

*Mediterranea*  
*International journal on the transfer of knowledge*

Vol. 6 — 2021



## *Mediterranea*

### *International journal on the transfer of knowledge*

<http://www.uco.es/ucopress/ojs/index.php/mediterranea/index>

Vol. 6 — 2021

#### EDITORS

Charles Burnett (The Warburg Institute, London)  
Juan Pedro Monferrer-Sala (University of Córdoba)  
Andrea Aldo Robiglio (KU Leuven)

#### ASSISTANT EDITOR

Pedro Mantas-España (University of Córdoba)

#### PUBLICATIONS COMMITTEE

Mauro Calcagno (University of Pennsylvania)  
Marina Detoraki (University of Crete, Greece)  
John Monfasani (University of New York, Albany)  
Sabine Schmidtke (Institute of Advanced Studies, Princeton University)  
Sarah Stroumsa (The Hebrew University, Jerusalem)  
Sofía Torallas Tovar (Classics and Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations, University of Chicago)

#### ADVISORY BOARD

Camilla Adang (Tel Aviv University) – Jean Balsamo (University of Reims) – Joël Biard (University of Tours) – Thomas Burman (University of Notre Dame - Indiana) – Brian A. Catlos (University of Colorado at Boulder) – Rita Copeland (University of Pennsylvania) – Wim Decock (KU Leuven) – Alexander Fidora (ICREA - Autonomous University of Barcelona) – Mercedes García-Arenal (CSIC - Madrid) – Dag Nikolaus Hasse (University of Würzburg) – Christian Høgel (University of Southern Denmark) – Sharon Kinoshita (University of California - Santa Cruz) – Ann Kuttner (University of Pennsylvania) – Mathijs Lamberigts (KU Leuven) – Cecilia Martini (University of Padova) – José Meirinhos (University of Porto) – Mia Mochizuki (New York) – Meira Polliack (Tel Aviv University) – Gerd Van Riel (KU Leuven) – Denis Robichaud (University of Notre Dame - Indiana) – Samuel Rubenson (University of Lund) – Richard C. Taylor (Marquette University - Milwaukee) – Herman Teule (University of Leuven / University of Nijmegen)

#### SECTION EDITOR

Tommaso De Robertis (University of Pennsylvania)  
Serena Masolini (KU Leuven)

#### DOCUMENTATION

Manuel Marcos Aldón (University of Córdoba)  
Fuensanta M. Guerrero Carmona (University of Córdoba)

## Contents

Lucas ORO HERSHTEIN

La metafísica política del *Kitāb al-Yanābīʿ* de Abū Yaʿqūb al-Sijistānī: del monismo ontológico al monismo político..... 1–29

Elsa Giovanna SIMONETTI

Iamblichus and Plutarch on Inspiration..... 31–55

Sonja BRENTJES

MS Paris, Bibliothèque des Missions étrangères 1069: The French-Arabic Dictionary of François Pétis de la Croix (1653–1713)?..... 57–84

Pietro Bassiano ROSSI

Fra etimologie e tropi: allo scrittoio con ‘Magister Robertus’ (*Dicta* 109, 110, 111)..... 85–107

Griselda GAIADA

Borges, Leibniz y la metafísica de los espejos..... 109–129

Pilar HERRÁIZ OLIVA

Towards a New Methodology for Natural Philosophy: Latin Averroism Revisited..... 131–155

### In memoriam

Charles BURNETT

In memoriam Peter Dronke (30.V.1934–19.IV.2020)..... 157–161

Angelo D’ORSI

In memoriam Franco Cordero (6.VIII.1928–8.V.2020)..... 163–166

Rafael RAMÓN GUERRERO In memoriam Miguel Cruz Hernández (15.I.1920–25.V.2020)....	167–171
Juan Pedro MONFERRER-SALA In memoriam Federico Corriente (14.XI.1940–16.VI.2020).....	173–175
Jean BALSAMO In memoriam Marc Fumaroli (10.VI.1932–24.VI.2020).....	177–183
Michael G. WECHSLER In memoriam Norman Golb (15.I.1928–29.XII.2020).....	185–188
Charles BURNETT In memoriam Helena Avelar de Carvalho (17.IX.1964–9.III.2021)	189–190

#### Review Articles

Ellen DE DONCKER Uncovering Moses ben Sabbatai: A Fourteenth-Century Critic of Philosophers and Kabbalists.....	191–208
Luca BIANCHI Aristotle <i>Redivivus</i> and His Alter-Egos.....	209–234
Luca BURZELLI A New Edition of Contarini's <i>De immortalitate animae</i> .....	235–242

#### Notes

Ignazio D'ANGELO La tradizione letteraria sulla prostituzione sacra a Locri Epizefiri: i due voti del 477 e del 351–346 a.C.....	243–262
--	---------

Kevin WHITE  
Cantos, Carte, and Columns: A Hypothesis Concerning the  
Original Mise-en-page of Dante's *Comedy*..... 263–285

Joel VARELA RODRÍGUEZ  
Gregorio Magno y los eruditos protestantes en los primeros 50  
años de la Reforma..... 287–309

### Reviews

Dragos CALMA  
Ruedi Imbach, *Minima mediaevalia. Saggi di filosofia medievale*,  
Aracne, Canterano (RM) 2019 (Flumen Sapientiae. Studi sul  
pensiero medievale, 10), PP. 352, ISBN 9788825523386..... 311–321

Sandrine ELMALEH  
Fernando José Pancorbo, *Joseph Penso De Vega, La creación de un  
perfil cultural y literario entre Ámsterdam y Livorno*, Leo S. Olschki,  
Firenze 2019 (Storia dell'ebraismo in Italia. Studi e testi, 31), PP.  
XII + 198, ISBN 9788822266651..... 323–331

Lisa DEVRIESE  
Michel Scot, *Liber Particularis, Liber Physonomie*, Ed. Oleg  
Voskoboynikov, SISMEL–Edizioni Del Galluzzo, Firenze 2019  
(Micrologus Library, 93), PP. VIII + 416, ISBN 9788884509062 333–336

Angela ULACCO  
*Corpus dei papiri filosofici greci e latini (CPF). Testi e lessico nei papiri di  
cultura greca e latina*, PT. II: *Frammenti adespoti e sentenze*, Vol. 1\*:  
*Frammenti adespoti*, Leo S. Olschki, Firenze 2019, PP. XXX +  
268, ISBN: 9788822266897..... 337–342

María del Carmen MOLINA BAREA  
Francesco Paolo Di Teodoro, *Lettera a Leone X di Raffaello e*

*Baldassarre Castiglione*, Leo S. Olschki, Firenze 2020 (Biblioteca dell'Archivium romanicum, ser. I: Storia, letteratura, paleografia, 503), PP. XII + 72, ISBN 9788822266774..... 343–347

Tommaso MANZON

Irene Zavattero (ed.), *L'uomo nel pensiero di Bonaventura da Bagnoregio*, Aracne, Canterano (RM) 2019 (Flumen Sapientiae. Studi sul pensiero medievale, 11), PP. 372, ISBN 9788825525922..... 349–355

María del Carmen LÓPEZ RUIZ

David Hamidovič, Claire Clivaz, Sarah Bowen Savant (eds.), in coll. with Alessandra Marguerat, *Ancient Manuscripts in Digital Culture. Visualization, Data Mining, Communication*, Brill, Leiden–Boston 2019 (Digital Biblical Studies, 3), PP. XVI + 284, ISBN 9789004346734..... 357–360

# ARTICLES



LA METAFÍSICA POLÍTICA DEL *KITĀB AL-YANĀBĪ*<sup>ʿ</sup>  
DE ABŪ YAʿQŪB AL-SIJISTĀNĪ:  
DEL MONISMO ONTOLÓGICO AL MONISMO POLÍTICO\*

THE POLITICAL METAPHYSICS OF ABŪ YAʿQŪB AL-SIJISTĀNĪ'S *KITĀB AL-YANĀBĪ*<sup>ʿ</sup>:  
FROM ONTOLOGICAL MONISM TO POLITICAL MONISM

LUCAS ORO HERSHTEIN  
UNIVERSITY OF BUENOS AIRES

*Resumen*

En el *Libro de las Fuentes* (*Kitāb al-Yanābī*<sup>ʿ</sup>), Abū Yaʿqūb al-Sijistānī propone una fundamentación teórica para la Ismāʿīlyyah, un colectivo religioso que se expresa simultáneamente como un movimiento político. Este artículo, destinado a un lector que se inicia en el tema, intenta mostrar que la filosofía política que la obra despliega nace en el ángulo donde se superponen la visión sincrónica de una metafísica de raíz neoplatónica y la visión diacrónica de una profetología de raíz ismāʿīlī.

*Palabras Clave*

Abū Yaʿqūb al-Sijistānī; *Kitāb al-Yanābī*<sup>ʿ</sup>, neoplatonismo, filosofía ismāʿīlī, metafísica política.

*Abstract*

In the *Book of Sources* (*Kitāb al-Yanābī*<sup>ʿ</sup>), Abū Yaʿqūb al-Sijistānī proposes a theoretical foundation for the Ismāʿīlyyah, a religious community that expresses itself as a political movement. This paper, meant for a reader who is new to the topic, seeks to show that the text's political philosophy is born at the angle in which the synchronous vision of a Neoplatonic-rooted metaphysics and the diachronic vision of a Ismāʿīlī-rooted prophetology overlap.

*Key Words*

Abū Yaʿqūb al-Sijistānī, *Kitāb al-Yanābī*<sup>ʿ</sup>, Neoplatonism, Ismāʿīlī philosophy, political metaphysics.



## Introducción<sup>1</sup>

Este trabajo – de carácter introductorio – dirige su atención a un momento en el despliegue de lo que retrospectivamente es posible representar como una de las facetas en la discusión entre las ‘dos espadas’, la ‘espiritual’ y la ‘temporal’, cuyo desarrollo en el mundo islámico, henchido de problemas colaterales, cabe ser entendido como acaso más intrincado que en el mundo latino medieval.<sup>2</sup> En particular, aquí se estudia lo que se entiende como la metafísica política del *Libro de las Fuentes* (*Kitāb al-Yanābī*; desde ahora, KY)<sup>3</sup> de Abū Ya‘qūb al-Sijistānī,<sup>4</sup> escrito a mediados del siglo cuarto del calendario islámico/décimo de la era común.

Metodológicamente, esta no pretende ser una investigación en la historia del pensamiento ismā‘īlī enfocada en ciertos tópicos filosóficos sino un estudio dirigido a un capítulo de la historia de la filosofía medieval.<sup>5</sup> las proyecciones

---

\* Le agradezco a Claudia D’Amico su lectura crítica de la primera versión de este artículo.

<sup>1</sup> En este trabajo se sigue una versión ligeramente modificada de las pautas de transliteración de IJMES. Las traducciones son propias.

<sup>2</sup> ABD AL-HAKEEM CARNEY, « The Desacralisation of Power in Islam », *Religion, State and Society*, 31/2 (2003), p. 9.

<sup>3</sup> Existen dos ediciones críticas del KY: ABŪ YA‘QŪB AL-SIJISTĀNĪ, « Kitāb al-Yanābī », en HENRY CORBIN (ed.), *Trilogie ismaélienne*, Institut Franco-iranien, Tehran-Paris 1961 (Bibliothèque iranienne, 9), p. 2–97 [texto árabe]; y ABŪ YA‘QŪB AL-SIJISTĀNĪ, *Kitāb al-yanābī*, ed. Muṣṭafā Ghālib, Trading Office, Beyrouth 1965. A su vez, existen dos traducciones: ABŪ YA‘QŪB AL-SIJISTĀNĪ, « Kitāb al-Yanābī », en HENRY CORBIN (ed. y trad.), *Trilogie ismaélienne*, Institut Franco-iranien, Tehran-Paris 1961, p. 5–127 [texto francés]. (2da edición: ABŪ YA‘QŪB SEJESTĀNĪ, « Kitāb al-Yanābī », en HENRY CORBIN (ed. y trad.), *Trilogie ismaélienne*, Verdier, Paris 1994, p. 1–164 [texto francés].); y ABŪ YA‘QŪB AS-SIJISTĀNĪ, *The Wellsprings of Wisdom. A Study of Abū Ya‘qūb al-Sijistānī’s Kitāb al-Yanābī. Including a Complete English Translation with Commentary and Notes on the Arabic Text*, trad. PAUL E. WALKER, University of Utah Press, Salt Lake City 1994.

<sup>4</sup> Un compendio de la bibliografía sobre la Ismā‘īliyyah, incluyendo una reconstrucción de la historia del campo disciplinar, se encuentra en WLADIMIR IVANOW, *A Guide to Ismā‘īlī Literature*, Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland, London 1933 (Prize Publication Fund, 13); Id., *Ismā‘īlī Literature. A Bibliographical Survey*, Tehran University Press, Tehran 1963 (Ismaili Society Series. A, 15); ISMĀ‘ĪL K. POONAWALA, *Biobibliography of Ismā‘īlī Literature*, Undena Publications, Malibu, CA 1977 (Studies in Near Eastern Culture and Society, 1); FARHĀD DAFTARY, « The Ismā‘īliyya or Sevener Shī‘ah », en HEINZ HALM, *Shī‘ism*, Edinburgh University Press, Edinburgh 2004 (New Edinburgh Islamic Surveys), p. 160–201; FARHĀD DAFTARY, « The Study of the Ismā‘īlis », en FARHĀD DAFTARY, GURDOFARID MISKINZODA (eds.), *The Study of Shī‘ī Islam. History, Theology and Law*, I. B. Tauris–The Institute of Ismaili Studies, London–New York 2014 (Shi‘i Heritage Series, 2), p. 47–66; y KHALĪL ANDANI, « A Survey of Ismaili Studies, Part 1: Early Ismā‘īlism and Fāṭimid Ismā‘īlism », *Religion Compass*, 10/8 (2016), p. 191–216.

<sup>5</sup> El KY no sigue un orden argumentativo claro ni despliega sus postulados demostrativamente, a pesar de sus propias aclaraciones metodológicas (ver KY, §7: ed. CORBIN, p. 5; ed. GHĀLIB, p. 59; trad. CORBIN, p. 16; trad. WALKER, p. 42; y KY, §9: ed. CORBIN, p. 9; ed. GHĀLIB, p. 63; trad. CORBIN, p. 21; trad. WALKER, p. 45, donde al-Sijistānī afirma que el lenguaje del KY es simbólico). Al respecto, ver PAUL E. WALKER, « The Ismā‘īlī Vocabulary of Creation », *Studia Islamica*, 40 (1974), p. 76. En este sentido,

metafísico-políticas de la doctrina de la causalidad propia de la tradición filosófica neoplatónica.<sup>6</sup> La importancia de los textos de al-Sijistānī radica en diferentes cuestiones. En primer lugar, representan una segunda fase en el proceso de recepción de la tradición filosófica griega, a un siglo de distancia del movimiento de traducciones en el marco del cual nace la ‘filosofía’ en árabe (*falsafah*). Además, se encuentran en el núcleo del desarrollo temprano de una de las dos principales tradiciones islámicas de filosofía política, la *ismā‘īlī*, junto a la cultivada inicialmente por al-Fārābī y luego por ibn Sīnā, ibn Rushd, ibn Bājjah e ibn Ṭufayl. Así mismo, han sido uno de los canales de transmisión de los textos de Plotino y Proclo, o al menos de sus ideas y vocabulario, a los mundos intelectuales de la *ismā‘īliyyah*. En particular, la búsqueda de equivalentes en el Qur‘ān para el léxico filosófico, la construcción de analogías islámicas para las nociones filosóficas y el desarrollo de un enfoque *ismā‘īlī* para los principales temas metafísicos heredados de los textos filosóficos hacen del *KY* un ejemplo del camino intermedio representado por la *ismā‘īliyyah* entre los exponentes de la *falsafah*, como al-Kindī, al-Fārābī e ibn Sīnā, y los del *kalām*, como al-Ash‘arī, al-Māturīdī, ‘Abd al-Jabbār y al-Bāqillānī.

En el despuntar del pensamiento islámico, no cabe distinguir entre una teología política y una filosofía política.<sup>7</sup> Sin afirmar una identidad perfecta entre la religión, el estado y la sociedad en el islam,<sup>8</sup> o entre lo sagrado y lo secular,<sup>9</sup> un

---

cabe resaltar que en la *ismā‘īliyyah* no se explicitan las reglas metodológicas para guiar el proceso de exégesis, ya que la misma razón humana que estipula la necesidad del *ta’wīl* se constituye en el criterio de su validez (DANIEL DE SMET, « Philosophie grecque et religion musulmane: Aristote comme exégète du Coran selon la tradition Shī‘ite ismaélienne », *Ishrāq. Islamic Philosophy Yearbook*, 2 (2011), p. 348).

<sup>6</sup> Al respecto, ver DANIEL DE SMET, « Les bibliothèques Ismaéliennes et la Question du Néoplatonisme Ismaélien », en CRISTINA D’ANCONA (ed.), *The Libraries of the Neoplatonists*, Brill, Leiden–Boston 2007 (*Philosophia antiqua*, 107), p. 490–491; DANIEL DE SMET, « The Risāla al-Mudhhiba Attributed to al-Qādī al-Numān: Important Evidence for the Adoption of Neoplatonism by Fātimid *ismā‘īlism* at the Time of al-Mu‘izz? », en OMAR ALÍ-DE-UNZAGA (ed.), *Fortresses of the Intellect: Ismaili and Other Islamic Studies in Honour of Farhād Daftary*, Institute of Ismaili Studies, London 2011, p. 309–311; y DE SMET, « Philosophie grecque et religion musulmane », p. 355.

<sup>7</sup> Ver SIMON MIMOUNI, « Introduction à la théologie politique. Eléments de Réflexion », en GIOVANNI FILORAMO (ed.), *Teologie politiche. Modelli a confronto*, Morcelliana, Brescia 2005 (*Le scienze umane*, 4), p. 24.

<sup>8</sup> Ver PATRICIA CRONE, *God’s caliph. Religious Authority in the First Centuries of Islam*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge–New York 2003 (University of Cambridge Oriental Publications, 37), p. 396.

<sup>9</sup> Esta distinción es asumida, por ejemplo, en ANTONY BLACK, *The History of Islamic Political Thought. From the Prophet to the Present*, Edinburgh University Press, Edinburgh 2011, p. 14.

tópico clásico<sup>10</sup> de discutible historicidad,<sup>11</sup> cabe sostener que la distinción entre dos objetos del conocimiento, o entre dos modos de conocimiento distintos, uno metafísico y otro político, es extraña a los primeros pensadores musulmanes, incluyendo a al-Sijistānī. Por el contrario, en los primeros siglos de historia islámica el pensamiento político es concebido como perteneciendo a otros géneros discursivos;<sup>12</sup> en este sentido, cabe ser entendido como conceptualmente indeterminado, pero no por esto debe ser visto como teóricamente vago, ya que comprende más que un conjunto de enunciaciones políticas explícitas.<sup>13</sup> Así, la diferenciación sistemática entre la reflexión metafísica y la propiamente política, en ocasiones asumida como originaria, lleva siglos.<sup>14</sup> En el mismo sentido, no es posible desconocer que una doctrina política siempre descansa sobre un conjunto de definiciones metafísicas; el autor puede hacerlas explícitas, negarlas o desconocerlas, pero son fundacionales tanto ontológica como epistemológicamente.

El asunto filosófico crucial en las doctrinas neoplatónicas es la explicación y justificación del por qué y el cómo del pasaje de la unidad a la multiplicidad. En el caso de los neoplatonismos monoteístas, el mismo dilema aparece en la relación entre la creación voluntaria y la emanación necesaria, por un lado, y entre la trascendencia absoluta y la conjunción entre trascendencia e inmanencia, por el otro. Específicamente, en el neoplatonismo ismā'īlī, esta cuestión se manifiesta como una tensión entre lo universal y lo particular,<sup>15</sup> lo que en al-Sijistānī se expresa en el problema de la salvación del 'alma' (*nafs*) individual.

---

<sup>10</sup> Ver GUSTAVE EDMUND VON GRUNEBaum, *Medieval Islam. A Study on Cultural Orientation*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago 1953 (An Oriental Institute Essay), p. 170–220.

<sup>11</sup> Ver 'ABD ALLĀH LAROUĪ, « The Arabs and Cultural Anthropology: Notes on the method of Gustave von Grunebaum », en ID., *The Crisis of the Arab Intellectual: Traditionalism or Historicism*, University of California Press, Berkeley–Los Angeles 1976 (Campus, 184), p. 444–480.

<sup>12</sup> AZIZ AL-AZMEH, « Islamic Political Thought: Current Historiography and the Frame of History », en ID. (ed.), *The Times of History. Universal Topics in Islamic Historiography*, Central European University Press, Budapest 2007 (Past Incorporated, 1786–1438, 4), p. 187.

<sup>13</sup> AZIZ AL-AZMEH, « Writing Power », en ID., *Muslim Kingship. Power and the Sacred in Muslim, Christian and Pagan Polities*, I. B. Tauris, London 1996, p. 83–114.

<sup>14</sup> También esta diferencia es asumida, por ejemplo, en BLACK, *The History of Islamic Political Thought*, p. 58.

<sup>15</sup> Frente a los problemas de cómo conciliar la trascendencia, unidad y unicidad de Dios con los atributos que se le adjudican en el Qur'ān y de cómo armonizar la inconmensurabilidad de Dios con los versos que describen sus acciones en términos humanos, el pensamiento ismā'īlī propone una respuesta radical. En vistas a salvaguardar la pureza de la esencia divina, relega el aspecto exterior de Dios tal como aparece en el Qur'ān a un nivel inferior de la realidad: el del 'aql, la primera creatura (DANIEL DE SMET, *La Quiétude de l'Intellect. Néoplatonisme et gnose ismaélienne dans Ḥamīd ad-Din al-Kirmānī*, Peters, Louvain 1995 [Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta, 67], p. 36). Al respecto, ver también ID., « Perfectio prima – perfectio secunda ou les vicissitudes d'une notion: de S. Thomas aux Ismaéliens ṭayyibites du Yēmen », *Recherches de Théologie et de Philosophie médiévales*, 66 (1999), p. 254–288.

### I. La metafísica del KY

A partir de la originación divina, la realidad se constituye en un continuo movimiento de expansión y retracción, entre el 'fluir' (*jarā*) primigenio y el 'retorno' (*ma'ād* o *rujū'*) de los 'particulares' (*ajzā'*) a los 'universales' (*al-kulliyāt*). Cada modalidad de la existencia implica una capacidad de conocimiento determinada. A su vez, una transformación en la capacidad de conocimiento conlleva un cambio en la modalidad de la existencia. En la expansión, los 'dones' (*fawā'id*) y los 'conocimientos' (*ulūm*) fluyen desde la 'inteligencia' (*'aql*) y la *nafs* hacia el mundo material, al cual constituyen en ese movimiento. Sin embargo, los seres humanos no son capaces de recibir los dones y los conocimientos en sí mismos. Lo espiritual, en tanto dones y conocimientos, se expande originando lo material a través de la 'mediación' (*tawfiq*) de las instancias intermedias, las cuales participan de las superiores.<sup>16</sup> En esta expansión se genera el tiempo, en el marco del cual los dones y los conocimientos son un 'jardín del discernimiento' (*bustān al-tamyīz*) para los integrantes de la 'misión' (*da'wah*) ismā'īlī: los profetas 'dotados de palabra y razón' (*nuṭaqa'*), los 'pilares' (*usus*), los 'imames' (*a'immaḥ*) y los 'adjuntos' (*lawāḥiq*).

Es decir, los dones y los conocimientos están 'mezclados' (*mashūb*) con sus 'formulaciones' (*alfāz*) e 'interpretaciones' (*ibārāt*), las cuales son como 'caparazones' (*qushūr*) que se interponen entre el objeto y el sujeto de conocimiento, por lo que la 'fatiga' (*ta'ab*) y la 'frustración' (*naṣb*) lo 'aflijen' (*aṣāba*),<sup>17</sup> apareciendo la 'duda' (*shubḥah*) y la 'ambigüedad' (*iltibās*), con la posibilidad de que, entonces, la 'forma sutil' (*al-ṣūrah al-laṭifah*) del ser humano se 'corrompa' (*fasada*).<sup>18</sup> Los integrantes de la *da'wah* tienen la capacidad metafísica, con la consiguiente potestad política, de mediar entre el ser humano y la 'ipseidad' (*huwiyyah*) de dichos dones y conocimientos, trascendiendo los caparazones.

Cada una de las instancias de mediación, cuya razón es metafísica y su expresión es política, constituye uno de los 'órdenes convencionales' (*al-siyāsāt al-nāmūsiyyah*) cuyo 'establecimiento' (*iqāmah*) en el 'mundo corporal' (*al-'alām al-jismānī*) Dios 'desea' (*arāda*), a través de la 'ejecución' (*qawm*) mediante su

---

<sup>16</sup> KY, §15 (ed. CORBIN, p. 11; ed. GHĀLIB, p. 66; trad. CORBIN, p. 24; trad. WALKER, p. 47). Cuando se habla de lo espiritual se hace alusión a un sentido genérico de lo inteligible: es lo más digno de ser conocido, si bien es lo menos inmediatamente cognoscible, dado que sólo puede ser conocido mediante una *intentio* intelectual, lo cual implica no solamente distintos niveles de conocimiento sino también grados de perfección en el ser.

<sup>17</sup> KY, §132 (ed. CORBIN, p. 68; ed. GHĀLIB, p. 137; trad. CORBIN, p. 82-89; trad. WALKER, p. 89).

<sup>18</sup> KY, §133 (ed. CORBIN, p. 68; ed. GHĀLIB, p. 138; trad. CORBIN, p. 89; trad. WALKER, p. 90).

voluntad,<sup>19</sup> para disciplinar la *nafs* del ser humano.<sup>20</sup> Estos órdenes convencionales vertebran la historia temporal, la cual se despliega en su totalidad a lo largo de seis ‘períodos’ (*adwār*), desde Ādam hasta Muḥammad, cada uno de los cuales está dividido también en seis.<sup>21</sup> Cada orden convencional se expresa en una ‘jerarquía’ (*ḥadd*) de veintitún miembros. De estos, dos son ‘principios’ (*aṣṭayn*) eternos: el ‘*aql*’ y la *nafs*. Los restantes integrantes son temporales: el *nāṭiq*; seis *a’immah*,<sup>22</sup> incluyendo cada último *imām* del período, es decir los ‘completadores’ (*atimmā*),<sup>23</sup> y doce *lawāḥiq*.<sup>24</sup>

Así, la metafísica se hace historia donde la realidad última del tiempo es metafísica. La *da’wah* como misión política de la jerarquía temporal es una expresión de la *da’wah* como exhortación universal de los principios eternos. Cada *nāṭiq* es tanto un intermediario entre lo inferior y lo superior, siendo el ‘vicario’ (*khalīfah*) del ‘*aql*’ en el mundo material,<sup>25</sup> como un intermediario entre lo inferior y lo superior, siendo un ‘misionero’ (*janāḥ*) del Qā’im.<sup>26</sup> En esa condición, y en razón de la ‘palabra de Dios’ (*kalimat Allāh*),<sup>27</sup> el *nāṭiq* es el punto de quiebre en el cual la metafísica deviene historia, ya que ‘abre’ (*fataḥa*) los ‘órdenes legales’ (*al-siyāsāt al-*

<sup>19</sup> KY, §27 (ed. CORBIN, p. 18; ed. GHĀLIB, p. 74; trad. CORBIN, p. 37; trad. WALKER, p. 51).

<sup>20</sup> PAUL E. WALKER, *Early philosophical Shī’ism. The Ismā’īlī Neoplatonism of Abū Ya’qūb al-Sijistānī*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 1993 (Cambridge Studies in Islamic Civilization), p. 122.

<sup>21</sup> KY, §155 (ed. CORBIN, p. 79; ed. GHĀLIB, p. 154; trad. CORBIN, p. 103; trad. WALKER, p. 98).

<sup>22</sup> KY, §158 (ed. CORBIN, p. 81; ed. GHĀLIB, p. 155; trad. CORBIN, p. 104; trad. WALKER, p. 99).

<sup>23</sup> KY, §17 (ed. CORBIN, p. 13; ed. GHĀLIB, p. 67; trad. CORBIN, p. 24; trad. WALKER, p. 47).

<sup>24</sup> KY, §158 (ed. CORBIN, p. 80–81; ed. GHĀLIB, p. 155; trad. CORBIN, p. 104; trad. WALKER, p. 99).

<sup>25</sup> KY, §141 (ed. CORBIN, p. 72; ed. GHĀLIB, p. 143–144; trad. CORBIN, p. 94; trad. WALKER, p. 93).

<sup>26</sup> KY, §157 (ed. CORBIN, p. 80; ed. GHĀLIB, p. 154; trad. CORBIN, p. 103; trad. WALKER, p. 99). Además, al-Sijistānī dice que « el *nāṭiq* es auténticamente el Mahdī, ya que el Mahdī es uno de los siete *nuṭaqā’* » (KY, §180; ed. CORBIN; p. 91. ed. GHĀLIB, p. 168; trad. CORBIN, p. 119; trad. WALKER, p. 107), lo cual debe ser leído en el marco de su búsqueda de una posición intermedia entre las corrientes qarmaṭī y fāṭimī. Al respecto, ver DANIEL DE SMET, « La taqiyya et le jeûne du Ramadan: quelques réflexions ismaéliennes sur le sens ésotérique de la charia », *al-Qanṭara*, 34/2 (2013), p. 368, nota 26; p. 369, nota 28; y p. 372. Ver también WILFERD F. MADELUNG, « Fāṭimiden und Bahrainqarmaṭen », *Der Islam*, 34 (1959), p. 34–88; WILFERD F. MADELUNG, « Das Imāmat in der frühen isma’ilitischen Lehre », *Der Islam*, 37/1–3 (1961), p. 43–135; y SAMUEL STERN, « The Early Ismā’īlī Missionaries in North-West Persia and in Khurasan and Transoxiana », *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, 23 (1960), p. 56–90.

<sup>27</sup> La revelación de los textos sagrados debe serle adjudicada no a Dios sino al ‘*aql*’ en relación con la *kalimat Allāh*; cf. CARMELA BAFFIONI, « Esoteric Shī’ism in the Additions to Ancient Manuscripts of the Rasā’il Ikhwān al-Ṣafā’ », en MOHAMMAD A. AMIR-MOEZZI, MARIA DE CILLIS, DANIEL DE SMET, ORKHAN MIR-KASIMOV (eds.), *L’Ésotérisme Shī’ite. Ses racines et ses prolongements. Shī’i Esotericism: Its Roots and Developments*, Brepols, Turnhout 2016 (Bibliothèque de l’École des hautes études. Section des sciences religieuses, 177), p. 320. Al respecto, al-Sijistānī sostiene que el ‘*aql*’ es ‘suficiente’ (*kifāyah*) para el conjunto de la realidad: KY, §178 (ed. CORBIN, p. 91; ed. GHĀLIB, p. 90–91; trad. CORBIN, p. 118; trad. WALKER, p. 107). El ser humano no puede ir más allá, dado que para él « más allá del ‘*aql*’ no hay nada »: KY, §178; ed. CORBIN, p. 91; ed. GHĀLIB, p. 90–91; trad. CORBIN, p. 118; trad. WALKER, p. 107.

*sharī‘ah*),<sup>28</sup> otra forma de referirse a los ‘órdenes convencionales’. Esta apertura se da a través de una operación de la cual el *nāṭiq* es la ‘fuente’ (*yanbu*): la ‘composición’ (*ta’līf*),<sup>29</sup> la cual es posible por la *tawfiq* de la *nafs* entre el *nāṭiq* y el ‘*aql*’.<sup>30</sup>

El *nāṭiq* está entre el ‘ascenso’ (*ṣu‘ūd*) al ‘rango’ (*martabah*) de la *nafs*, para ‘beneficiarse’ (*istafāda*) con la ‘porción’ (*ḥazz*) de la *kalimat Allāh* que le corresponde, y el ‘don’ (*ifādah*) hacia lo que le es inferior.<sup>31</sup> Como resultado de este doble movimiento, el *nāṭiq* principia las ‘enunciaciones lógicas’ (*al-alfāz al-mantiqiyyah*) que ‘expresan’ (*mu‘abbirah*) tanto las ‘excelencias inteligibles’ (*al-faḍā’il al-‘aqliyyah*) que provienen del ‘*aql*’<sup>32</sup> como las ‘composiciones anímicas’ (*al-murakkab al-nafsiyyah*) que provienen de la *nafs*.<sup>33</sup> Así, el *nāṭiq* ‘combina’ (*jama‘a*) determinadas palabras, ‘componiendo’ (*allafa*) una *ta’līf*; es decir, una ‘ley’ exterior (*sharī‘ah*).<sup>34</sup> Cada *sharī‘ah* está en el corazón de cada uno de los ‘órdenes convencionales’ o ‘legales’, al que determina. En ese sentido, cabe decir que el *nāṭiq* ‘extiende’ (*nashara*) las ‘bendiciones’ (*khayrāt*) en el mundo,<sup>35</sup> ya que cada *sharī‘ah* condensa los dones y los conocimientos del movimiento de expansión, corporeizando lo metafísico al hacerlo histórico.

Precisamente, cada *nāṭiq* ‘compone’ su *sharī‘ah* considerando dos perspectivas distintas.<sup>36</sup> Por un lado, atendiendo a los ‘conocimientos inspirados’ (*al-‘ulūm al-*

<sup>28</sup> KY, §140 (ed. CORBIN, p. 81; ed. GHĀLIB, p. 143; trad. CORBIN, p. 93; trad. WALKER, p. 92).

<sup>29</sup> KY, §10 (ed. CORBIN, p. 9; ed. GHĀLIB, p. 63; trad. CORBIN, p. 22; trad. WALKER, p. 45) y KY, §31 (ed. CORBIN, p. 19. ed. GHĀLIB, p. 75. trad. CORBIN, p. 38. trad. WALKER, p. 52).

<sup>30</sup> KY, §164 (ed. CORBIN, p. 83; ed. GHĀLIB, p. 158–159; trad. CORBIN, p. 107–108; trad. WALKER, p. 101).

<sup>31</sup> KY, §15 (ed. CORBIN, p. 11; ed. GHĀLIB, p. 66; trad. CORBIN, p. 24; trad. WALKER, p. 47).

<sup>32</sup> En el KY se afirma que siete inteligibles son ‘imaginados’ (*tawahhama*) en el ‘*aql*’ universal en la ‘esencia de la originación’ (*dhāt al-ibdā’*), o sea en el momento mismo de la originación. Es posible entenderlos como ‘meta-inteligibles’, ya que se encuentran en cada ‘*aql*’ particular que entiende un inteligible: la ‘eternidad’ (*dahr*), la ‘verdad’ (*ḥaqq*), la ‘felicidad’ (*surūr*), la ‘demostración’ (*burhān*), la ‘vida’ (*ḥayāh*), la ‘perfección’ y *ghaybah*. En este contexto, el término *ghaybah* puede ser leído como ‘auto-subsistencia’, como en ABŪ YA‘QŪB AS-SIJISTĀNĪ, *The Wellsprings of Wisdom*, p. 164–165, o como ‘ocultación’, como en ABŪ YA‘QŪB SEJESTĀNĪ, « Kitāb al-Yanābī‘ », p. 62–63, nota 124. Aquí se entiende el término como una referencia a « l’accès à la connaissance suprasensible, à la dimension suprasensible des choses [...] [la cual] prend dans l’être humain une existence concrète; l’âme participe à la *ghaybah* de la première Intelligence » (ABŪ YA‘QŪB SEJESTĀNĪ, « Kitāb al-Yanābī‘ », p. 63, nota 124).

<sup>33</sup> KY, §140 (ed. CORBIN, p. 81; ed. GHĀLIB, p. 143; trad. CORBIN, p. 93; trad. WALKER, p. 92).

<sup>34</sup> KY, §15 (ed. CORBIN, p. 11; ed. GHĀLIB, p. 66; trad. CORBIN, p. 23–24; trad. WALKER, p. 47).

<sup>35</sup> KY, §21 (ed. CORBIN, p. 14–15; ed. GHĀLIB, p. 69; trad. CORBIN, p. 26; trad. WALKER, p. 49).

<sup>36</sup> La idea de la doble composición de la *sharī‘ah* también puede verse como aludiendo a la posibilidad de respetarla en secreto o públicamente (KY, §4: ed. CORBIN, p. 4; ed. GHĀLIB, p. 59; trad. CORBIN, p. 15; trad. WALKER, p. 40), aunque esta afirmación parece referir más a la idea de ‘prudencia’ en la exposición de la fe (*taqiyyah*) que a la *sharī‘ah* en sí misma, y como aludiendo a la diferencia entre

*ta'yīdiyyah*) que provienen de la 'sabiduría divina' (*al-ḥikmah al-rabbāniyyah*) mediante la operación del 'aql, es decir, el 'fortalecimiento' (*ta'yīd*). Por otro lado, atendiendo a la 'composición' (*mu'allaf*) entre lo espiritual y lo material,<sup>37</sup> la *sharī'ah* que fluye de cada *nāṭiq* 'contiene' (*iḥṭawā*) lo que 'reflejan' (*ḥakā*) ambos mundos,<sup>38</sup> siendo así apropiada para su momento histórico específico<sup>39</sup> y nación particular.<sup>40</sup> Ahora bien, el *ta'līf* de lo 'legal' (*shar'ī*) no modifica las 'leyes' (*sharā'i*) en sí mismas, en lo 'secreto' (*khafīyy*), sino sólo en su dimensión 'exterior' (*zāhir*), ya que en el núcleo de cada ley se encuentra puro 'ilm'.<sup>41</sup> Por eso, la *sharī'ah* es sagrada no en su letra, determinada, histórica, temporal y específica, sino por lo que expresa.<sup>42</sup>

Así, en cada momento de la historia temporal conviven simultáneamente diferentes órdenes convencionales o legales, ya que distintas naciones conservan 'leyes tradicionales' (*al-sharā'i al-muqalladah*)<sup>43</sup> o 'convencionales' (*al-sharā'i al-nāmūsiyyah*) que resultaron del movimiento de expansión universal, siendo utilizadas para la 'mejora' (*iṣlāh*) y el 'soporte' (*qiwām*) del mundo material, pero que luego fueron despojadas de los dones y los conocimientos,<sup>44</sup> perdiendo su sentido espiritual y transformándose en un 'mortífero veneno' (*al-summ al-qātil*).<sup>45</sup>

Cada *nāṭiq* busca en su tiempo la 'perfección' (*kamāl*) de la *da'wah* universal, la cual consiste en la 'producción' (*nushū*) de la 'forma espiritual' (*al-sūrah al-rūḥāniyyah*) en vistas al 'mantenimiento' (*istiqāmah*) de sus 'estados' (*aḥwāl*) para el advenimiento mesiánico.<sup>46</sup> En su rol histórico, el *nāṭiq* 'domina' (*malaka*) lo material, 'modificándolo' (*qalaba*), y 'administra' (*dabbara*) los 'asuntos' (*umūr*) de los seres humanos a partir de la 'inspiración' (*waḥy*) de Dios.<sup>47</sup> Sin 'alcanzar' (*nāla*) la 'completitud' (*tamāmiyyah*) del 'aql, el *nāṭiq* es el 'señor' (*ṣāhib*) de los rangos que caracterizan su rol histórico: el 'apostolado' (*risālah*), el 'comisionado' (*wiṣāyah*) y

---

una composición para los 'iletrados' (*jūhhāl*) y otra para los 'hombres de conocimiento' (*ulamā*) (KY, §3; ed. CORBIN, p. 2-3. ed. GHĀLIB, p. 57. trad. CORBIN, p. 15. trad. WALKER, p. 40).

<sup>37</sup> KY, §3 (ed. CORBIN, p. 3; ed. GHĀLIB, p. 57; trad. CORBIN, p. 15; trad. WALKER, p. 40).

<sup>38</sup> KY, §164 (ed. CORBIN, p. 83; ed. GHĀLIB, p. 158-159; trad. CORBIN, p. 107-108; trad. WALKER, p. 101).

<sup>39</sup> KY, §15 (ed. CORBIN, p. 11; ed. GHĀLIB, p. 66; trad. CORBIN, p. 24; trad. WALKER, p. 47) y KY, §181 (ed. CORBIN, p. 92; ed. GHĀLIB, p. 168; trad. CORBIN, p. 120; trad. WALKER, p. 108).

<sup>40</sup> KY, §165 (ed. CORBIN, p. 83; ed. GHĀLIB, p. 159; trad. CORBIN, p. 108; trad. WALKER, p. 101).

<sup>41</sup> KY, §181 (ed. CORBIN, p. 92; ed. GHĀLIB, p. 168; trad. CORBIN, p. 120; trad. WALKER, p. 108).

<sup>42</sup> PAUL E. WALKER, *Abū Ya'qūb al-Sijistānī: Intellectual Missionary*, I. B. Tauris-Institute of Isma'ili Studies, London-New York 1996 (Ismaili Heritage Series), p. 48.

<sup>43</sup> KY, §134 (ed. CORBIN, p. 69; ed. GHĀLIB, p. 139; trad. CORBIN, p. 89; trad. WALKER, p. 90). Esta es una idea enfatizada con la utilización del término *nāmūs*, el cual parece ser, a pesar de la utilización en textos antiguos de términos derivados de la raíz *nūn.mīm.sīn*, una transliteración del griego νόμος. Ver WALKER, *Early philosophical Shī'ism*, p. 115; y MARTIN PLESSNER y FRANÇOIS VIRÉ, « Nāmūs », en *Encyclopaedia of Islam. Second Edition*, vol. VII, Brill, Leiden 1993, p. 953-956.

<sup>44</sup> KY, §133 (ed. CORBIN, p. 68; ed. GHĀLIB, p. 138; trad. CORBIN, p. 89; trad. WALKER, p. 90).

<sup>45</sup> KY, §134 (ed. CORBIN, p. 68; ed. GHĀLIB, p. 139; trad. CORBIN, p. 89; trad. WALKER, p. 90).

<sup>46</sup> KY, §155 (ed. CORBIN, p. 79; ed. GHĀLIB, p. 154; trad. CORBIN, p. 102-103; trad. WALKER, p. 98).

<sup>47</sup> KY, §180 (ed. CORBIN, p. 91; ed. GHĀLIB, p. 168; trad. CORBIN, p. 119; trad. WALKER, p. 107).

el 'imamato' (*imāmah*).<sup>48</sup> Los *nuṭaqā'* integran una serie histórica, diferenciándose por el 'grado' (*miqdār*) de su 'dignidad' (*darajah*), según como 'brilla' (*lāḥa*) la *nafs* universal en cada uno.<sup>49</sup> Es decir, la 'interpretación auténtica' (*ta'wīl*)<sup>50</sup> y la 'revelación' (*tanzīl*) de cada *nāṭiq* difieren en tanto cada *nāṭiq* 'lleva' (*ḥamala*) el *ta'wīl* que le corresponde según la 'extensión' (*qadr*) de su 'pureza' (*ṣufuwu*).<sup>51</sup> Esta línea histórica es progresiva: cada *nāṭiq* comprende los *nuṭaqā'* anteriores a él<sup>52</sup> y Muḥammad es superior a los demás.<sup>53</sup>

En cada período histórico, al *nāṭiq* le acompaña un *asās*, el cual es la *yanbu'* del *ta'wīl*<sup>54</sup> dado que 'funda' (*anṣa'a*) las 'explicaciones' (*bayānāt*)<sup>55</sup> de los dones y los conocimientos corporeizados por el *ta'līf* del *nāṭiq* a partir del *ta'yīd* del 'aql, el cual 'brilla' (*lama'a*) para el conjunto del mundo material pero del cual solamente el ser humano puede alcanzar la 'extracción' (*istikhrāj*) de su 'usufructo' (*manfa'ah*).<sup>56</sup> Por eso, el *asās* es 'el guía' (*al-hādī*),<sup>57</sup> ya que abre las 'auténticas interpretaciones intelectuales' (*al-ta'wīlāt al-'ulumīyyah*),<sup>58</sup> 'manifestando' (*abraza*) – es decir, distinguiendo – lo 'real' (*ḥaqīqah*) con respecto a lo 'externo' (*zāhir*) y el *ta'wīl* con respecto a la *sharī'ah*.<sup>59</sup> El *ta'wīl* es un 'discurso' (*qawl*) perfecto que expone la verdad última a partir de la realidad, leyéndola como el signo último de la revelación.<sup>60</sup>

En la operación del *asās* se explicita la correlación entre la existencia y el conocimiento. El *ta'wīl* del *asās* « reconduce las figuras a sus arquetipos », <sup>61</sup> yendo de lo inferior a lo superior, pero al hacerlo produce una 'explicación' (*bayān*) que, moviéndose de lo superior a lo inferior, 'graba' (*naqasha*) las 'formas inteligibles'

---

<sup>48</sup> KY, §141 (ed. CORBIN, p. 72; ed. GHĀLIB, p. 143–144; trad. CORBIN, p. 93; trad. p. 93).

<sup>49</sup> KY, §179 (ed. CORBIN, p. 91; ed. GHĀLIB, p. 167; trad. CORBIN, p. 119; trad. WALKER, p. 107.)

<sup>50</sup> En este caso, la idea de *ta'wīl* no parece referir a lo mismo que cuando se le adjudica al *asās* sino a la posibilidad de realizar dicha 'interpretación auténtica' que, sin embargo, es llevada a cabo por el *asās*.

<sup>51</sup> KY, §181 (ed. CORBIN, p. 92; ed. GHĀLIB, p. 168; trad. CORBIN, p. 119; trad. WALKER, p. 108).

<sup>52</sup> KY, §21 (ed. CORBIN, p. 15; ed. GHĀLIB, p. 69; trad. CORBIN, p. 26; trad. WALKER, p. 49).

<sup>53</sup> KY, §3 (ed. CORBIN, p. 3; ed. GHĀLIB, p. 57; trad. CORBIN, p. 14; trad. WALKER, p. 40).

<sup>54</sup> KY, §10 (ed. CORBIN, p. 9; ed. GHĀLIB, p. 63; trad. CORBIN, p. 22; trad. WALKER, p. 45). Y KY, §31 (ed. CORBIN, p. 19; ed. GHĀLIB, p. 75; trad. CORBIN, p. 38; trad. WALKER, p. 52).

<sup>55</sup> KY, §16 (ed. CORBIN, p. 11; ed. GHĀLIB, p. 66; trad. CORBIN, p. 24; trad. WALKER, p. 47).

<sup>56</sup> KY, §187 (ed. CORBIN, p. 95; ed. GHĀLIB, p. 171; trad. CORBIN, p. 125; trad. WALKER, p. 110).

<sup>57</sup> KY, §181 (ed. CORBIN, p. 92; ed. GHĀLIB, p. 168; trad. CORBIN, p. 119; trad. WALKER, p. 107).

<sup>58</sup> KY, §140 (ed. CORBIN, p. 71; ed. GHĀLIB, p. 143; trad. CORBIN, p. 93; trad. p. 92).

<sup>59</sup> KY, §141 (ed. CORBIN, p. 72; ed. GHĀLIB, p. 143–144; trad. CORBIN, p. 93; trad. WALKER, p. 92). Con respecto a la distinción entre *zāhir* y *bāṭin*, ver DANIEL DE SMET, « Au delà de l'apparent: les notions de *zāhir* et *bāṭin* dans l'ésotérisme musulman », *Orientalia Lovaniensia Periodica*, 25 (1994), p. 197–220.

<sup>60</sup> KY, §184 (ed. CORBIN, p. 93; ed. GHĀLIB, p. 169; trad. CORBIN, p. 121; trad. WALKER, p. 109).

<sup>61</sup> CORBIN, *Trilogie ismaélienne*, p. 27, nota 37, p. 95, nota 183 y p. 96, nota 191.

(*al-ṣuwar al-‘aqliyyah*), es decir las formas espirituales producidas por el *nāṭiq*, en el corazón de los ‘buscadores’ (*murtādīn*).<sup>62</sup>

Tanto el *asās* como su *ta’wīl* está determinados históricamente. Sin embargo, el resultado del *ta’wīl* no tiene ‘diferencia’ (*ikhṭilāf*)<sup>63</sup> alguna consigo mismo, dado que el *ta’wīl* consiste en retrotraer lo ‘interior’ (*bāṭin*) de su substrato en lo *ẓāhir* a su significación original,<sup>64</sup> la cual es siempre la misma. Al igual que ocurre con los *nuṭaqa’*, cada *asās* comprende los *usus* anteriores.<sup>65</sup> Para poder ‘entender’ (*waqafa*) las causas segundas, es preciso conocer las causas primeras que las contienen eminentemente, y para eso es preciso la guía de un *imām*, un *lāhiq* o un *janāh*<sup>66</sup> que abra los cuatro principios. En caso de querer entender un rango sin los otros – los rangos espirituales sin los temporales o los temporales sin los espirituales – no se ‘entiende’ (*alima*) la ‘religión’ (*dīn*)<sup>67</sup> y por ende la realidad en su conjunto. Ahora bien, así como el *nāṭiq* es ontológicamente inferior al *‘aql*,<sup>68</sup> el *asās* es ontológicamente inferior al *nāṭiq*.<sup>69</sup> Por eso, al-Sijistānī aclara que aquellos que suponen que el *asās* comprende los rangos superiores, incluyendo el del *nāṭiq* o incluso más,<sup>70</sup> se equivocan: para conocer las causas segundas es preciso conocer las causas primeras, pero las causas segundas no pueden lo que pueden las causas primeras.

En cada momento histórico, al *nāṭiq* y al *asās* le sigue una serie de seis *a’immah*. Continuando el movimiento histórico, cada *imām*, ‘el señor de la interpretación’ (*ṣāhib al-ta’wīl*)<sup>71</sup> y el ‘señor del tiempo’ (*ṣāhib al-zamān*),<sup>72</sup> ‘sostiene’ (*qiwām*) la *da’wah* a los cuatro principios (el *‘aql*, la *nafs*, el *nāṭiq* y el *asās*).<sup>73</sup> A los *a’immah* les suceden los diferentes *khulafā’*, quienes prosiguen la ‘revelación’ (*burūz*) y ‘desarrollo’ (*nashā’*) de las formas inteligibles o espirituales.<sup>74</sup>

<sup>62</sup> KY, §184 (ed. CORBIN, p. 93; ed. GHĀLIB, p. 169; trad. CORBIN, p. 121; trad. WALKER, p. 108).

<sup>63</sup> KY, §181 (ed. CORBIN, p. 92; ed. GHĀLIB, p. 168; trad. CORBIN, p. 119; trad. WALKER, p. 108) y KY, §181 (ed. CORBIN, p. 92; ed. GHĀLIB, p. 168; trad. CORBIN, p. 120; trad. WALKER, p. 108).

<sup>64</sup> DE SMET, « Philosophie grecque et religion musulmane », p. 347.

<sup>65</sup> KY, §21 (ed. CORBIN, p. 15; ed. GHĀLIB, p. 69; trad. CORBIN, p. 26; trad. WALKER, p. 49).

<sup>66</sup> KY, §142 (ed. CORBIN, p. 72; ed. GHĀLIB, p. 144; trad. CORBIN, p. 94; trad. WALKER, p. 93).

<sup>67</sup> KY, §142 (ed. CORBIN, p. 73; ed. GHĀLIB, p. 144; trad. CORBIN, p. 94; trad. WALKER, p. 93).

<sup>68</sup> KY, §158 (ed. CORBIN, p. 80; ed. GHĀLIB, p. 155; trad. CORBIN, p. 108; trad. WALKER, p. 99).

<sup>69</sup> KY, §141 (ed. CORBIN, p. 72; ed. GHĀLIB, p. 143–144; trad. CORBIN, p. 93; trad. WALKER, p. 92).

<sup>70</sup> KY, §16 (ed. CORBIN, p. 12; ed. GHĀLIB, p. 66; trad. CORBIN, p. 24; trad. WALKER, p. 47). Y KY, §20 (ed. CORBIN, p. 13; ed. GHĀLIB, p. 69; trad. CORBIN, p. 26; trad. WALKER, p. 48). Ver MARIA DE CILLIS, « A Preliminary Study on the Significance of *Qaḍā’* and *Qadar* in the Eight Chapter of *Al-Kirmānī’s Kitāb al-Riyāl* », en AMIR-MOEZZI, DE CILLIS, DE SMET, MIR-KASIMOV (eds.), *L’Ésotérisme Shi’ite*, p. 356.

<sup>71</sup> KY, §4 (ed. CORBIN, p. 4; ed. GHĀLIB, p. 58; trad. CORBIN, p. 15; trad. WALKER, p. 41).

<sup>72</sup> KY, §2 (ed. CORBIN, p. 3; ed. GHĀLIB, p. 56; trad. CORBIN, p. 14; trad. WALKER, p. 40).

<sup>73</sup> KY, §29 (ed. CORBIN, p. 19; ed. GHĀLIB, p. 75; trad. CORBIN, p. 38; trad. WALKER, p. 52).

<sup>74</sup> KY, §30 (ed. CORBIN, p. 19; ed. GHĀLIB, p. 75; trad. CORBIN, p. 38; trad. WALKER, p. 52).

## II. La metafísica política del KY

En el centro de la ontología del KY se encuentra un monismo substancial:<sup>75</sup> más allá de Dios, la 'substancialidad' (*jawhariyyah*) de todos los seres se constituye por participación en la misma 'substancia' (*jawhar*): el 'aql. Por eso, entre todo lo que existe hay una relación de simpatía ontológica:<sup>76</sup> el orden de lo originado 'coincide' (*wāfaqa*) con el del originador;<sup>77</sup> lo particular 'resemble' (*shabiha*) lo universal,<sup>78</sup> con lo cual lo material es en última instancia 'coincidente' (*muwāfiq*) con lo espiritual<sup>79</sup> y el camino de contracción sigue el de la expansión.<sup>80</sup> Este monismo substancial es dinámico: al universo espiritual y material *ismā'īlī* le subyace una estructura de donación y recepción a través de la cual se constituyen los diferentes niveles de la realidad.

En el KY, la ontología tiene una doble proyección soteriológica.<sup>81</sup> Por un lado, se afirma que el retorno es el movimiento (eterno, ya que la dimensión espiritual no tiene un fin)<sup>82</sup> de lo particular a su dimensión universal, el cual es coadyuvado por la *da'wah* en tanto exhortación universal de los principios espirituales, es decir el 'aql y la *nafs*. En este sentido, la salvación de la *nafs* individual es un movimiento de retorno individual de cada *nafs* particular, más allá del tiempo, del mundo sensible a su dimensión espiritual original, sin mediación alguna excepto la de su propia interioridad y posible para toda *nafs*. Por otro lado, se sostiene que el retorno es el de Muḥammad b. Ismā'īl en tanto el Qā'im,<sup>83</sup> coadyuvado por la *da'wah* en tanto 'misión' histórica de cada período específico.<sup>84</sup> En este sentido, la salvación es entendida como un proceso colectivo, desplegado en el marco de los sucesivos

---

<sup>75</sup> Ver MOHAMMED A. ALIBHAI, « Abū Ya'qūb al-Sijistānī and the Kitāb Sullam al-Najāt. A Study in Islamic Neoplatonism », Ph.D. Diss., The Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations of the Harvard University, Cambridge 1983, p. 65–88.

<sup>76</sup> Ver DANIEL DE SMET, « Miroir, Savoir et Émanation dans l'Ismaélisme Fatimide », en DANIEL DE SMET, MERYEM SEBTI, GODEFROID DE CALLATAÏ, *Miroir et savoir: la transmission d'un thème platonicien, des Alexandrins à la philosophie arabo-musulmane. Actes du colloque international tenu à Leuven et Louvain-la-Neuve, les 17 et 18 novembre 2005*, Leuven University Press, Louvain 2005, p. 184.

<sup>77</sup> KY, §17 (ed. CORBIN, p. 12; ed. GHĀLIB, p. 67; trad. CORBIN, p. 25; trad. WALKER, p. 47).

<sup>78</sup> KY, §32 (ed. CORBIN, p. 20; ed. GHĀLIB, p. 76; trad. CORBIN, p. 40; trad. WALKER, p. 52).

<sup>79</sup> KY, §115 (ed. CORBIN, p. 50; ed. GHĀLIB, p. 126; trad. CORBIN, p. 78; trad. WALKER, p. 81).

<sup>80</sup> Ibid.

<sup>81</sup> FARHĀD DAFTARY, *The Ismā'īlīs. Their History and Doctrines*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge–New York, 2007, p. 135.

<sup>82</sup> KY, §121 (ed. CORBIN, p. 62; ed. GHĀLIB, p. 130; trad. CORBIN, p. 84; trad. WALKER, p. 85).

<sup>83</sup> Esta narrativa es de 'tipo político' (*ḍarb min al-siyāsah*) (KY, §§176–177; ed. CORBIN, p. 90; ed. GHĀLIB, p. 166; trad. CORBIN, p. 113–114; trad. WALKER, p. 106).

<sup>84</sup> Para una introducción a la escatología *ismā'īlī*, ver DANIEL DE SMET, « Ismā'īlī-Shī'ī Visions of Hell. From the 'Spiritual' Torment of the Fāṭimids to the Ṭayyibī Rock of Sijjīn », en CHRISTIAN LANGE, *Locating Hell in Islamic Traditions*, Brill, Leiden–Boston 2016 (Islamic History and Civilization, 119), p. 242–244.

períodos de la historia temporal, necesariamente mediado por la jerarquía religiosa representada en cada momento histórico por la *da'wah* y abierto exclusivamente para quienes participan de dicha *da'wah*.

## II.1 La perspectiva cosmológica

En el *KY*, el conocimiento es definido como una ‘bendición’ (*barakah*) de Dios que ‘salva’ (*khalasha*) al ser humano de la ‘oscuridad’ (*zulmah*) de la mera materialidad.<sup>85</sup> Al-Sijistānī sostiene que conocer implica una cierta ‘comprehensión’ (*iḥāṭah*), posibilitada por la ‘participación’ (*ishtaraka*)<sup>86</sup> en los ‘primeros inteligibles’ (*al-awā'il al-'aqliyyah*).<sup>87</sup>

Potencialmente, todos los seres humanos pueden ser ‘participantes’ (*mushtarikūn*) por igual,<sup>88</sup> ya que todos tienden al retorno motivados por su ‘instinto’ (*gharīzah*).<sup>89</sup> En cada ser humano se encuentra una *jawhar* ‘extendida’ (*mumtadd*) que ‘comprende’ (*adraka*) las cuestiones ‘secretas’ (*khafiyāt*), y aunque luego esta ‘desaparece’ (*adima*), algo similar tiene ‘existencia’ (*wujūd*) en otra persona, incluso cuando no había ‘huella’ (*athar*) antes de su ‘manifestación’ (*zuhūr*) en ella.<sup>90</sup> Esto es su *nafs*, una parte de la ‘*nafs* universal’ (*al-nafs al-kulliyah*), la cual es su *jawhar* última,<sup>91</sup> desde la cual se ‘manifiesta’ (*zāhara*), de la cual ‘gana’ (*iktasab*) durante su existencia como *nafs* particular, y a la cual retorna.<sup>92</sup> Los seres humanos son una parte de un mundo material mayor, definido como un ‘microcosmos’ (*al-'ālam al-ṣaghīr*) por ‘analogía’ (*qiyās*), es decir en ‘correlación’ (*nasab*), con el mundo espiritual.<sup>93</sup>

En el caso del microcosmos material, así como en el del mundo espiritual, sus beneficios se manifiestan gracias a la ‘adquisición’ (*iktisāb*) de partes de la *nafs*

<sup>85</sup> *KY*, §4 (ed. CORBIN, p. 4; ed. GHĀLIB, p. 57; trad. CORBIN, p. 15; trad. WALKER, p. 40).

<sup>86</sup> La participación excluye al principio creador; cf. DANIEL DE SMET, « Ismā'īlī Theology », en SABINE SCHMIDTKE (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Islamic Theology*, Oxford University Press, Oxford 2016 (Oxford Handbooks), p. 315. Además, es exclusivamente de lo inferior en lo superior: si bien el ‘*aql* particular está mezclado con en el cuerpo en el que ‘aparece’ (*azhara*), su ‘permanencia’ (*thabāt*) no se da mediante la ‘permanencia’ (*thabāt*) del individuo (*KY*, §53: ed. CORBIN, p. 30; ed. GHĀLIB, p. 91; trad. WALKER, p. 60) sino a través de su ‘esencia’ (*dhāt*) (*KY*, §54: ed. CORBIN, p. 31; ed. GHĀLIB, p. 91; trad. WALKER, p. 61; *KY*, §56: ed. CORBIN, p. 31; ed. GHĀLIB, p. 91–92; trad. WALKER, p. 61). En ese sentido, es ‘simple’ (*mujarrad*) tanto en su *jawhariyyah* como en su ‘ipseidad’ (*hūwiyyah*): permanece siendo puro ‘*aql*’ (*KY*, §53: ed. CORBIN, p. 30; ed. GHĀLIB, p. 91; trad. WALKER, p. 60). Ver también WALKER, *Early philosophical Shī'ism*, p. 91.

<sup>87</sup> *KY*, §53 (ed. CORBIN, p. 30; ed. GHĀLIB, p. 91; trad. WALKER, p. 60).

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>89</sup> *KY*, §177 (ed. CORBIN, p. 90; ed. GHĀLIB, p. 166; trad. CORBIN, p. 113; trad. WALKER, p. 106).

<sup>90</sup> *KY*, §85 (ed. CORBIN, p. 45; ed. GHĀLIB, p. 108; trad. CORBIN, p. 65; trad. WALKER, p. 70).

<sup>91</sup> *KY*, §95 (ed. CORBIN, p. 49; ed. GHĀLIB, p. 114; trad. CORBIN, p. 70; trad. WALKER, p. 74).

<sup>92</sup> *KY*, §87 (ed. CORBIN, p. 45; ed. GHĀLIB, p. 109; trad. CORBIN, p. 66; trad. WALKER, p. 71).

<sup>93</sup> *KY*, §86 (ed. CORBIN, p. 44–45; ed. GHĀLIB, p. 109; trad. CORBIN, p. 65–66; trad. WALKER, p. 71).

universal.<sup>94</sup> Lo particular ‘imita’ (*ikhṭadhā*) el universal del que participa, ‘sin excepción’ (*bilā mukhālafah*), realizando la acción de su universal.<sup>95</sup> Entonces, cada *nafs* particular tiende a una ‘conexión’ (*munāsabah*) con su dimensión universal debido a un ‘minimísimo resto’ (*aqall qalīl*) del mundo espiritual que persiste en ella, por el cual ‘olvida’ (*nasiya*) el mundo material y ‘conoce’ (*‘alima*) que este no tiene ‘comparación’ (*nisbah*) con el mundo espiritual.<sup>96</sup>

Con todo, existe una ‘distinción’ (*tafāṣṣul*): dado que la ‘distancia espiritual’ (*al-masāfah al-rūhaniyyah*) entre la *nafs* universal y una *nafs* particular que es ‘pura’ (*ṣāfiyah*) es menor que la que existe con respecto a una *nafs* que no lo es,<sup>97</sup> y además ciertas *anfus* son más puras que otras,<sup>98</sup> no todas las *anfus* olvidan el mundo material y se ‘embarcan’ (*aqbala*) en un ‘trayecto’ (*sulūk*) hacia su mundo espiritual del mismo modo. La ‘pureza’ (*ṣafwah*) y ‘sutileza’ (*latāfah*) de la *jawhar* de cada *nafs* depende del ‘reposo’ (*sukūn*) en el que se encuentra, ya que el *sukūn* es el ‘vehículo’ (*markab*) del movimiento del alma.<sup>99</sup> A su vez, el *sukūn* de cada *nafs* es consecuencia de lo que esta ‘desea’ (*iṣhtahā*).<sup>100</sup> Entonces, de acuerdo con el ‘grado’ de sutileza de su *nafs*,<sup>101</sup> cada ser humano ‘recibe’ (*qabila*) las ‘influencias’ (*athar*) del mundo espiritual.

Ahora bien, estos dones y conocimientos no están seguros contra la ‘decadencia’ (*zawāl*) – hasta el grado de su ‘asimilación’ (*shabbaha*) – al mundo material.<sup>102</sup> Si la *nafs* particular no se beneficia con el ‘reposo completo’ (*al-sukūn al-tāmm*) antes de recibir los dones y los conocimientos, estos acaban asimilados a las cosas materiales en su ‘transformación’ (*tabaddul*).<sup>103</sup> Ante una ‘inclinación’ (*mayl*) hacia el mundo material, el *sukūn* ‘cesa’ (*zāla*) y los dones y los conocimientos se ‘cierran’ (*ghalaga*).<sup>104</sup>

La materialidad puede ser causa ora de su propia ‘corrupción’ (*‘ifsād*), ora de la ‘manifestación’ (*izhār*) de lo espiritual, dependiendo de si el ser humano la entiende como un ‘propósito’ (*qaṣd*) o como un ‘instrumento’ (*āla*). En este sentido, ciertos seres humanos devienen instrumentos de esa materialidad, degradándose con ella.

---

<sup>94</sup> Ibid. Ver WALKER, *Early philosophical Shī‘ism*, p. 108.

<sup>95</sup> KY, §88 (ed. CORBIN, p. 46; ed. GHĀLIB, p. 110; trad. CORBIN, p. 67; trad. WALKER, p. 72).

<sup>96</sup> KY, §35 (ed. CORBIN, p. 21–22; ed. GHĀLIB, p. 78; trad. CORBIN, p. 41; trad. WALKER, p. 54).

<sup>97</sup> KY, §33 (ed. CORBIN, p. 20; ed. GHĀLIB, p. 77; trad. CORBIN, p. 40; trad. WALKER, p. 53).

<sup>98</sup> KY, §90 (ed. CORBIN, p. 47; ed. GHĀLIB, p. 111; trad. CORBIN, p. 68; trad. WALKER, p. 72).

<sup>99</sup> KY, §65 (ed. CORBIN, p. 36; ed. GHĀLIB, p. 98; trad. CORBIN, p. 54–55; trad. WALKER, p. 64).

<sup>100</sup> KY, §137 (ed. CORBIN, p. 70; ed. GHĀLIB, p. 141; trad. CORBIN, p. 91–92; trad. WALKER, p. 91).

<sup>101</sup> KY, §186 (ed. CORBIN, p. 94; ed. GHĀLIB, p. 171; trad. CORBIN, p. 124; trad. WALKER, p. 109). Estas ‘influencias’ no deben ser confundidas con la ‘transmisión’ (*ittiṣāl*) del *ta’yīd* (KY, §186; ed. CORBIN, p. 94; ed. GHĀLIB, p. 171; trad. CORBIN, p. 124; trad. WALKER, p. 109).

<sup>102</sup> KY, §63 (ed. CORBIN, p. 35; ed. GHĀLIB, p. 97; trad. CORBIN, p. 54; trad. WALKER, p. 64).

<sup>103</sup> Ibid.

<sup>104</sup> KY, §65 (ed. CORBIN, p. 36; ed. GHĀLIB, p. 98; trad. CORBIN, p. 54–55; trad. WALKER, p. 66).

Por el contrario, otros sostienen como propósito la manifestación de lo espiritual en el mundo material, por lo cual se ‘dedican’ (*aqbala*) a los dones y los conocimientos. Así, ellos no son un instrumento del mundo material, sino que hacen que el mundo material sea su propio instrumento, utilizándolo para la ‘obtención’ (*nayl*) de dichos dones y conocimientos.<sup>105</sup> En ellos, la *nafs* particular ‘alcanza’ (*balagha*) su rango por medio de los dones y los conocimientos que ‘adquiere’ (*kasaba*) en el mundo material a través de su ‘mediación’ (*wasīṭah*).<sup>106</sup>

El KY separa a estos seres humano en tres grupos: los ‘hombres de conocimiento’ (*‘ālim*); los ‘fortalecidos’ (*mu’ayyadūn*); y los *nuṭaqa’*. A simple vista, no es fácil reconocer quién pertenece a cada grupo. La mayoría, aunque ‘comprende’ (*adraka*) sólo un poco, está satisfecha con eso y declama conocer mucho. Sólo algunos ‘conocen’ (*arafa*) el verdadero grado de ‘refinamiento’ (*fadl*) de su *‘ilm*.<sup>107</sup> Además, mientras que la distinción entre aquellos que ‘obtienen’ (*aṣāba*) en diferente grado los tesoros del ‘mundo material’ (*dunyā*) es *zāhir*, la ‘distinción’ producto del conocimiento está ‘velada’ (*khafīyy*).<sup>108</sup>

Los ‘hombres de conocimiento’ (*‘ulamā’*) dependen en su conocimiento de lo ‘materialmente sensible’ (*al-maḥsūsāt al-hayūlāniyyah*). Su ‘comprensión’ (*iḥāṭah*) es como la de la causa al efecto o la del artesano a su producto y no como la del macrocosmos al microcosmos o la del cuerpo sublime al cuerpo denso: es una *iḥāṭah* ‘racional’ (*‘ilmiyyah*) e ‘intelectual’ (*‘aqliyyah*).<sup>109</sup> Cuando es así, las ‘consecuencias’ (*awāqib*) de los asuntos ‘culminan’ (*intahā*) en la *nafs*.<sup>110</sup> Toda ‘diferencia’ (*tafāwut*) que existe entre los propios *‘ulamā’* es producto del grado del *sukūn* de su *nafs* cuando cada uno recibe los dones y los conocimientos, lo cual determina su perdurabilidad.

A los *mu’ayyadūn* les es ‘dado’ (*nāla*) el reposo completo antes de recibir los dones y los conocimientos, por lo que lo hacen completamente, sin que estos se vean afectados por ‘cambio’ (*tabdīl*) alguno.<sup>111</sup> Es decir, cuando la *nafs* particular se ‘despoja’ (*ṭaraḥa*) de la materialidad, en su *jawhariyyah* y en sus ‘facultades’ (*quwwah*), y se despoja de su fidelidad a las cosas materiales, ‘repudiando’ (*naḥā*) el cuerpo, el ‘vacío’ (*farāgh*) y el ‘lugar’ (*makān*), entonces su *jawhariyyah* ‘permanece’

<sup>105</sup> KY, §99 (ed. CORBIN, p. 50–51; ed. GHĀLIB, p. 116–117; trad. WALKER, p. 75–76).

<sup>106</sup> KY, §175 (ed. CORBIN, p. 79; ed. GHĀLIB, p. 166; trad. CORBIN, p. 113; trad. WALKER, p. 105–106).

<sup>107</sup> KY, §136 (ed. CORBIN, p. 70; ed. GHĀLIB, p. 140–141; trad. CORBIN, p. 91; trad. WALKER, p. 91).

<sup>108</sup> KY, §135 (ed. CORBIN, p. 69; ed. GHĀLIB, p. 140; trad. CORBIN, p. 91; trad. WALKER, p. 90).

<sup>109</sup> KY, §92 (ed. CORBIN, p. 48; ed. GHĀLIB, p. 113; trad. CORBIN, p. 69; trad. WALKER, p. 73).

<sup>110</sup> KY, §20 (ed. CORBIN, p. 14; ed. GHĀLIB, p. 68; trad. CORBIN, p. 25; trad. WALKER, p. 48). Este tipo de afirmaciones muestran que el proceso del conocimiento es más complejo de lo que parece en un comienzo. Ciertamente, « the contents of the intellect are the intelligible properties of the universe, as, for example, that the whole is equal to the sum of its parts. In thinking the intelligibles the mind is what it thinks » (WALKER, *Abū Ya‘qūb al-Sijistānī: Intellectual Missionary*, p. 33). Sin embargo, eso es sólo una parte del movimiento del conocimiento.

<sup>111</sup> KY, §64 (ed. CORBIN, p. 35–36; ed. GHĀLIB, p. 97–98; trad. CORBIN, p. 54; trad. WALKER, p. 64).

(*baqiya*) en el ‘puro conocimiento’ (*al-‘ilm al-mahḍ*).<sup>112</sup> En otras palabras, cuando los *mu‘ayyadūn* ‘buscan’ (*ṭalaba*) las ‘verdades de las cosas’ (*ḥaqā‘iq al-ashyā’*), las ‘entienden’ (*waqafa*) por un ‘raptó’ (*intiḳāl*) que los ‘transporta’ (*intaḳal*) al mundo espiritual, y así ‘obtienen’ (*nāla*) los dones y los conocimientos.<sup>113</sup> Así, su *nafs* ‘obtiene’ (*ballagha*) su universal<sup>114</sup> y los ‘inteligibles’ (*ma‘qūlah*) retornan a un ‘único conocimiento intelectual’ (*ma‘rifah wāhidah ‘aqliyyah*).<sup>115</sup> En este sentido, los *mu‘ayyadūn* no siguen un proceso deductivo, ya que su ‘*aql* particular se actualiza integralmente en el acto del conocimiento,<sup>116</sup> captando lo *bāṭin* donde la mayoría sólo puede ver lo *ẓāhir*.<sup>117</sup> Con todo, para hacerse entender por la mayoría producen ‘signos’ (*dalā‘il*) que están sostenidos en lo material.<sup>118</sup> La *nafs*, al beneficiarse de los dones y los conocimientos espirituales, ‘es continua’ (*ittasala*) con ellos, con lo cual se ‘desarrolla’ (*nashā‘*) como una forma espiritual ‘continua’ (*al-muttaṣilah*) y ‘eternamente perenne’ (*azaliyyah sarmadiyyah*).<sup>119</sup> Por ende, si el ser es por participación y por la participación es el conocimiento, ambos órdenes son paralelos.

## II.2 La perspectiva escatológica

El *ta’yīd* del ‘*aql* recorre la realidad que resulta de la ‘conformación’ (*tarkīb*) de la *nafs*. El ser humano puede participar individualmente, por su *jawhariyyah*, del *ta’yīd* del ‘*aql*. Sin embargo, esta participación no es suficiente para completar el movimiento del *ta’yīd*, sino que es necesario actualizarla participando en el *ta’wīl*, contenido eminentemente en la *ta’līf* del *nāṭiq*, desarrollado gradualmente a través de la cadena única de la *da‘wah* y condensado en una *sharī‘ah* que hace posible la vida humana.

Ahora, en la ontología del KY la salvación es alcanzada mediante un conocimiento que se obtiene cuando su objeto es retrotraído a la causa espiritual de la cual es una expresión, yendo de lo particular a lo universal y de lo contingente a lo necesario.<sup>120</sup> Este es un conocimiento performativo, definido como tal tanto por los contenidos que comprende como por la operación intelectual que lo

---

<sup>112</sup> KY, §91 (ed. CORBIN, p. 47–48; ed. GHĀLIB, p. 112; trad. CORBIN, p. 69; trad. WALKER, p. 73).

<sup>113</sup> KY, §167 (ed. CORBIN, p. 75; ed. GHĀLIB, p. 160; trad. CORBIN, p. 109; trad. WALKER, p. 102).

<sup>114</sup> KY, §92 (ed. CORBIN, p. 48; ed. GHĀLIB, p. 112; trad. CORBIN, p. 69; trad. WALKER, p. 73).

<sup>115</sup> KY, §39 (ed. CORBIN, p. 23; ed. GHĀLIB, p. 80; trad. CORBIN, p. 43; trad. WALKER, p. 55).

<sup>116</sup> CORBIN, *Trilogie ismaélienne*, p. 127, nota 268. Ver también DE SMET, « Ismā‘īlī Theology », p. 322.

<sup>117</sup> DE SMET, « Philosophie grecque et religion musulmane », p. 349.

<sup>118</sup> KY, §188 (ed. CORBIN, p. 95; ed. GHĀLIB, p. 172; trad. CORBIN, p. 125; trad. WALKER, p. 110). De un modo similar, los *nuṭaqa‘* hacen ‘uso’ (*istikhdām*) del mundo espiritual, ‘extrayendo’ (*istikhrāj*) sus beneficios (KY, §187; ed. CORBIN, p. 95; ed. GHĀLIB, p. 171; trad. CORBIN, p. 125; trad. WALKER, p. 110).

<sup>119</sup> KY, §63 (ed. CORBIN, p. 35; ed. GHĀLIB, p. 97; trad. CORBIN, p. 54; trad. WALKER, p. 64).

<sup>120</sup> WALKER, *Abū Ya‘qūb al-Sijistānī: Intellectual Missionary*, p. 28.

constituye, el *ta'wīl*. El ser humano no puede por sí mismo descifrar el significado del símbolo que la realidad en su conjunto constituye. Este conocimiento no se alcanza por un proceso individual de aprendizaje, sino que es precisa la mediación operada por la *da'wah*, la cual le da a los particulares la posibilidad de participar en la dimensión universal. En la « antropología pesimista » de al-Sijistānī,<sup>121</sup> el espacio de la *siyāsah* no se desarrolla sobre una « ley natural »<sup>122</sup> sino en el de la gracia sacramental de la *da'wah*.<sup>123</sup>

El movimiento de quien se somete al acto del *ta'wīl* proyecta en quien realiza el *ta'wīl* el poder de ser el único exégeta posible de esos símbolos. Es decir, la aceptación de dichos símbolos no sólo implica un reconocimiento del orden fundacional de la dimensión espiritual sino también una expresión de devoción hacia el exégeta, a través de la cual se constituye tanto un vínculo personal como un colectivo metafísico.<sup>124</sup>

Si el *ta'wīl* fuera un dogma que agotase en sí mismo, en tanto dogma, lo *bāṭin*, la *da'wah* se limitaría a propagar un conjunto definido de conocimientos discretos, con lo cual no se comprendería el motivo de la ciclicidad histórica y la razón de la dimensión *zāhir* de la *sharī'ah*. Sin embargo, el *ta'wīl* es una actividad: la *da'wah* es el camino o el método por el cual un ser humano puede transformarse a sí mismo para ser capaz de recibir esos dones y conocimientos. En ese marco, sólo hay un poder relativo legítimo, aunque no sea el único poder relativo existente: el *imāmah*.

El *imāmah* anuncia el futuro reino de Dios en la tierra. Si Dios es la única fuente del poder, cualquier poder relativo debe legitimarse en una doctrina que derive dicho poder relativo a partir del poder absoluto. Así, la metafísica del KY es, en última instancia, una metafísica del poder. En este marco, es posible leer la idea de 'política' (*siyāsah*),<sup>125</sup> tal como aparece en el KY, a la luz de uno de sus significados literales: « la administración de una cosa (*qiyām 'alā shay'*) en vistas a conservar o rectificar su modo de ser propio ».<sup>126</sup> La *siyāsah* es la administración de los asuntos

<sup>121</sup> DANIEL DE SMET, « Loi rationnelle et loi imposée. Les deux aspects de la Šari'a dans le chiisme ismaélien des X et XI<sup>e</sup> siècles », *Mélanges de l'Université Saint-Joseph*, 61 (2008), p. 523.

<sup>122</sup> Entendiendo la ley natural como una cierta capacidad innata de reflexión personal independiente de cualquier tipo de revelación divina y autónoma de toda autoridad ejercida por otros seres humanos (RUPERT J. KILCULLEN, « Natural Law », en HENRIK LAGERLUND (ed.), *Encyclopedia of Medieval Philosophy. Philosophy between 500 and 1000*, Springer, Heidelberg–London–New York 2011, p. 831).

<sup>123</sup> WALKER, *Early philosophical Shī'ism*, p. 124.

<sup>124</sup> JAMEL A. VELJI, *An Apocalyptic History of the Early Fāṭimid Empire*, Edinburgh University Press, Edinburgh 2016 (Edinburgh Studies in Islamic Apocalypticism and Eschatology), p. 215.

<sup>125</sup> Sobre la idea de *siyāsah*, ver BERNARD LEWIS, « Siyâsa », en ARNOLD H. GREEN, *In Quest of an Islamic Humanism: Arabic and Islamic Studies in Memory of Mohamed al-Nowaihi*, The American University in Cairo, Cairo 1984, p. 3–14; FAUZI M. NAJJAR, « Political Philosophy in Islam », *Islamic Quarterly*, 20/2 (1978), p. 121–132; y ERWIN I. J. ROSENTHAL, « Some Aspects of Islamic Political Thought », en ID. (ed.), *Studia Semitica*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 1971 (University of Cambridge Oriental Publications, 17), vol. II, p. 17–33.

<sup>126</sup> EDWARD W. LANE, *An Arabic-English Lexicon*, William and Norgate, London 1872, bk. I, pt. 4, p. 1465.

humanos en tanto es la administración de los medios de salvación. Dado que el único medio de salvación es un tipo específico de ‘ilm, la *siyāsah* es la administración de las *yanābī‘* en el marco de las cuales este ‘ilm es generado, a través de una determinada forma de *ta‘wīl*, y reproducido.

La potestad de la *da‘wah*, entendiéndola como la capacidad de ejecutar lo establecido por la autoridad,<sup>127</sup> es conducir al hombre a un fin cuya naturaleza es análoga a la naturaleza de dicha potestad.<sup>128</sup> Por ende, en el KY hay más que una imbricación accidental de lo metafísico y lo político: <sup>129</sup> la *da‘wah* es un instrumento eclesiástico que dispensa un sacramento intelectual.<sup>130</sup>

La mediación de la *da‘wah* persiste hasta el ‘tiempo determinado’ (*al-waqt al-muqaddar*) en el que el Qā‘im alcance la ‘posición’ (*manzilah*) que Dios ‘preparó’ (*a‘adda*) para él. Cuando ‘arribe’ (*balagha*) el ‘individuo perfecto’ (*al-shakhṣ al-kāmil*), entonces el tiempo colapsará en la ‘residencia del retorno y la permanencia’ (*dār al-ma‘ād wa al-qarār*).<sup>131</sup> Se dará una ‘emergencia’ (*kharūj*) de la potencia al acto.<sup>132</sup> Así, las ‘formas inteligibles’, ‘espirituales’, ‘sublimes’ (*al-ṣūrah al-laṭīfah*) u ‘ocultas’ (*al-ṣūrah al-khaṭīyah*) se ‘manifestarán’ (*zahara*) en su *huwiyyah*, con lo que se ‘revelará’ (*baraza*) una forma ‘capaz’ (*qadīr*) de la ‘recepción’ (*qabūl*) de los dones y los conocimientos sin *ta‘lif* ni ‘organización’ (*tartīb*).<sup>133</sup> La ‘esencia’ (*ghāyah*) de los dones y los conocimientos se anunciará y estos se ‘despojarán’ (*ramā*) de las formulaciones e interpretaciones, por lo que ‘permanecerán’ (*istaqarra*) en su ‘estado’ (*hay‘ah*) más hermoso y en su ‘condición’ (*rutbah*) más noble!<sup>134</sup> así, la *huwiyyah* se ‘anunciará’ (*anba‘a*) integralmente.<sup>135</sup>

Por ende, el ser humano será capaz de ‘investigar’ (*istakhbara*) directamente mediante su ‘disposición intrínseca’ (*fiṭrah*); es decir, con su propio ‘discernimiento’ (*tamyīz*) y haciendo uso de su propia ‘deducción’ (*istinbāt*),<sup>136</sup> ‘extractando’ (*akhrāja*) por él mismo la ‘clarificación’ (*bayān*) de todas las cosas.<sup>137</sup> Así, las ‘verdades estructurales’ (*ḥaqā‘iq abniyah*) de las *sharā‘i‘* ‘se desvelarán’ (*kashafa*), con lo cual los seres humanos las ‘conocerán’ (*alima*) y no

<sup>127</sup> SILVIA MAGNAVACCA, *Léxico técnico de filosofía medieval*, Miño y Dávila, Buenos Aires 2005, p. 541.

<sup>128</sup> FRANCISCO BERTELLONI, « Algunas reinterpretaciones de la causalidad final aristotélica en la teoría política medieval », *Caderno de História e Filosofia da Ciência*, 15/2 (2005), p. 345.

<sup>129</sup> Como se lo entiende en DE SMET, « La taqīyya et le jeûne du Ramadan », p. 360.

<sup>130</sup> WALKER, *Early philosophical Shī‘ism*, p. 93.

<sup>131</sup> KY, §1 (ed. CORBIN, p. 2; ed. GHĀLIB, p. 56; trad. CORBIN, p. 14; trad. WALKER, p. 39).

<sup>132</sup> KY, §97 (ed. CORBIN, p. 50; ed. GHĀLIB, p. 115; trad. WALKER, p. 75).

<sup>133</sup> KY, §165 (ed. CORBIN, p. 84; ed. GHĀLIB, p. 159; trad. CORBIN, p. 108; trad. WALKER, p. 102).

<sup>134</sup> KY, §131 (ed. CORBIN, p. 67; ed. GHĀLIB, p. 138; trad. CORBIN, p. 88; trad. WALKER, p. 89).

<sup>135</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>136</sup> KY, §145 (ed. CORBIN, p. 74; ed. GHĀLIB, p. 147; trad. CORBIN, p. 97; trad. WALKER, p. 94).

<sup>137</sup> KY, §144 (ed. CORBIN, p. 74; ed. GHĀLIB, p. 146–147; trad. CORBIN, p. 97; trad. WALKER, p. 94) y KY, §165 (ed. CORBIN, p. 83; ed. GHĀLIB, p. 159; trad. CORBIN, p. 108; trad. WALKER, p. 101).

abjurarán de ellas,<sup>138</sup> liberándose del dolor provocado por la adherencia a las leyes convencionales.<sup>139</sup>

En resumen, cuando todo lo ‘oculto’ (*mastūb*) sea ‘desvelado’ (*makshūf*),<sup>140</sup> la *sharīah* será ley natural, con lo que cesará la necesidad metafísica de la interpretación. Las instancias de mediación colapsarán, metafísica y por ende políticamente: los asuntos humanos alcanzarán su ‘conclusión’ (*muntahā*). En ese sentido, la profecía llegará a su máxima expresión cuando se abroge incluso a sí misma.

### III. Conclusión

Si se acepta la posibilidad de un problema político en la tradición filosófica neoplatónica clásica, tanto en las interpretaciones a partir de las cuales es difícil ver semejanzas con al-Sijistānī<sup>141</sup> como a partir de aquellas otras sobre las que es posible,<sup>142</sup> el KY puede ser entendido como un texto de metafísica política neoplatónica ismāʿīlī. Así, su estudio pone de manifiesto que el neoplatonismo islámico no puede ser considerado como una escuela de pensamiento que exhibe sólo disidencias menores.<sup>143</sup> Por eso, es preciso acercarse a los textos sin buscar entenderlos a través de ontologías y epistemologías genéricamente neoplatónicas, disponiéndose a descubrir aspectos novedosos cuyo sentido no se percibe cuando los términos y los conceptos son investidos con significados ya conocidos.<sup>144</sup>

---

<sup>138</sup> KY, §14 (ed. CORBIN, p. 73; ed. GHĀLIB, p. 146; trad. CORBIN, p. 97; trad. WALKER, p. 93); KY, §146 (ed. CORBIN, p. 74; ed. GHĀLIB, p. 148; trad. CORBIN, p. 97; trad. WALKER, p. 94); KY, §165 (ed. CORBIN, p. 83; ed. GHĀLIB, p. 159; trad. CORBIN, p. 108; trad. WALKER, p. 101); KY, §134 (ed. CORBIN, p. 69; ed. GHĀLIB, p. 139; trad. CORBIN, p. 89; trad. WALKER, p. 90). Sin embargo, incluso así habrá ciertos ‘ulūm específicos de determinadas naciones a las cuales no se podrá acceder salvo mediante un « guía conoedor y encargado de ellas » (*al-hādy al-‘ālim al-muwakkal bi-hā*) (KY, §134: ed. CORBIN, p. 69; ed. GHĀLIB, p. 139; trad. CORBIN, p. 89; trad. WALKER, p. 90).

<sup>139</sup> KY, §133 (ed. CORBIN, p. 67; ed. GHĀLIB, p. 138; trad. CORBIN, p. 89; trad. WALKER, p. 90).

<sup>140</sup> KY, §143 (ed. CORBIN, p. 74; ed. GHĀLIB, p. 146; trad. CORBIN, p. 97; trad. Walker, p. 94).

<sup>141</sup> Ver JAMES V. SCHALL, « Plotinus and Political Philosophy », *Gregorianum*, 66/4 (1985), p. 687–707; DOMINIQUE J. O’MEARA, *Platonopolis. Platonic Political Philosophy in Late Antiquity*, Clarendon Press, Oxford 2003, p. 31–139; ENRIQUE Á. RAMOS JURADO, « La teoría política en el neoplatonismo », *Habis*, 36 (2005), p. 423–442; JESÚS DE GARAY SUÁREZ-LLANOS, « La filosofía política de Proclo », en PEDRO ROCHE ARIAS (coord.), *El pensamiento político en la Edad Media*, Fundación Ramón Areces, Madrid 2010 (Colección Pensamiento Político), p. 423–435; y SONG, EUREE, « The ethics of descent in Plotinus », *Hermathena*, 187 (2009), p. 27–48.

<sup>142</sup> Ver ASGER OUSAGER, *Plotinus on Selfhood, Freedom and Politics*, Aarhus University Press, Aarhus 2005 (Aarhus Studies in Mediterranean Antiquity, 6; Acta Jutlandica, 79:1; Humanities Series, 76), p. 27–48.

<sup>143</sup> Como ocurre, por ejemplo, en O’MEARA, *Platonopolis*, p. 185–197.

<sup>144</sup> ALIBHAI, *Abū Yā qūb al-Sijistānī and the Kitāb Sullam al-Najāt*, p. 88.

Por cierto, en el KY no se postula la existencia de una dimensión política ontológicamente autónoma: el *imāmah* en tanto institución está ausente.<sup>145</sup> Además, considerando la falta de una fundamentación filosófica sobre el surgimiento o de un discurso sobre la naturaleza del orden político, entendido como el espacio en el que tienen lugar relaciones genéricamente calificables como políticas,<sup>146</sup> cabe decir que el KY no desarrolla una filosofía política.<sup>147</sup> Sin duda, dado que el KY opera como fundamentación teórica de un colectivo religioso que se expresa como un movimiento político, la metafísica es implícitamente entendida como una metafísica política.<sup>148</sup> Esto es coherente con la tradición intelectual en el marco de la cual debe ser entendido al-Sijistānī, para la cual es propio enfocarse, al abordar filosóficamente la política, en sus fundamentos metafísicos, teniendo como principal objeto de preocupación la relación entre la razón y la revelación tal como se presenta en el acto de la revelación de la *sharī'ah*, lo cual lleva a la cuestión de la salvación.<sup>149</sup> Ahora bien, la visión de al-Sijistānī no se distingue de la filosofía neoplatónica sólo por ciertos temas específicos como el *imāmah*, la *da'wah* o el *ta'wīl*.<sup>150</sup> Es decir, si al-Sijistānī se separa de la filosofía neoplatónica por su definición del *ta'wīl*, no lo es por causa de sus contenidos sino por el carácter de sus agentes en cuanto administradores de los medios de salvación.

En ese sentido, la idea de *ta'wīl*, y por ende el modo en el que se esboza el concepto de *siyāsah*, nace en el ángulo donde se superponen en conflicto las dos perspectivas metafísicas de al-Sijistānī: la visión sincrónica de su metafísica de raíz neoplatónica, expresada en su modelo de causalidad espiritual, y la visión diacrónica de su profetología de raíz ismā'īlī, expresada en su modelo de causalidad

---

<sup>145</sup> WALKER, *Early philosophical Shī'ism*, p. 114. Con todo, el tema de la filosofía política debe identificarse con el objetivo de la práctica política – y no a la inversa (LEO STRAUSS, « What is Political Philosophy? », en ID., *What is Political Philosophy and Other Studies*, The University of Chicago Press, Chicago–London 1988, p. 10).

<sup>146</sup> Al respecto, ver DANIEL DE SMET, « Une classification ismaélienne des sciences: l'apport d'al-Sijistānī à la 'tradition d'al-Kindī' et ses liens avec Abū l-Ḥasan al-Āmirī », en ANNA AKASOY, WIM RAVEN (eds.), *Islamic Thought in the Middle Ages: Studies in Text, Transmission and Translation, in Honour of Hans Daiber*, Brill, Leiden 2008 (Islamic Theology, Philosophy, and Science, 75), p. 77–90.

<sup>147</sup> Entendiendo la filosofía política como « un saber práctico, subsumido bajo el moral, relativo al ordenamiento de los hombres en cuanto animales precisamente políticos en una *civitas* » (MAGNAVACCA, *Léxico técnico de filosofía medieval*, p. 131).

<sup>148</sup> Ver MARCO DI BRANCO, « Ismailiti a Bisanzio. Immagini e presenze », *Studia graeco-arabica*, 3 (2013), p. 117.

<sup>149</sup> CHARLES E. BUTTERWORTH, « Political Philosophy, Arabic », en LAGERLUND (ed.), *Encyclopedia of Medieval Philosophy*, p. 1050.

<sup>150</sup> Como se afirma en DE SMET, « Philosophie grecque et religion musulmane », p. 362.

histórica.<sup>151</sup> A través de la *da'wah*, en tanto exhortación universal y misión histórica, el dualismo entre las dos espadas se desvanece. El dominio de la *siyāsaḥ* no es un campo secular que se deriva del contenido de la revelación, sino un reflejo humano de la dimensión espiritual de la realidad creada toda. Por eso, en el KY, el monismo ontológico conduce a un monismo político.

---

<sup>151</sup> PAUL E. WALKER, « Cosmic Hierarchies in Early Ismā'īlī Thought: The View of Abū Ya'qūb al-Sijistānī », *Muslim World*, 66 (1976), p. 17-18. Más en general, cabe notar la idea de que la imagen de que « antes del advenimiento de la ley divina » (*qabla wurūd al-shar'*) el ser humano vivía en un estado de « libertad primordial » (*barā'a aṣliyyah*) no es una afirmación que se presuma histórica sino ontológica, una representación de suerte de edad de oro metafísica desarrollada en el marco de las doctrinas 'neoplatónicas' que moldean las discusiones intelectuales del islam temprano (PATRICIA CRONE, *God's Rule. Government and Islam*, Columbia University Press, New York 2004, p. 262).

Apéndice

Glosario de Términos Filosóficos

Los siguientes términos son algunos de los filosóficamente más relevantes en los fragmentos del KY estudiados. Este glosario no pretende incluir todos los términos significativos sino un conjunto representativo que le permita al lector que se adentra en el tema poder profundizar en su estudio. Al tratarse este de un artículo introductorio, se ha recogido un significado unívoco para términos que, en ocasiones, portan múltiples significados. Por la misma razón, se han obviado aclaraciones gramaticales que podrían ayudar a comprender mejor el sentido de uno u otro concepto.

<i>Transliteración</i>	<i>Traducción</i>
<i>adraka</i>	‘comprender’
‘ <i>alima</i> ; ‘ <i>arafa</i>	‘conocer’
<i>allafa</i>	‘componer’
‘ <i>ālim</i> , pl. ‘ <i>ulamā</i> ’	‘hombres de conocimiento’
<i>amr</i> , pl. <i>umūr</i>	‘asuntos’
‘ <i>āqibah</i> , pl. ‘ <i>awāqib</i>	‘consecuencias’
‘ <i>aql</i> , pl. ‘ <i>uqūl</i>	‘inteligencia’
<i>arāda</i> ; <i>ishtahā</i>	‘desear’
<i>aṣāba</i> ; <i>nāla</i>	‘obtener’
<i>asās</i> , pl. <i>usus</i>	‘pilar’
<i>aṣl</i> , dual <i>aṣlayn</i>	‘principio’
<i>athar</i> , pl. <i>āthār</i>	‘influencias’
<i>balagha</i>	‘alcanzar’; ‘arribar’
<i>ballagha</i>	‘obtener’
<i>baqiya</i> ; <i>istaqarra</i>	‘permanecer’
<i>bāṭin</i>	‘interior’
<i>bayān</i> , pl. <i>bayānāt</i>	‘explicación’
<i>dā‘ī</i> , pl. <i>du‘āh</i> ; sinónimo <i>janāḥ</i> , pl. <i>ajniḥah</i>	‘misionero’
<i>dalālah</i> , pl. <i>dalā‘il</i>	‘signos’
<i>da‘wah</i>	‘misión’, como sustantivo propio; ‘exhortación’, como sustantivo común
<i>dawr</i> , pl. <i>adwār</i>	‘período’
<i>fā‘ida</i> , pl. <i>fawā‘id</i>	‘dones’

<i>falsafah</i>	‘filosofía’, no como sustantivo común sino como sustantivo propio, en referencia a un determinado movimiento intelectual
<i>faylasūf</i> , pl. <i>falāsifah</i>	‘filósofo’, con el mismo sentido
<i>fataḥa</i>	‘abrir’
<i>ghāyah</i> , pl. <i>ghayāt</i>	‘esencia’
<i>ḥāl</i> , pl. <i>aḥwāl</i>	‘estado’
<i>ḥikmah</i> , pl. <i>ḥikam</i>	‘sabiduría’
<i>huwiyyah</i>	‘ipseidad’
<i>‘ibārah</i> , pl. <i>‘ibārāt</i>	‘interpretaciones’
<i>ifādah</i>	‘don’
<i>ifsād</i>	‘corrupción’
<i>iḥāṭah</i>	‘comprensión’
<i>‘ilm</i> , pl. <i>‘ulūm</i>	‘conocimiento’
<i>imām</i> , pl. <i>a‘immah</i>	‘imán’
<i>imāmah</i>	‘imamato’
<i>jāhil</i> , pl. <i>juhḥāl</i>	‘iletrados’
<i>jarā</i>	‘fluir’
<i>jawhar</i>	‘substancia’
<i>jawhariyyah</i>	‘substancialidad’
<i>juz’</i> , pl. <i>ajzā’</i>	‘parte’; ‘particular’
<i>istafāda</i>	‘beneficiarse’
<i>kalām</i>	‘teología’
<i>kalimat Allāh</i>	‘la palabra de Dios’
<i>khayrah</i> , pl. <i>khayrāt</i>	‘bendiciones’
<i>khalīfah</i> , pl. <i>khulafā’</i>	‘vicario’
<i>khafiyyah</i> , pl. <i>khafiyyāt</i>	cuestiones ‘secretas’
<i>lāhiq</i> , pl. <i>lawāḥiq</i>	‘adjunto’
<i>lafz</i> , pl. <i>alfāz</i>	‘formulaciones’
<i>latāfah</i>	‘sutileza’
<i>ma‘qūlah</i> , pl. <i>ma‘qūlāt</i>	‘inteligibles’
<i>martabah</i> , pl. <i>marātib</i>	‘rango’
<i>mashūb</i>	‘mezclado’
<i>ma‘ād</i> ; <i>rujū’</i>	‘retornar’
<i>miqdār</i> , pl. <i>maqādīr</i> ; <i>qadr</i> , pl. <i>aqdār</i>	‘grado’; ‘extensión’
<i>mu‘allaf</i> ; <i>ta‘līf</i>	‘composición’
<i>mu‘ayyad</i> , pl. <i>mu‘ayyadūn</i>	‘fortalecidos’
<i>murtād</i> , pl. <i>murtādīn</i>	‘buscador’
<i>mutakallim</i> , pl. <i>mutakallimūn</i>	‘teólogo’, como sustantivo propio
<i>mutimm</i> , pl. <i>atimmā’</i>	‘completador’: el último <i>imām</i> de cada <i>dawr</i>

<i>nafs</i> , pl. <i>anfus</i>	'alma'
<i>nāṭiq</i> , pl. <i>nuṭaqā'</i>	profeta 'dotado de palabra y razón'
<i>nasiya</i>	'olvidar'
<i>mushtarik</i> , pl. <i>mushtarikūn</i>	'participantes'
<i>qabila</i>	'recibir'
<i>qabūl</i>	'recepción'
<i>qishr</i> , pl. <i>qushūr</i>	'caparazones'
<i>qiwām</i>	'sostenimiento'
<i>quwwah</i> , pl. <i>quwwāt</i>	'facultades'
<i>sharī'ah</i> , pl. <i>sharā'ī'</i>	'ley' exterior
<i>sukūn</i>	'reposo'
<i>ṭaraḥa</i> ; <i>ramā</i>	'despojar'
<i>ta'wīl</i>	'interpretación auténtica'
<i>tafāṣṣul</i>	'distinción'
<i>tarkīb</i>	'conformación'
<i>ta'yīd</i>	'fortalecimiento'
<i>tawfiq</i>	'mediación'
<i>ṭhabāt</i>	'permanencia'
<i>wasīṭah</i> , pl. <i>wasā'it</i>	'mediación'
<i>yanbu'</i> , pl. <i>yanābī'</i>	'fuente'
<i>zāhir</i>	'exterior'
<i>zawāl</i>	'decadencia'
<i>zuhūr</i> ; <i>izhār</i>	'manifestación'

## Fuentes

### 1. En árabe

Abū Ya‘qūb al-Sijistānī, *Kitāb al-yanābī*, ed. Muṣṭafā Ghālib, Trading Office, Beyrouth 1965.

— « Kitāb al-Yanābī », en Henry Corbin (ed.), *Trilogie ismaélienne*, Institut Franco-iranien, Tehran–Paris 1961 (Bibliothèque iranienne, 9), p. 2–97 [texto árabe].

### 2. En traducción

Abū Ya‘qūb As-Sijistānī, *The Wellsprings of Wisdom. A Study of Abū Ya‘qūb al-Sijistānī’s Kitāb al-Yanābī*. Including a Complete English Translation with Commentary and Notes on the Arabic Text, trad. Paul E. Walker, University of Utah Press, Salt Lake City 1994.

— « Kitāb al-Yanābī », en Henry Corbin (ed. y trad.), *Trilogie ismaélienne*, Institut Franco-iranien, Tehran–Paris 1961, p. 5–127 [texto francés]. (2<sup>da</sup> edición: Abū Ya‘qūb Sejestānī, « Kitāb al-Yanābī », en H. Corbin (ed. y trad.), *Trilogie ismaélienne*, Verdier, Paris 1994, p. 1–164 [texto francés].)

### 3. Bibliografía citada

Alibhai, Moḥammed A., « Abū Ya‘qūb al-Sijistānī and the *Kitāb Sullam al-Najāt*. A Study in Islamic Neoplatonism », Ph.D. Diss. The Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations of the Harvard University, Cambridge 1983.

Andani, Khalīl, « A Survey of Ismaili Studies, Part 1: Early Ismā‘īlism and Fāṭimid Ismā‘īlism », *Religion Compass*, 10/8 (2016), p. 191–216.

al-Azmeh, Aziz, « Writing Power », en Aziz Al-Azmeh, *Muslim Kingship. Power and the Sacred in Muslim, Christian and Pagan Polities*, I. B. Tauris, London 1996, p. 83–114.

— « Islamic Political Thought: Current Historiography and the Frame of History », en Aziz al-Azmeh (ed.), *The Times of History. Universal Topics in Islamic Historiography*, Central European University Press, Budapest 2007 (Past Incorporated, 1786–1438, 4), p. 185–265.

Baffioni, Carmela, « Esoteric Shī‘ism in the Additions to Ancient Manuscripts of the Rasā’il Ilkhwān al-Ṣafā’ », en Mohammad A. Amir-Moezzi, Maria De Cillis, Daniel De Smet, Orkhan Mir-Kasimov (eds.), *L’Ésotérisme Shi‘ite. Ses racines et ses prolongements. Shi‘i Esotericism: Its Root and Developments*, Brepols, Turnhout 2016 (Bibliothèque de l’École des hautes études. Section des sciences religieuses, 177), p. 281–326.

Bertelloni, Francisco, « Algunas reinterpretaciones de la causalidad final aristotélica en la teoría política medieval », *Caderno de História e Filosofia da Ciência*, 15/2 (2005), p. 343–371.

Black, Antony, *The History of Islamic Political Thought. From the Prophet to the Present*, Edinburgh University Press, Edinburgh 2011.

Butterworth, Charles E., « Political Philosophy, Arabic », en Henrik Lagerlund (ed.), *Encyclopedia of Medieval Philosophy. Philosophy between 500 and 1000*, Springer, Heidelberg–London–New York 2011, p. 1047–1051.

Carney, Abd al-Hakeem, « The Desacralisation of Power in Islam », *Religion, State and Society*, 31/2 (2003), p. 203–219.

Crone, Patricia, *God's caliph. Religious Authority in the First Centuries of Islam*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge–New York 2003 (University of Cambridge Oriental Publications, 37).

— *God's Rule. Government and Islam*, Columbia University Press, New York 2004.

Daftary, Farhād, « The Ismā'īliyya or Sevener Shī'ah », en Heinz Halm, *Shī'ism*, Edinburgh University Press, Edinburgh 2004 (New Edinburgh Islamic Surveys), p. 160–201.

— *The Ismā'īlīs. Their History and Doctrines*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge–New York 2007.

— « The Study of the Ismā'īlīs », en Farhād Daftary y Gurdofarid Miskinzoda (eds.), *The Study of Shī'ī Islam. History, Theology and Law*, I. B. Tauris–The Institute of Ismaili Studies, London–New York 2014 (Shi'i Heritage Series, 2), p. 47–66.

De Cillis, Maria, « A Preliminary Study on the Significance of Qaḍā' and Qadar in the Eight Chapter of Al-Kirmānī's Kitāb al-Riyāl », en Mohammad A. Amir-Moezzi, Maria De Cillis, Daniel De Smet, Orkhan Mir-Kasimov (eds.), *L'Ésotérisme Shi'ite. Ses racines et ses prolongements. Shi'i Esotericism: Its Root and Developments*, Brepols, Turnhout 2016 (Bibliothèque de l'École des hautes études. Section des sciences religieuses, 177), p. 345–367.

De Garay Suárez-Llanos, Jesús, « La filosofía política de Proclo », en Pedro Roche Arias (ed.), *El pensamiento político en la Edad Media*, Fundación Ramón Areces, Madrid 2010 (Colección Pensamiento Político), p. 423–435.

De Smet, Daniel, « Au-delà de l'apparent: les notions de *zāhir* et *bāṭin* dans l'éso-térisme musulman », *Orientalia Lovaniensia Periodica*, 25 (1994), p. 197–220.

— *La Quiétude de l'Intellect. Néoplatonisme et gnose ismaélienne dans Ḥamīd ad-Dīn al-Kirmānī*, Peters, Louvain 1995 (Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta, 67).

- « Perfectio prima – perfectio secunda ou les vicissitudes d'une notion: de S. Thomas aux Ismaéliens ṭayyibites du Yèmen », *Recherches de Théologie et de Philosophie médiévales*, 66 (1999), p. 254–288.
- « La doctrine avicennienne des deux faces de l'âme et ses racines ismaéliennes », *Studia Islamica*, 93 (2001), p. 77–89.
- « Miroir, Savoir et Émanation dans l'Ismaélisme Fatimide », en Daniel De Smet, Meryem Sebti, Godefroid de Callataÿ (eds.), *Miroir et savoir: la transmission d'un thème platonicien, des Alexandrins à la philosophie arabo-musulmane. Actes du colloque international tenu à Leuven et Louvain-la-Neuve, les 17 et 18 novembre 2005*, Leuven University Press, Louvain 2005, p. 173–187.
- « Les bibliothèques Ismaéliennes et la Question du Néoplatonisme Ismaélien », en Cristina D'Ancona (ed.), *The Libraries of the Neoplatonists*, Brill, Leiden–Boston 2007 (*Philosophia antiqua*, 107), p. 481–492.
- « Loi rationnelle et loi imposée. Les deux aspects de la Šarī'a dans le chiisme ismaélien des X et XI<sup>e</sup> siècles », *Mélanges de l'Université Saint-Joseph*, 61 (2008), p. 515–544.
- « Une classification ismaélienne des sciences: l'apport d'al-Sijistānī à la 'tradition d'al-Kindī' et ses liens avec Abū l-Ḥasan al-ʿĀmirī », en Anna Akasoy, Wim Raven (eds.), *Islamic Thought in the Middle Ages: Studies in Text, Transmission and Translation, in Honour of Hans Daiber*, Brill, Leiden 2008 (*Islamic Theology, Philosophy, and Science*, 75), p. 77–90.
- « The Risāla al-Mudhhiba Attributed to al-Qāḍī al-Numān: Important Evidence for the Adoption of Neoplatonism by Fāṭimid Ismāʿīlism at the Time of al-Muʿizz? », en Omar Alī-de-Unzaga (ed.), *Fortresses of the Intellect: Ismaili and Other Islamic Studies in Honour of Farhād Daftary*, Institute of Ismaili Studies, London 2011, p. 309–341.
- « Philosophie grecque et religion musulmane: Aristote comme exégète du Coran selon la tradition Shīʿite ismaélienne », *Ischrāq. Islamic Philosophy Yearbook*, 2 (2011), p. 344–363.
- « La taqiyya et le jeûne du Ramadan: quelques réflexions ismaéliennes sur le sens ésotérique de la charia », *al-Qanṭara*, 34/2 (2013), p. 357–386.
- « The Quest for Wisdom as a Spiritual Exercise », *Philosophy East and West*, 64/4 (2014), p. 1039–1041.
- « Ismāʿīlī Theology », en Sabine Schmidtke (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Islamic Theology*, Oxford University Press, Oxford 2016 (*The Oxford Handbooks*), p. 313–324.

— « Ismā‘īlī-Shī‘ī Visions of Hell. From the ‘Spiritual’ Torment of the Fāṭimids to the Ṭayyibī Rock of Sijjīn », en Christian Lange (ed.), *Locating Hell in Islamic Traditions*, Brill, Leiden–Boston 2016 (Islamic History and Civilization, 119), p. 241–266.

Di Branco, Marco, « Ismailiti a Bisanzio. Imagini e presenze », *Studia graeco-arabica*, 3 (2013), p. 105–120.

Ivanow, Wladimir, *A Guide to Ismā‘īlī Literature*, Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland, London 1933 (Prize Publication Fund, 13).

— *Ismā‘īlī Literature. A Bibliographical Survey*, Tehran University Press, Tehran 1963 (Ismaili Society Series. A, 15).

Kilcullen, Rupert J., « Natural Law », en Henrik Lagerlund (ed.), *Encyclopedia of Medieval Philosophy. Philosophy between 500 and 1000*, Springer, Heidelberg–London–New York 2011, p. 831–839.

Lane, Edward W., *An Arabic-English Lexicon*, William and Norgate, London 1872.

Laroui, ‘Abd Allāh, « The Arabs and Cultural Anthropology: Notes on the method of Gustave von Grunebaum », en ‘Abd Allāh Laroui, *The Crisis of the Arab Intellectual: Traditionalism or Historicism*, University of California Press, Berkeley–Los Angeles 1976 (Campus, 184), p. 44–80.

Lewis, Bernard, « Siyāsa », en Arnold H. Green (ed.), *In Quest of an Islamic Humanism: Arabic and Islamic Studies in Memory of Mohamed al-Nowaihi*, The American University in Cairo, Cairo 1984, p. 3–14.

Magnavacca, Silvia, *Léxico técnico de filosofía medieval*, Miño y Dávila, Buenos Aires 2005.

Madelung, Wilferd F., « Fāṭimiden und Bahrainqarmaṭen », *Der Islam*, 34 (1959), p. 34–88.

— « Das Imāmat in der frühen isma‘īlitischen Lehre », *Der Islam*, 37/1–3 (1961), p. 43–135.

Mimouni, Simon, « Introduction à la théologie politique. Eléments de Réflexion », en Giovanni Filoramo (ed.), *Teologie politiche. Modelli e confronto*, Morcelliana, Brescia 2005 (Le scienze umane, 4), p. 17–29.

Najjar, Fauzi M., « Political Philosophy in Islam », *Islamic Quarterly*, 20/2 (1978), p. 121–32.

- O'Meara, Dominique J., *Platonopolis. Platonic Political Philosophy in Late Antiquity*, Clarendon Press, Oxford 2003.
- Ousager, Asger, *Plotinus on Selfhood, Freedom and Politics*, Aarhus University Press, Aarhus 2005 (Aarhus Studies in Mediterranean Antiquity, 6; Acta Jutlandica, 79:1; Humanities Series, 76).
- Poonawala, Ismā'īl K., *Biibliography of Ismā'īlī Literature*, Undena Publications, Malibu 1977 (Studies in Near Eastern Culture and Society, 1).
- Plessner, Martin y François Viré, « Nāmūs », en *Encyclopaedia of Islam. Second Edition*, vol. VII, Brill, Leiden 1993, p. 953–956.
- Ramos Jurado, Enrique Á., « La teoría política en el neoplatonismo », *Habis*, 36 (2005), p. 423–442.
- Rosenthal, Erwin I. J., « Some Aspects of Islamic Political Thought », en Erwin I. J. Rosenthal (ed.), *Studia Semitica*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 1971 (University of Cambridge Oriental Publications, 17), vol. II, p. 17–33.
- Schall, James V., « Plotinus and Political Philosophy », *Gregorianum*, 66/4 (1985), p. 687–707.
- Song, Euree, « The ethics of descent in Plotinus », *Hermathena*, 187 (2009), p. 27–48.
- Stern, Samuel, « The Early Ismā'īlī Missionaries in North-West Persia and in Khurasan and Transoxiana », *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, 23 (1960), p. 56–90.
- Strauss, Leo, « What is Political Philosophy? », en Leo Strauss, *What is Political Philosophy and Other Studies*, The University of Chicago Press, Chicago–London 1988, p. 9–55.
- Velji, Jamel A., *An Apocalyptic History of the Early Fāṭimid Empire*, Edinburgh University Press, Edinburgh 2016 (Edinburgh Studies in Islamic Apocalypticism and Eschatology).
- von Grunebaum, Gustave E., *Medieval Islam. A Study on Cultural Orientation*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago 1953 (An Oriental Institute Essay).
- Walker, Paul E., « The Ismā'īlī Vocabulary of Creation », *Studia Islamica*, 40 (1974), p. 75–85.
- « Cosmic Hierarchies in Early Ismā'īlī Thought: The View of Abū Ya'qūb al-Sijistānī », *Muslim World*, 66 (1976), p. 14–28.

- *Early philosophical Shī'ism. The Ismā'īlī Neoplatonism of Abū Ya'qūb al-Sijistānī*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 1993 (Cambridge Studies in Islamic Civilization).
- *Abū Ya'qūb al-Sijistānī: Intellectual Missionary*, I. B. Tauris–Institute of Ismā'īli Studies, London–New York 1996 (Ismaili Heritage Series).



# IAMBlichUS AND PLUTARCH ON INSPIRATION\*

ELSA GIOVANNA SIMONETTI  
KU LEUVEN

## *Abstract*

This article argues that the works of Plutarch of Chaeronea (c. 45–120 AD) exerted a significant influence on Iamblichus of Chalcis (c. 245–325 AD), with specific reference to his theory of prophetic inspiration. This analysis is expressly concerned with the works that Plutarch and Iamblichus devoted to divination: the Delphic dialogues and *De mysteriis*, respectively. Its objective is to show that Iamblichus was influenced by Plutarch's works, and to understand whether he tried to emend the doctrines and arguments of his predecessor in his attempt to adapt Platonic doctrines to his own original views on theology and ritual. Exploring the connections between Plutarch and Iamblichus will also provide the opportunity to delve into the conceptual ruptures and continuities characterising the history of Platonism during the first centuries AD.

## *Key Words*

Iamblichus, Plutarch, inspiration, divination, Delphi.



## *I. Plutarch and Iamblichus in Dialogue*

The heart of Iamblichus's account of oracular divination is set out in the third book of *De mysteriis Aegyptiorum* (or *Response to Porphyry*), a work responding to questions

---

\* A preliminary version of this paper was presented at the Second Meeting of the North American Sections of the International Plutarch Society (Utah State University, 15–18 May 2019), organised by Frances Titchener. I am very grateful for the feedback received at the conference. This article builds on the research carried out at the American School of Classical Studies in Athens, generously supported by the British Academy - Newton Fund. My thanks also to George Boys-Stones for his comments on the draft. I am profoundly grateful to Crystal Addey for her invaluable help and stimulating discussions on this topic. I thank the blind-reviewers for their comments and suggestions, the Journal Editors, Pedro Mantas España and Serena Masolini, for their support. Huge thanks to Matthew Acton for his help with the English.

raised in Porphyry's *Letter to Anebo*.<sup>1</sup> Iamblichus's *De mysteriis* is a cornerstone in Neoplatonic philosophy, and laid down some of the foundations of theurgy, a ritual practice that began in late antiquity, but was strongly influenced by ancient divinatory theories.<sup>2</sup> While writing his reply to Porphyry, Iamblichus might have been inspired by his precursor Plutarch, who also served as a priest at an oracular temple, and was interested in the art of divination, including its functioning and theoretical foundations.<sup>3</sup> Plutarch's Delphic dialogues are explicitly devoted to oracular divination, and have always attracted considerable scholarly attention. They have been variously interpreted as a repository of Plutarch's own reflections on Delphic mantic, a faithful account of Delphic ritual, as reliable testimony for the broader socio-historical context in which the shrine was operating in the first centuries AD, and as an extensive repertoire of ancient views on prophecy. Iamblichus, who shared Plutarch's fascination with divination, could have taken inspiration from the writings of his fellow Platonist, and re-used them, whether with approval or otherwise.

- 
- <sup>1</sup> For an accurate analysis of the alleged epistolary exchange between Porphyry and Iamblichus, including its Egyptian references and background, see: EMMA C. CLARKE, JOHN M. DILLON, JACKSON P. HERSHBELL, *Iamblichus: De mysteriis*. Translated with an Introduction and Notes, Society of Biblical literature, Atlanta 2003 (Writings from the Greco-Roman World, 4), p. xxvi–xlvi. The remarkable *Communication* by the Egyptologist Elsa Oréal, in SAFFREY, HENRI DOMINIQUE, ALAIN-PHILIPPE SEGONDS (eds.), *Porphyre. Lettre à Anébon l'Égyptien. Texte établi, traduit et commenté*, Les Belles Lettres, Paris 2012 (Collection des universités de France Série grecque - Collection Budé 492), p. xxxii–xxxviii is also extremely informative. The other main reference version of *De mysteriis* is: HENRI DOMINIQUE SAFFREY, ALAIN-PHILIPPE SEGONDS, ADRIEN LECERF, *Jamblique, Réponse à Porphyre (De mysteriis). Texte établi, traduit et annoté*, Les Belles Lettres, Paris 2013 (Collection des universités de France Série grecque - Collection Budé 496).
- <sup>2</sup> Two recent studies have greatly advanced our understanding of the phenomenon of theurgy: ILINCA TANASEANU-DÖBLER, *Theurgy in Late Antiquity. The Invention of a Ritual Tradition*, Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht Verlag, Göttingen 2013 (Beiträge zur europäischen Religionsgeschichte, 1), and CRYSTAL ADDEY, *Divination and Theurgy in Neoplatonism. Oracles of the Gods*, Ashgate, Farnham–Burlington 2014 (Ashgate Studies in Philosophy and Theology in Late Antiquity). The former explores late ancient theurgy and its historical development, while the latter proves the intersections between theurgy and divination.
- <sup>3</sup> Iamblichus as an historical figure and his role as a 'philosopher priest' are discussed in POLYMNIA ATHANASSIADI's recent study, « A Global Response to Crisis: Iamblichus' Religious Programme », in CHRISTOPH RIEDWEG (ed.), *PHILOSOPHIA in der Konkurrenz von Schulen, Wissenschaften und Religionen: Zur Pluralisierung des Philosophiebegriffs in Kaiserzeit und Spätantike*, De Gruyter, Berlin 2017 (Philosophie der Antike, 34), p. 257–290. Evidence for Plutarch's employment as a priest in the Delphic sanctuary is provided by ANGELO CASANOVA, among others, in « Plutarch as Apollo's Priest at Delphi », in LAUTARO ROIG LANZILLOTTA, ISRAEL MUÑOZ GALLARTE (eds.), *Plutarch in the Religious and Philosophical Discourse of Late Antiquity*, Brill, Leiden 2012 (Studies in Platonism, Neoplatonism, and the Platonic Tradition, 14), p. 151–157. FRANÇOISE FRAZIER offers a wonderful depiction of the sacred place of Delphi in « Delphes dans les 'Dialogues Pythiques' de Plutarque: un 'lieu inspiré' », in JEAN-MARC LUCE (ed.), *Delphes et la littérature d'Homère à nos jours*, Classiques Garnier, Paris 2018, p. 209–233.

This article will therefore address the following questions: on what grounds can we assert that Iamblichus had Plutarch in mind while writing his own work on divination? What principles guided Iamblichus's approach to Plutarch's theories, and what were his conceptual objectives? Finally, what does the connection between Plutarch and Iamblichus indicate about the broader development of late-ancient Platonism?

In order to answer these questions, this article will be divided into two main parts. Sections II–V will explore points of contact between Iamblichus and Plutarch's theories of divination, concerning in particular the interaction between the material and transcendent principles in inspiration, the notion of mixture, the role of *daimones*, and the definition of the human medium from an anthropological viewpoint. Sections VI–VII will then focus on the wider metaphysical and cosmological conceptions implied by Iamblichus and Plutarch's divinatory theories, within the framework of the development of the Platonic tradition in antiquity.

The similarities between Iamblichus and Plutarch have not gone unnoticed by scholars. Carine Van Liefferinge has shed light on some conceptual parallelisms between these two philosophers,<sup>4</sup> in light of their common aim of justifying the decline of the oracular activity during their respective life spans by advocating for a substantial harmony between philosophical analysis and religious beliefs.<sup>5</sup> Crystal Addey has shown that Plutarch and Iamblichus resorted to strikingly similar aetiological models founded on multiple levels of causation in order to explain divinatory phenomena,<sup>6</sup> while Aude Busine has demonstrated that Iamblichus's account of Delphic prophecy can be considered an 'extension' of Plutarch's.<sup>7</sup> Anne Sheppard has identified the existence of a specific line of tradition associating the human imaginative faculty of *phantasia* (φαντασία) with prophecy, which has its origins in the exegesis of Plato's *Timaeus* 70e. Sheppard has shown that this reading, although seldom endorsed by the Neoplatonists, was nevertheless adopted by Plutarch and Iamblichus, both of whom resorted to

---

<sup>4</sup> CARINE VAN LIEFFERINGE, « Jamblique, lecteur de Plutarque? », *Revue de philosophie ancienne*, 16 (1998), p. 37–53, explains that the commonalities between Plutarch and Iamblichus, rather than proving some direct influence of the former on the latter, were due to some persistent threads within the Platonic tradition. The common features that she highlights include the images of the theurgist in Iamblichus, and the 'divine man' in Plutarch (p. 45 and 51), and their common adherence to dualistic theories of Persian, Barbarian and Oriental provenance (p. 46–47). She also explains that Iamblichus's idea of « prodiges dans les statues » (p. 48–50) was grounded in his new approach to transcendence and materiality.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 37–38.

<sup>6</sup> ADDEY, *Divination and Theurgy*, p. 216.

<sup>7</sup> As Busine explains, Iamblichus's prophetic theory « se situe dans le prolongement de l'exégèse plutarquéeenne sur le *pneûma* delphique » (AUDE BUSINE, « La consultation de l'oracle d'Apollon dans le discours de Jamblique », *Kernos*, 15 (2002), 195).

*phantasia* to explain the contact between the human and the divine in prophetic inspiration.<sup>8</sup>

Moreover, there are reasons to believe that Iamblichus was at least partially familiar with the works of Plutarch, and could have read them either in their original form or in *compendia*.<sup>9</sup> Iamblichus's *De anima*, in particular, contains several references to Platonists of earlier generations (generically referred to as οἱ Πλατωνικοί). He repeatedly blames them for their controversies on the topic of the composition of the world-soul (*psychogonia*), a major problem for Middle- and Neo-Platonists, who often advanced divergent exegeses of the section of Plato's *Timaeus* that describes the formation of the cosmic soul.<sup>10</sup> This 'retrospective' approach to philosophy manifests the need, strongly felt by Iamblichus and all later Platonists, constantly to reflect on the philosophical identity and tradition of their school. This process of constant self-reflection and renovation is grounded in the exegesis Plato's works, and the desire to recover their authentic meaning.

<sup>8</sup> Anne Sheppard has pointed out that in the treatise *De insomniis*, Synesius of Cyrene exhibits the same belief in the possibility for imagination to partake in prophetic inspiration (ANNE SHEPPARD, « *Phantasia* and Inspiration in Neoplatonism », in MARK LOYAL [ed.], *Studies in Plato and the Platonic Tradition. Essays Presented to John Whittaker*, Routledge, London 1997, p. 201–210, here p. 204–206 and 208).

<sup>9</sup> The general introduction to the French edition of Plutarch's *Moralia* provides an overview of the textual transmission of his writings in antiquity. Cf. ROBERT FLACELIÈRE, JEAN IRIGOIN, *Plutarque, Oeuvres morales. Tome I, Ire partie: Introduction générale, Traités 1–2*, Les Belles Lettres, Paris 1987, (Collection des universités de France Série grecque - Collection Budé, 312), p. CCXXVII–CCXXXVII. According to this study, Plutarch's moral essays circulated widely after Plutarch's death, as attested by Aulus Gellius, Clement of Alexandria, Athenaeus, Porphyry, and other later authors (p. CCXXVIII). Porphyry, who may have been a teacher of Iamblichus, had an extensive, and presumably direct knowledge of Plutarch's oeuvre. On this topic, see also ELSA G. SIMONETTI, « Plutarch and the Neoplatonists: Porphyry, Proklos, Simplicios », in KATERINA OIKONOMOPOULOU, SOPHIA XENOPHONTOS (eds.), *Brill's Companion to the Reception of Plutarch*, Brill, Leiden-Boston 2019, (Brill's Companions to Classical Reception, 20), p. 136–153. Sopater of Apamea (or Alexandria), who was probably the same Sopater whom Eunapius describes as a very gifted pupil of Iamblichus, composed a miscellany of *Various Extracts* (Ἐκλογαὶ Διάφοροι) in twelve books, which was partly summarised in Photius's *Bibliotheca* (cf. Eun. VS 5.1; 6.2). We should remember that there are a handful of letters preserved under the name of Iamblichus directed to a man named Sopater, who may be the same pupil of Iamblichus, or one of his sons or grandsons. There is also evidence of a local dignitary in Apamea named 'Sopater'. On this issue, see JOHN M. DILLON, WOLFGANG POLLEICHTNER, *Iamblichus of Chalcis: The Letters, Edited with a Translation and Commentary*, Society of Biblical Literature, Atlanta 2009 (Writings from the Greco-Roman World, 19), p. XVI and 85. Sopater's collection of *excerpta* included various previous authors, such as Apollodorus, Athenaeus, Favorinus, and Plutarch himself. Several of Plutarch's writings were epitomised and assembled in Sopater's *Extracts*, occupying books eight to eleven. Cf. Phot. *Bibl.* 161.103a–105a; FRANCIS H. SANDBACH, *Plutarch. Moralia, Volume XV: Fragments*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, MA 1969 (Loeb Classical Library, 429), p. 2; FLACELIÈRE-IRIGOIN, *Plutarque*, p. CCXXIX–CCXXXI. Several *Moralia* that are now lost were quoted in this work, including Περὶ τε φύσεως καὶ πόνων, Περὶ δυσωπίας λόγου, Περὶ εὐθυμίας, Περὶ πλούτου.

<sup>10</sup> Plat. *Tim.* 35a–b (cf. Plut. *De an. procr.* 1012B).

Iamblichus's *De anima* also includes two direct references to Plutarch, indicating that he may have been familiar with some of his, perhaps even some of those that are now lost.<sup>11</sup> This hypothesis becomes all the more likely, however, when one compares Iamblichus's and Plutarch's accounts of prophecy.

## II. *Immaterial Principles and Material Changes*

While comparing Iamblichus's and Plutarch's discussions of prophecy, the feature that first stands out is their common apologetic intention. Both thinkers are committed to defending the right views on divination, and distinguishing divination from what it is *not*. Their objective is to defend the divine character of divination against wrong beliefs and erroneous interpretations, which could easily degenerate into dangerous and impious theological assumptions. However, their methodologies are completely antithetical.

Iamblichus, at the outset of the third book of *De mysteriis* – the one specifically devoted to divination – reports Porphyry's question as to what happens in the act of prognosis (πρόγνωσις).<sup>12</sup> He promptly explains that this question has no answer, since prediction is not a human endeavour. Divination is divine and supersensible, ungenerated and eternal (θεῖον, ὑπερφυές, ἀγέννητον, ἀίδιον αὐτοφωῶς).<sup>13</sup> Any study of divination requires looking straight at its essence, origin and principle (ἀρχὴ τῆς μαντικῆς).<sup>14</sup> In fact, the ontological status of divination makes it impossible for us to examine its merely phenomenal appearance (τὸ γινόμενον), insofar as its essence is extraneous to things existing in nature and their changes (φύσις, φυσικὴ μεταβολή).<sup>15</sup> This first passage is already indicative of Iamblichus's methodology of addressing the ontological and metaphysical foundations of *mantikê*, while backgrounding its contingent-material aspects. Conversely, Plutarch seems to focus primarily on the sensible dynamics of divination, and only eventually to discuss its wider cosmological and

---

<sup>11</sup> In the first *locus*, Plutarch and Atticus are described as philosophers who postulated a pre-cosmic disorder harmonised by a superior intellective power, contrary to Numenius, Porphyry, and Plotinus (cf. Iamb. *De an.* 23.1–11). In the second *locus*, taken from the eschatological section of *De anima*, Iamblichus relays that Plutarch, like Porphyry and other unspecified 'ancient thinkers' (οἱ παλαιότεροι), maintained that the human soul remains 'in its original hierarchical level' (ἐπὶ τῆς οἰκειᾶς τάξεως) – an unclear expression, due in part to a textual *lacuna* that mutilates the passage (Iamb. *De an.* 47.1–2). Since Plutarch never presents this theory in any of his extant writings, John Dillon and John Finamore have hypothesised that Iamblichus might here be referring to a lost psychological work by Plutarch. See JOHN FINAMORE, JOHN DILLON, *Iamblichus' De anima. Text, Translation, and Commentary*, Leiden–Boston, Brill 2002 (Philosophia Antiqua, 92), p. 209.

<sup>12</sup> Iamb. *De myst.* 3.1.1: τί τὸ γινόμενόν ἐστιν ἐν τῇ τοῦ μέλλοντος προγνώσει.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.1.10.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.1.14–15.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.1.6–8; see also 3.27.40.

theological framework. In other words, Iamblichus adopts a top-down, deductive approach, whereas Plutarch adopts a bottom-up, inductive one.

Porphyry's epistle calls Iamblichus's attention to the material elements (inferior causes) of the prophetic act. Porphyry asks why prophets in Claros, Delphi, and Didyma are inspired in three different ways: in the first temple by water, in the second by the effluxes of a chasm, in the third by hydric vapours.<sup>16</sup> This gives Iamblichus the opportunity to explain that divination comes from the gods (ἀπὸ δὲ τῶν θεῶν), and is realised through the first causes (πρωτουργοὶ αἰτίαι), while secondary causal factors (δευτερουργοί) have a merely incidental effect.<sup>17</sup> All the concrete tokens in the temple, as well as the ritual apparatus, are far less important than the primary cause, the god: the former are only preparatory elements that make inspiration possible.<sup>18</sup> This idea follows from a theological system in which an immutable, sublime, and absolutely transcendent god never comes in touch with contingency.<sup>19</sup>

Iamblichus soon presents the *pars destruens* of his argument, or, as he says, the 'antidote' (ἀλεξιφάρμακον) to possible fallacies,<sup>20</sup> which consists in a list of factors that *cannot* be considered principles (ἀρχαί) of divination. These are: bodies (σώματα) and their passions (παθήματα), nature (φύσις) and powers related to nature (περὶ τὴν φύσιν δυνάμεις), human preparation (ἀνθρώπινη παρασκευή), customs (περὶ αὐτὴν ἔξεις), and art (τέχνη).<sup>21</sup> A few lines later he reiterates that the activity of divination cannot be connected to bodily movements, mutable passions, and everything pertaining to nature, life, and change.<sup>22</sup>

It cannot be mere coincidence that Plutarch's views on divination are founded on the exact same factors that Iamblichus rejects, and expressed in strikingly similar terms. Lamprias, the narrator and one of the main characters in Plutarch's *De defectu oraculorum*, states that divination is founded on the disposition of the

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., 3.11.4–8.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., 3.1.40.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., 3.11.63–66: ἕτερος ὢν καὶ τοῦ πυρὸς καὶ τοῦ πνεύματος καὶ τῆς ἰδίας ἕδρας καὶ πάσης τῆς περὶ τὸν τόπον φυσικῆς καὶ ἱερᾶς φαινομένης κατασκευῆς.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., 3.13.40–44. On the hierarchy of beings in Iamblichus and other Neoplatonists, see ADRIEN LECERF, « L'évolution du concept de principe dans le premier néoplatonisme. Un bref parcours », in MARC-ANTOINE GAVRAY, ALEXANDRA MICHALEWSKI (eds.), *Les principes cosmologiques du platonisme: Origines, influences et systématisation*, Brepols, Turnhout 2017, p. 187–223. See especially p. 222, where the author discusses Iamblichus's metaphysics, and says, « les causes deviennent infiniment supérieures aux effets, elles conservent par rapport à eux un surplomb absolu, irréductible ».

<sup>20</sup> As emphasised by SAFFREY, SEGONDS, AND LECERF, *Jamblique*, p. 275, n. 5 to p. 75, ἀλεξιφάρμακον is a technical medical term that refers to 'antidote, contre poison'.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., 3.1.15.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., 3.1.32–34: κινήσεις σωμάτων ἢ παθῶν μεταβολὰς ἢ γενέσεις τινὰς ἐτέρας ἢ ζωῆς ἀνθρωπίνης ἐνεργείας ἢ λόγους ἐμψύχους ἢ φυσικοῦς.

human body (διάθεσις τοῦ σώματος) and the irrationality of the faculty responsible for divinatory activity (τὸ μαντικόν), described as ‘receptive to passions’ (δεκτικόν [...] πάθεισι).<sup>23</sup> Furthermore, Theon, a generally reliable and sensible character in Plutarch’s *De Pythiae oraculis*, asserts that the divinatory process depends on individual character (ἕξις), powers (δυνάμεις), abilities (τέχναι), and nature (φύσις).<sup>24</sup>

Iamblichus then defines the preconditions that make the Pythia ready to receive prophetic inspiration, and become completely possessed by the god (ὅλη γίγνεται τοῦ θεοῦ). She might either sit in the temple, or be encircled by the fiery (πυρῶδες) divine spirit (θεῖον πνεῦμα) that comes out of the chasm in Delphi. At that point, a ray (ἀκτίς) of divine fire (τοῦ θείου πυρός) shines upon her, and she surrenders to the divine force of the *pneûma*. A stable harmony (expressed with the verb συν-ἀρμόζεμαι) is *regularly* established between the Pythia and the *unchanging* divine prophetic power (σταθερὰ μαντικὴ δύναμις).<sup>25</sup> The idea that some sort of divine spirit (the *pneûma*) capable of engendering prophetic effects springs out in Delphi and makes the Pythia able to foretell the future is present in Plutarch and other ancient authors.<sup>26</sup> However, the idea that the effluences of the prophetic *pneûma* are always constant and unchanged is a Iamblichean innovation. Moreover, contrary to Plutarch Iamblichus does not seem to believe that an irrational-chaotic psychophysical state of the Pythia might interfere with the prophetic act, because every single time she sits in the temple, she is in the right condition to prophesy. In other words, the regular character of the *pneûma* is

<sup>23</sup> Plut. *De def. or.* 432D; see also Iamb. *De myst.* 3.25.25.

<sup>24</sup> Plut. *De Pyth. or.* 404E. One should always keep in mind that *De defectu oraculorum* and *De Pythiae oraculis* are two *dialogues*, and therefore it is always necessary to consider a given concept in light of the character who expresses it. Plutarch does not have an official representative or mouthpiece; nevertheless, the views of Lamprias in *De defectu* and Theon in *De Pythiae* seem to be the closest to Plutarch’s own ideas. For an analysis of these dialogues in light of what they can tell us about Plutarch’s own philosophical reflection, see ELSA G. SIMONETTI, *A Perfect Medium? Oracular Divination in the Thought of Plutarch*, Leuven University Press, Leuven 2017 (Plutarchea Hypomnemata).

<sup>25</sup> Cf. Iamb. *De myst.* 3.11.50–56. As Aude Busine has demonstrated, the expression used by Iamblichus to describe the action whereby the *pneûma* envelops the Pythia in a round bound of fire: ἀθρόον καὶ πολὺ τὸ ἀναφερόμενον ἀπὸ τοῦ στομίου πῦρ κύκλῳ πανταχόθεν αὐτὴν περιέχῃ, directly recalls the terminology employed in Neoplatonic cosmological accounts (BUSINE, « La consultation », p. 195).

<sup>26</sup> Cicero also attests to the presence of a spirit (*vis terrae, divinus afflatus*) in Delphi, responsible for prophetic inspiration, and subject to constant modifications in intensity (Cic. *De div.* 1.38).

combined with the always favourable condition of the Pythia, and a perfect harmony is *always* established between them.<sup>27</sup>

The fact that the Delphic *pneûma* is defined as an essentially infallible inspiration tool gives the impression that Iamblichus is literally emending the words of his predecessor: Plutarch founded his interpretation of divination precisely on the notion of the changeability of the *pneûma*, which he defined subject to continuous mutations exactly like every other physical element. The inherent changeability of the *pneûma*'s effluences was so crucial an element for Plutarch that he used it to justify the striking decline of oracular production throughout Greece at the dramatic time of *De defectu oraculorum*.<sup>28</sup> According to Plutarch, the encounter between the wavering pneumatic efflux in Delphi and the soul of the Pythia, herself agitated by dangerous fluctuations and irrational disturbances,<sup>29</sup> is bound to have unpredictable and even lethal effects, as attested by the well-known episode of the death of the prophetess in *De defectu oraculorum*.<sup>30</sup> The Chaeronean believes that the harmony between the variable substance of the *pneûma* and the capricious, inconstant nature of the Pythia's soul cannot be established once and for all. Rather, this is a purely contingent and episodic phenomenon, a coincidence created by the encounter between the temporary state of the Pythia and that of the pneumatic force.<sup>31</sup>

Plutarch describes the notion of *enthousiasmos* as a *change* (μεταβολή) arising from a proper temperament and disposition of the body (κρᾶσις καὶ διάθεσις τοῦ σώματος).<sup>32</sup> Iamblichus literally repeats and disproves all of these terms and concepts.<sup>33</sup> In *De mysteriis*, he insists that matter and its changes are opposed to what is divine, and contrary to divine inspiration itself. He reiterates that divine inspiration cannot be associated with any physical or emotional changes (κινήσεις σωμάτων ἢ παθῶν μεταβολάς) on multiple occasions.<sup>34</sup> This ontological

<sup>27</sup> Iamb. *De myst.* 3.11.50–67. See especially the use of the adverbs ὅταν - τότε. It is important to note that in *De myst.* 3.7 Iamblichus also declares that divination becomes mendacious, and inspiration loses its truthfulness and divine character, when it is contaminated by the damaging influence of material elements (Iamb. *De myst.* 3.7.27–31). This predicament does not seem to apply to Delphic oracular divination, which takes place under the aegis of the god Apollo, and where proper rites and omens are undertaken prior to beginning oracular consultation.

<sup>28</sup> For the widespread *topos* of the 'decline of oracles', see the extremely informative MARCO FRENSCHKOWSKI, *Offenbarung und Epiphanie. Band 1: Grundlagen des spätantiken und frühchristlichen Offenbarungsglaubens*, Mohr Siebeck, Tübingen 1995 (Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament, 2/79), p. 15–106.

<sup>29</sup> Plut. *De Pyth. or.* 404E7–9: ἀλλ' ὥσπερ ἐν σάλῳ † ψαύουσαν [αὐτήν] καὶ συμπλεκομένην τοῖς ἐν αὐτῇ κινήμασι καὶ πάθεσιν ἐπιταράττουσιν αὐτήν.

<sup>30</sup> Plut. *De def. or.* 438A–C.

<sup>31</sup> Cf. SIMONETTI, *A Perfect Medium?*, esp. p. 103–105.

<sup>32</sup> Plut. *De def. or.* 432D.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, 437A: τὴν κίνησιν αὐτοῦ καὶ τὸν τρόπον.

<sup>34</sup> Iamb. *De myst.* 3.1.33.

opposition is connected to Iamblichus's aetiological account: since inferior-material levels of causation cannot affect superior ones, contingent circumstances cannot cause any change (αἰτίαν τῆς θείας παραλλάξεως) on the superior, divine level.<sup>35</sup> Moreover, since the divine is absolutely transcendent (ἐξηρημένον), unmixed (ἄμικτον), and unchangeable (ἀμετάβλητον), it cannot be mingled with anything else, including the soul, and it cannot be mixed as an ingredient in a compound.<sup>36</sup>

### III. *The Notion of Mixture and the Role of Daimones*

Mixture (μίξις, κρᾶσις) is a key element in Plutarch's theory of divination, so it is surprising to note the vehemence with which Iamblichus rejects this concept while discussing prophetic inspiration. The fact that both authors rely on the notion of 'mixture' for their explanations – Plutarch with approval and Iamblichus with firm disapproval – makes this concept a crucial touchstone for evaluating the different roles that Plutarch and Iamblichus ascribe to the inferior-material and superior-spiritual factors in divination, as well as the wider theoretical implications of their respective choices.

The notion of mixture lies at the very heart of the Chaeronean's account of prophecy, and is central to his scientific theory of nature at large, as is evident in his explanations of various earthly phenomena.<sup>37</sup> The most relevant instances of the concept of 'mixture' in Plutarch's discussions of oracular divination are the following: the special mixture (κρᾶσις) established between the *pneûma* and the soul;<sup>38</sup> the apt mixture and disposition (κρᾶσις καὶ διάθεσις) of the Pythia's body, a necessary precondition for inspiration;<sup>39</sup> the fitting mixture (κρᾶσις οἰκεία) arising in bodies at the moment of death, which gives prophetic powers to the moribund;<sup>40</sup> the mixture or combination (μεῖξις) of two distinct movements (κινήσεις) that constitute inspiration (ἐνθουσιασμός); the mixture between the thoughts of the god (νοήσεις μεμιγμένας) and the mortal body and soul of the Pythia, through which the former are disclosed to humans.<sup>41</sup>

All these occurrences clash with Iamblichus's convictions about *mîxis* and *krâsis*, which he excludes from prophecy. Iamblichus insists vehemently that divination

---

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.8.19–20.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.21.13–14.

<sup>37</sup> See e.g. Plut. *De Pyth. or.* 395B and 395C, where the concept of κρᾶσις is used to explain the phenomenon of the 'blue patina' covering the bronze artefacts in Delphi (see also *De def. or.* 433A–B).

<sup>38</sup> Plut. *De def. or.* 432D–E.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, 432C.

<sup>41</sup> Cf. Plut. *De Pyth. or.* 404E–F.

has nothing to do with physical forces and mixtures (σωματικαῖς δυνάμεσιν ἢ κράσεσι),<sup>42</sup> and that its origin *a fortiori* cannot be ascribed to anything human or contingent, since inferior forces of causality cannot affect superior ones.<sup>43</sup> Iamblichus adheres to a literal and straightforward interpretation of Diotima's assertion that 'god does not mix with human' (θεὸς δὲ ἀνθρώπῳ οὐ μίγνυται),<sup>44</sup> upon which he founds his dualistic cosmological and metaphysical account. Like other Neoplatonists, Iamblichus explains human-divine interactions in light of the notion of participation, rather than mixture. Human beings 'participate' in god's power when they are illuminated.

Iamblichus states that the principle (ἀρχή), or cause (αἰτία, αἴτιον) of divination lies in neither physical variables like heat, cold, moisture (θερμὸν καὶ ψυχρὸν καὶ ὑγρὸν), nor their mixture (μίξις, κράσις).<sup>45</sup> In Plutarch's *De defectu oraculorum*, these same factors are integrated within Lamprias's 'plausible and rational' explanation of the dynamics of inspiration. Here, physical variables such as warmth (θερμότης, or the adjectives ἔνθερμος and πυρώδης), dryness (ξηρότης), moisture (ὑγρότης), and chill (περίψυξις) qualify the encounter between the *pneûma* and the priestess' soul.<sup>46</sup>

An even more direct reference to Plutarch in Iamblichus's *De mysteriis* concerns the divinatory virtues of the melancholic person (μελαγχολικός). Plutarch indicates that the peculiar bodily mixture (κράσις τοῦ σώματος) characterising the melancholic is the cause (αἰτία) of her prophetic dreams.<sup>47</sup> Iamblichus deals with the same problem, but argues against Plutarch's position and seems to be literally emending the view of his predecessor: the prophetic dreams experienced by melancholic people are not caused by their bodily *krâsis*, he states, since individual mixtures or temperaments (κράσεις) play no role in divination, even with regard to the specific case of the melancholic person.<sup>48</sup>

Aristotle offers a well-known account of the character of the melancholic person (μελαγχολικός) in *De divinatione per somnum*.<sup>49</sup> This topic must have been of

<sup>42</sup> Iamb. *De myst.* 3.10.8.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.8.15–20.

<sup>44</sup> Plat. *Symp.* 203a.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.1.30.

<sup>46</sup> Plut. *De def. or.* 432E–433B. For an interesting analysis of these corporeal elements in the context of another work of Plutarch, see AURELIO PÉREZ JIMÉNEZ, « Plutarch and Transgressions of Nature: Stylistic Analysis of *De facie in orbe lunae* 926C–D », in MICHIEL MEEUSEN, LUC VAN DER STOCKT (eds.), *Natural Spectaculars: Aspects of Plutarch's Philosophy of Nature*, Leuven University Press, Leuven 2015 (Plutarchea Hypomnemata), p. 215–226.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, 437F.

<sup>48</sup> Iamb. *De myst.* 3.8.8.

<sup>49</sup> Cf. Aristot. *De div. per somn.* 463b16. It is interesting to note that in SAFFREY, SEGONDS, LECERF, *Jamblique*, p. 276, n. 2 to p. 7, the authors clarify that « Le point de vue d'Aristote est purement scientifique et non pas religieux ».

interest to the Peripatetics, since treatment of the psychological category and conditions of melancholia is also found in the pseudo Aristotelian *Problems*.<sup>50</sup> Although these passages provide the common conceptual background to Plutarch's and Iamblichus's discussions of the character, features, and divinatory abilities of the melancholic, (along with those of other ancient authors),<sup>51</sup> what is at stake here is the specific connection between the *krâsis* of the melancholics and their predictive capacities. While Plutarch sees a link between the psycho-physical condition of melancholic persons and their prophetic skills, Iamblichus literally and explicitly denies precisely this causal-conceptual connection.

As Iamblichus argues shortly after, real divination cannot be explained as a special disposition or proportion in matter (ἐν ὕλης τάξει)<sup>52</sup> – an expression reminiscent of Plutarch's idea of the harmonic combination (ἁρμονία τῆς κράσεως) of the *pneûma* and the psychic substance that is required for inspiration, as reported by Lamprias in *De defectu oraculorum*.<sup>53</sup> It is interesting to note that Lamprias ascribes the function of moderating the delicate mixture between the *pneûma* and the soul of the Pythia to the daemons. They are the overseers, attendants, and guardians (ἐπιστάτας καὶ περιπόλους καὶ φύλακας) of this delicate balance, from which they remove all the disturbing-irrational elements. In the Delphic dialogues, *daimones* are never qualified as the *direct* inspirers of prophetic messages. They do not provoke illumination or possession; rather, they are the controllers and supervisors of the mantic performance.<sup>54</sup>

Iamblichus also refutes the idea that the daemons might play an active role in prophecy and provoke inspiration. True inspiration comes not from the daemons but from the gods (οὔτε δαιμόνων, θεῶν δὲ γίγνεται ἐπίπνοια),<sup>55</sup> in virtue of their absolute ontological and aetiological priority in the genesis and comprehension of the rational order of the cosmos, which divination, as an entirely legitimate mode

---

<sup>50</sup> Cf. Ps.-Aristot. *Probl.* XXX 1 and 14. For a brilliant study of how this text is situated with respect to the *loci* on melancholia contained in Aristotle's works, see PHILIP J. VAN DER EIJK, *Medicine and Philosophy in Classical Antiquity: Doctors and Philosophers on Nature, Soul, Health and Disease*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 2005, ch. 5: « Aristotle on Melancholy », p. 139–168.

<sup>51</sup> For instance, Cicero, in *De divinatione* and through the voice of his brother Quintus, criticises Aristotle for connecting divinatory capabilities to a weak body, as it is the case with melancholic people, and argues that divination can only arise from a lucid mind (cf. Cic. *De div.* 1.38.81–2).

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.1.28.

<sup>53</sup> Plut. *De def. or.* 437A; compare this material harmony with the spiritual harmony that humans reach through ascesis in Iamb. *De myst.* 3.9.40.

<sup>54</sup> Plut. *De def. or.* 436F–437A. Their role is different in 'individual' or 'private' divination however, which Plutarch and other Middle-Platonists ascribed to the δαιμόνιον in a Socratic sense. A most valuable contribution on this topic is GEERT ROSKAM, « Socrates' δαιμόνιον in Maximus of Tyre, Apuleius, and Plutarch », in DELFIM F. LEÃO, FRANÇOISE FRAZIER (eds.), *Tychè et Pronoia: la marche du monde selon Plutarque*, Centro de Estudos Clássicos e Humanísticos da Universidade de Coimbra, Coimbra 2010, p. 93–108.

<sup>55</sup> Iamb. *De myst.* 3.7.3–5.

of knowledge acquisition, helps to disclose. The end of the third book of *De mysteriis* sheds further light on Iamblichus's reasons for excluding daemons from the divinatory process: they do not have any knowledge of the future.<sup>56</sup> Here Iamblichus wishes to disprove the opinion of the Christians – called 'the atheists' (τῶν ἀθέων δόξα) – who ascribe every divinatory practice to the evil daemon (πονηροῦ δαίμονος).<sup>57</sup> By depriving daemons of any function in prognosis, he completely dissociates divination from the lower orders of agents in the cosmos (including both the material and daemonic levels), and avoids criticism from Christians on this point.

One might therefore conclude that for both Plutarch and Iamblichus, the class of daemons is an important connecting element in their cosmologies, since it ensures the harmony and continuity of the cosmos.<sup>58</sup> But contrary to a common misconception that is suggested by ancient Christian critiques of divination unsupported by Platonic testimonies, they do not play any significant part in the mantic process.<sup>59</sup> It is indeed striking that despite the many differences between their respective approaches to divination, Plutarch and Iamblichus tend to assign a marginal and secondary role to the daemons, while ascribing every truthful prophetic inspiration exclusively to the divine, rather than the daemonic.

#### IV. *The Anthropology of Divination*

Iamblichus warns that the Delphic priestess, who is responsible for the reception and delivery of prophetic responses, needs to be free from material interferences. Like Plutarch, he resorts to the traditional *topos* according to which prophets need to be uneducated and simple-minded (εὐηθικοί),<sup>60</sup> and the Pythia be a naive and unexperienced woman.<sup>61</sup>

Iamblichus argues that ingenuous and uneducated people become able to pronounce wise words in virtue of their complete possession by the divine, a dynamic in which their own qualities play no role. For Iamblichus, inspiration

---

<sup>56</sup> Ibid., 3.18.17 and especially 3.22.37.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid., 3.31.73–74. See the very informative discussion on this point in SAFFREY, SEGONDS, LECERF, *Jamblique*, p. 300, n. 5–6 to p. 134.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid., 2.10.9–15; 4.7.9–11.

<sup>59</sup> See e.g. Joh. Chrys. *Hom. I Ep. Cor.* 29.12.1.

<sup>60</sup> Cf. Plat. *Ion* 534d–e; *Phdr.* 244b.

<sup>61</sup> Plutarch and Iamblichus both believe that the simplicity and naivety of the Pythia is responsible for her heightened receptive qualities. In order to explain this notion of receptivity they resort to different terms however, both of which have a deep cosmological resonance. For a concise analysis of the term ἐπιτηδειότης, employed by Iamblichus, see GLENN R. MORROW, JOHN M. DILLON, *Proclus' Commentary on Plato's Parmenides*, Princeton University Press, Princeton 1987, p. 13: « In the Neoplatonic universe, receptivity is all (ἐπιτηδειότης); it answers to the Christian concept of grace. The gods cannot confer gifts upon us unless and until we are ready to receive them ».

equals possession (θεοφορία, κατοκωχή), and implies the total loss of personal identity and self-consciousness on the part of the medium, such as the Pythia, who donates herself completely, with her body and her soul, to the divine power.<sup>62</sup> According to this view, divination is neither based on individual faculties, nor on a separation or abstraction of the intellect from the rest of the human compound.<sup>63</sup>

When one looks at Plutarch's dialogues, one sees that the Pythia needs to be *as pure as possible* and that the disturbing movements that affect her body and soul should be reduced to a *minimum*. Theon explains that prophetic inspiration (ἐνθουσιασμός) results from two simultaneous movements: the one intrinsic to the Pythia, according to which she contributes her own qualities and nature, and the other extrinsic, coming from outside (ἐξωθεν), i.e. from the god. Iamblichus emends this explanation almost literally: prophetic inspiration (ἐνθουσιασμός) is not an emotion (πάθος), and does not pertain to the psychic constitution and abilities of individuals, but comes *only* from outside (ἐξωθεν), which means, again, from the god.<sup>64</sup> In other words, Plutarch and Iamblichus agree that the medium is not in a completely frenzied state, which would mark a perversion toward what is irrational and inferior. Nevertheless, Iamblichus inclines towards a much more radical, de-materialised view of the psychophysical condition of the medium, in which human faculties play no role at all, and inspiration comes *only* from the god (ἐξωθεν).<sup>65</sup> For Iamblichus, the prophet is not in control of his- or herself, but completely controlled by the divine agent.<sup>66</sup>

The markedly cooperative activity that Plutarch proposes in *De Pythiae oraculis* argues instead that the god does not act as a puppeteer who takes control of human bodies.<sup>67</sup> As explained by Theon in this dialogue, the burden of the Pythia's personal qualities and nature cannot be removed from the process: her voice, rhythm, and words directly and inevitably shape the oracular responses that she utters. The god only puts images (φαντασίαι) into her mind and a light (φῶς) into her soul that allows her to see the future.<sup>68</sup> But if one zooms in on the interchange taking place between the priestess and the god, the exact way in which they are supposed to come into contact remains obscure. Plutarch's reader is left

---

<sup>62</sup> Iamb. *De myst.* 3.4.5 and 10-15.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.8.1.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.24.1-20; 35. Cf. SAFFREY, SEGONDS, LECERF, *Jamblique*, p. 279, n. 3 to p. 85.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.4.21.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.8.25. The receptivity of the seer is a secondary, but crucial aspect for Iamblichus. He attaches great significance to ritual preparations, which render the seer a pure and ideal receptacle of the divine. Cf. CRYSTAL ADDEY, « Ecstasy between Divine and Human: Re-assessing Agency in Iamblichean Divination and Theurgy », in JOHN F. FINAMORE, JOHN PHILIPS (eds.), *Literary, Philosophical and Religious Studies in the Platonic Tradition: Proceedings of the Seventh Annual International Society for Neoplatonic Studies Conference*, Academia Verlag, Bonn 2013, p. 7-24.

<sup>67</sup> Plut. *De Pyth. or.* 404F.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*, 397C-D.

wondering how the god, who is pure and transcendent, can put (παρίστημι) a light into the Pythia's mind, and images into the passionate, irrational, and inferior part of her soul. No answer is provided in the Delphic dialogues.

Iamblichus's explanation of Delphic prophecy seems to be aimed at covering precisely this gap, by attempting to bridge the huge distance that Plutarch's dualistic account had opened between the Pythia and Apollo. Iamblichus makes it clear that the god is present (πάρεστιν) but remains separate, and illuminates the Pythia from afar (χωριστῶς ὁ θεὸς ἐπιλάμπων).<sup>69</sup> In order to better understand how this 'illumination from afar' happens, it is necessary to look at some passages in which Iamblichus and Plutarch discuss the role of the imaginative faculty (φαντασία) in inspiration.

Imagination is often recalled in Plutarch's Delphic dialogues. In *De defectu oraculorum*, the Pythia's mantic faculty (μαντικόν) is defined as 'receptive' (δεκτικόν) of passions, images and predictive impressions (φαντασιῶν πάθεισι καὶ προαισθήσεωσιν). As this passage makes clear, *phantasia* is closely connected to the irrational element, an association confirmed by the correlated use of adverbs that express a lack of *logos* (ἄσυλλογίστως, ἄλόγως, φαντασιαστικῶς).<sup>70</sup>

By contrast, for Iamblichus only a divine, superior form of imagination gives access to accurate knowledge of the future (φανταστικὴ τοῦ μέλλοντος).<sup>71</sup> This type of *phantasia* does not rely on a passion of the soul (πάθος ψυχῆς), nor is it determined by inferior levels of causation.<sup>72</sup> The reason for this bifurcated view of *phantasia* ultimately lies in the structure of the cosmos itself.

The cosmos does not stand on passions (πάθη), but on rational principles (λόγοι). Since the world has an ordered, coherent, and rational nature, no truthful prediction can come from human passions; rather, there must be a superior, divine kind of imagination that is responsible for disclosing the future to us. No connection is possible between disordered motions (ἀτάκτους καὶ παραχῶδεις κινήσεις) and the future (τῷ μέλλοντι).<sup>73</sup> Whereas passion is exclusively concerned with the present, foreknowledge (πρόγνωσις) is oriented towards the future.

Iamblichus thus distinguishes between the human faculty of imagination (ἡ ἐν ἡμῖν φανταστικὴ δύναμις),<sup>74</sup> which may be either correct or incorrect, and divine

<sup>69</sup> Iamb. *De myst.* 3.11.50–66.

<sup>70</sup> Plut. *De def. or.* 432D and 433C.

<sup>71</sup> Iamb. *De myst.* 3.22.25.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid., 3.7.30.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid., 3.24.10.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid., 3.14.12. The vehicle of the soul, as the recipient of the divine *phantasia*, is purified through ritual preparations. On this topic, see the instructive article: CRYSTAL ADDEY, « In the Light of the

imaginings (φαντασίου θεϊά), which are always true, and transmitted through the ‘vehicle of divine light’ that takes hold of our imaginative power.<sup>75</sup> Light is the link connecting the transcendent and the contingent realms, and the means through which the god extends his power onto the entire cosmos.

### V. *Metaphysical Conceptions and the Platonic Tradition*

The preceding discussion indicates that Iamblichus clearly knew Plutarch’s works, and was even challenging and revising the theories advanced by the latter. Plutarch and Iamblichus both stand out in the Platonic tradition insofar as they developed the most detailed accounts of the practice and theory of divination, and attempted to systematise its different kinds.<sup>76</sup> The above analysis has shed light on crucial aspects of their respective approaches, on the basis of which I can now raise some more general considerations.

First, one may note that Plutarch and Iamblichus adopt two radically antithetical perspectives on divination. Although they share the same explanatory framework of multiple causation, they have opposing views on the relative importance of the two causes. While Iamblichus emphasises the role and relevance of primary (ultimate) causes, Plutarch emphasises the role of secondary (auxiliary) causes. The distinctive feature of Plutarch’s approach is his attention to materiality: he asserts that *both* contingent and transcendent factors are essential for the scientific study of earthly phenomena. He thereby grants full epistemic dignity to the material (inferior) elements; the *pneûma*, the ritual apparatus, the temple itself, the human medium, and even the daemons all need to be taken into account for an accurate scientific explanation of divination.<sup>77</sup>

---

Sphere: The Vehicle of the Soul and Subtle Body Practices in Neoplatonism », in JAY JOHNSTON, GEOFFREY SAMUEL (eds.), *Religion and the Subtle Body in Asia and the West: Between Mind and Body*, Routledge, London 2013 (Routledge Studies in Asian Religion and Philosophy), p. 149–167.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid., 2.14. The ‘vehicle of divine light’ is the correct interpretation of Iamblichus’s expression φωτὸς ἀγωγή, according to MATTEO AGNOSINI, « Giamblico e la divinazione κατὰ τὸ φανταστικόν. Verso l’integrazione di un genere divinatorio: il caso dell’idromanzia », in HELMUT SENG, LUCIANA G. SOARES SANTOPRETE, CHIARA. O. TOMMASI MORESCHINI (eds.), *Formen und Nebenformen des Platonismus in der Spätantike*, Universitätsverlag Winter, Heidelberg 2016, (Bibliotheca Chaldaica, 6), p. 376–382. See also SAFFREY, SEGONDS, LECERF, *Jamblique*, p. 287, n. 1–2 to p. 99.

<sup>76</sup> Plutarch wrote other works on this topic that are now lost, such as *De divinatione* (Περὶ μαντικῆς, fr. 147), which was apparently devoted to the art of divination (μαντικὴ τέχνη) in comparison with other *technai*.

<sup>77</sup> See esp. *De def. or.* 414F–415A, where Cleombrotus emphasises the fact that Plato was the first philosopher to give due importance to nature (φύσις) and matter (ὕλη), and thus introduced the notion of substrate (ὑποκείμενον). Later in the same dialogue (435F–436A), Lamprias explains the theory of so-called double causation, according to which *both* the superior-divine and inferior-material orders of causation have to be taken into account for a complete understanding

Conversely, Iamblichus advocates for the absolute *otherness* of divination, a divine gift and therefore a special phenomenon that cannot be compared with any other.<sup>78</sup> As indicated above, Iamblichus claims that it is impossible to know what happens during the divinatory act.<sup>79</sup> He deems bodies, passions, natural forces, material mixtures and dispositions merely accessory factors. Like Plutarch, he believes that divination can be studied in a scientific way, but his certainty rests on completely different grounds than those of Plutarch.

The scientific methodology adopted by Iamblichus for the study of divination in *De mysteriis* bears a close resemblance to Aristotle's theory of demonstrative reasoning (ἀποδείξις), which consists in deduction from true and self-evident (ἐξ ἀληθῶν καὶ πρώτων) principles (ἀρχαί).<sup>80</sup> According to Iamblichus, the supreme principle (ἀρχή) of divination is its divine nature and provenance: every truthful prediction (πρόγνωσις) comes from the gods. From this self-evident truth, all the different forms (εἶδη) of divination can be easily inferred in a scientific way (ἐπιστημονικῶς).<sup>81</sup> The system of prediction mirrors that of the whole cosmos: the common divine provenance of the cosmos and divination confirms the existence, coherence, and truth of both of them, on the basis of a perfect parallelism between ontological and epistemological stances.<sup>82</sup>

Despite this top-down approach, which emphasises transcendence, Iamblichus's position proves more pragmatic and well-defined than Plutarch's when it comes to the nature of the *messages* that divination is expected to disclose.

---

of phenomena. For Plutarch's conceptions of aetiology and science, see PIERLUIGI DONINI, « Problemi del pensiero scientifico a Roma: Il primo e il secondo secolo d.C. », in GABRIELE GIANNANTONI, MARIO VEGETTI (eds.), *La scienza ellenistica. Atti delle tre giornate di studio (Pavia, 14-16 aprile 1982)*, Bibliopolis, Napoli 1984, p. 353–374; GEORGE R. BOYS-STONES, « Plutarch on the Probable Principle of Cold: Epistemology and the *De primo frigido* », *Classical Quarterly*, 47 (1997), p. 227–238; MICHEL MEEUSEN, « How to Treat a Bee-Sting? On the Higher Cause in Plutarch's *Causes of Natural Phenomena*: the Case of *Quaest. Nat.* 36–37 », *Quaderni urbinati di cultura classica*, 105 (2013), p. 131–157. For an excellent overview of the roles and natures of causes in Plutarch and other Middle-Platonists, see FRANCO FERRARI, « Le système des causes dans le platonisme moyen », in CARLO NATALI, CRISTINA VIANO (eds.), *Aitia II. Avec ou sans Aristote. Le débat sur les causes à l'âge hellénistique et impérial*, Peeters, Leuven 2014, p. 185–205.

<sup>78</sup> Iamb. *De myst.* 3.1.10: οὐδ' ὅλως ἀνθρωπικόν ἐστι τὸ ἔργον, θεῖον δὲ καὶ ὑπερφυῆς ἄνωθέν τε ἀπὸ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ καταπεμπόμενον, ἀγέννητόν τε καὶ ἀίδιον αὐτοφυῶς προηγείται.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.1.1 and *supra*.

<sup>80</sup> Aristot. *Top.* 1.100a18.

<sup>81</sup> Iamb. *De myst.* 3.1.50.

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.* Note here that the distinction between two kinds of divination follows the same line as Cicero's well-known classification: *Duo sunt enim divinandi genera, quorum alterum artis est, alterum naturae* (Cic. *De div.* 1.6.11–12). For Iamblichus, technical divination is the exegesis of the signs scattered by the gods in the cosmos (Iamb. *De myst.* 3.16.35). *Sympatheia*, which is the mutual interconnection of all the cosmic elements, makes it possible for the divine signs to be propagated all over the world. Iamblichus deems technical divination, which relies on material tokens and employs logical inference and conjecture, inferior to natural-inspired divination.

Indeed, Plutarch never explicitly discusses the content of the divinatory responses, or the knowledge they might reveal to the enquirers,<sup>83</sup> except in scattered references to the predictive function of divination in the Delphic dialogues.<sup>84</sup> A slightly different attitude emerges in the treatment of *individual* (as opposed to *oracular*) divination. In *De genio Socratis*, messages sent by the gods to chosen individuals on earth amount to the disclosure of a sort of ‘divine education’ (παιδαγωγία), which guides them through the path of virtue.<sup>85</sup> The generally vague conceptualisation of the cognitive dimension of divination reveals something crucial about Plutarch’s interests and methodology: he conceives divination and its intrinsic physical and psychological aspects as a phenomenon worthy of study *per se*, regardless of the *content* that it is expected to disclose.

Iamblichus, on the other hand, is very concerned about the kinds of messages that divination reveals, and especially the spheres of knowledge that it grants access to.<sup>86</sup> The foremost evidence for Iamblichus’s deep interest in the cognitive-epistemic functions of divination is the substantial identification that he establishes between the words *mantikê* (μαντική) and *prognôsis* (πρόγνωσις), which he employs interchangeably, thus clarifying that he intends divination to be a predictive tool.<sup>87</sup> In this regard, it is important to bear in mind that the centuries between Plutarch and Iamblichus witnessed a considerable development in science, in which the notion of *prognôsis* played a leading role, especially in the field of medicine, as confirmed by the works of Galen of Pergamum. Galen had introduced ‘prognosis’ as a scientifically relevant concept, and defined it as the future outcome of the present physical condition of patients, inferred from the

---

<sup>83</sup> One possible exception is his complaint about the poor quality of enquiries addressed to the oracle (*De E* 386C; *De Pyth. or.* 408C), but even here he does not discuss the content of the oracle’s responses.

<sup>84</sup> Sarapion, a Stoic poet, and character in *De Pythiae oraculis*, reports that some prodigies occurred before key historical events in Rome (note his use of the words πρόγνωσιν, προειπεῖν, and προλέγω in 399D; cf. 398E–F). Lamprias again calls the mantic faculty of the soul the ‘prognostic part’ in *De defectu oraculorum* (πρόγνωστικὸν μέρος, 433A). The Stoic philosopher Theon employs the notion of prediction (πρόγνωσις) in a typically Stoic manner in *De E apud Delphos* (387B), by referring to the order of the interconnected series of past, present, and future events, which makes prediction possible. But none of these cases imply that for Plutarch divination must be predictive *per se*.

<sup>85</sup> Plut. *De genio Socr.* 593B.

<sup>86</sup> Iamb. *De myst.* 3.1.23: θεάματά τε ἔχει θεῖα καὶ θεωρήματα ἐπιστημονικά. In this regard, we can define theurgy as an epistemological and ethical tool that transforms the consciousness and soul of the individual, or as a practice that leads to an ontological and ethical transformation of the soul. Cf. ADDEY, *Divination and Theurgy in Neoplatonism*, ch. 7, esp. p. 269–273.

<sup>87</sup> For an excellent analysis of the notion of *prognôsis* in Iamblichus, see PETER T. STRUCK, *Divination and Human Nature: A Cognitive History of Intuition in Classical Antiquity*, Princeton University Press, Princeton 2016, p. 243–246.

stochastic-combinatory analysis of their bodily symptoms (τεκμήρια).<sup>88</sup> His methodology combined this empirical approach with a theoretical understanding of the discipline of medicine as founded on rational principles.

The extensive use of the notion of prognosis in medical treatises might have played into Iamblichus's interest in the epistemic dimension of divination, and in the identity that he establishes between 'divination' and 'prediction'<sup>89</sup> – although he intends 'prediction' in a very broad sense, i.e. as a tool of self-knowledge, that helps one access divine wisdom, and aims at the ethical betterment of the recipient.<sup>90</sup>

That divination can not only be a subject of scientific study, but can also give access to scientific knowledge, is well exemplified by Iamblichus's definition of divination as a practice that permits 'divine visions and scientific insights' (θεάματα [...] θεῖα καὶ θεωρήματα ἐπιστημονικά) through divine actions and signs (θείοις ἔργοις ἢ σημείοις).<sup>91</sup> The important adjective here is 'scientific' (ἐπιστημονικά). What does it mean to have 'scientific visions'? This is certainly consistent with the fact that Iamblichus intends to offer a well ordered account of scientific theology (ἐπιστημονικῆς θεολογίας ἢ διάταξις) in *De mysteriis*.<sup>92</sup> But it can be further clarified by a passage in which Iamblichus discusses the prophetic power of dreams. Dreams that allow for a vivid vision of the future are those in which the intellect is detached from the body, and therefore able to attain a superior kind of knowledge. This notion is shared by Plutarch, who in *De genio Socratis* provides a mythical account of the capacity of intellect (νοῦς) to separate itself from the rest of the human being and embark in a cosmic journey, in which it grasps eschatological truths. This is, however, a mythical narrative, a stylistic choice and device that provides an oblique way to indicate the truth.<sup>93</sup> Iamblichus, instead, explains straightaway that the detachment of the intellect from the body

---

<sup>88</sup> See Gal. *Prog.* 2.27.5–3.18.1. It is also important to note that Galen excluded any kind of divinatory practice from the field of medical prognosis in order to defend himself against accusations of being a sorcerer (γόης), rather than a competent physician. Cf. ROBERT J. HANKINSON, « Prédiction, prophétie, pronostic: la gnoseologie de l'avenir dans la divination et la médecine antique », in JOSÉ KANY-TURPIN (ed.), *Signe et prédiction dans l'Antiquité: actes du colloque international interdisciplinaire de Créteil et de Paris, 22-23-24 mai 2003*, Publications de l'Université de Saint-Étienne, Saint-Étienne 2005, p. 147–162; PIETER VAN NUFFELEN, « Galen, Divination and the Status of Medicine », *Classical Quarterly*, 64 (2014), p. 337–352.

<sup>89</sup> This does not mean that Iamblichus would endorse the truthfulness of inductive divination based on *stochasmos*, which he deems inaccurate and fallible (see Iamb. *De myst.* 3.15).

<sup>90</sup> On the ethical benefits of divination for Iamblichus, see n. 84 *supra*.

<sup>91</sup> Iamb. *De myst.* 3.1.21–24: the translation is from CLARKE, DILLON, AND HERSHBELL, *Iamblichus*, p. 119. The French edition of SAFFREY, SEGONDS, AND LECERF has: « des visions divines et des méditations qui rendent capables de savoir » (*Jamblique*, p. 76).

<sup>92</sup> Iamb. *De myst.* 1.4.68; see also 1.8.112 and 2.11.61.

<sup>93</sup> Plut. *De genio Socr.* 589F–590A.

allows for a *direct* apprehension of superior truths. Divination in Iamblichus becomes *de iure* a completely adequate means of knowledge acquisition in the field of god, essences, and principles (ἁσώματες οὐσίαι). When the purest form of divination (τελειότερα μαντεία) occurs, and the divine, intellectual part (τὸ νοερόν [...] καὶ τὸ θεῖον) of the soul is united with superior entities, abstract concepts are disclosed to it as well as individual destiny. In this process, the whole soul receives true knowledge of the intelligible world, including pure visions of the gods and incorporeals,<sup>94</sup> and this is what ‘scientific visions’ seems to signify.

The possibility for divination to disclose the secrets of the material and intelligible realms is rooted in the very structure of the cosmos. Ordinary as well as divinatory knowledge encompasses both transcendent principles, and things that come into existence, arranged starting from their original cause.<sup>95</sup> As a consequence, divination cannot qualify as an *intuition* (ἐπιβολή, ἐπαφή).<sup>96</sup> Rather, the possibility of foreknowledge is rooted in the complete interconnection of all causes, an idea reminiscent of Stoic *sympatheia*, but which Iamblichus re-interprets in a Platonic framework, while limiting its influence to the sublunary realm.<sup>97</sup> The god and everything divine is superior to necessity (ἀνάγκη), which is restricted to the material cosmos.

The action of the gods demonstrates their love for humankind (φιλανθρωπία). The notion of *philanthrōpia* is strongly present already in Plutarch, who so names the care and benevolence of the gods towards humans and the material world, exerted through providence.<sup>98</sup> In Iamblichus, *philanthrōpia* becomes a divine bond (θεία φιλία) that envelops the entire cosmos (both down- and upwards), and guarantees the harmony and interconnection of all its components. It is this divine interrelation, lovingly embracing the whole world and all its parts,<sup>99</sup> that makes

<sup>94</sup> Iamb. *De myst.* 3.3.26–33.

<sup>95</sup> See the example of the god Asclepius, who delivers therapeutic remedies — Iamb. *De myst.* 3.4.43.

<sup>96</sup> Peter Struck devotes a whole, thought-provoking chapter to this topic in his 2016 monograph *Divination and Human Nature*. For the difference between intuition and instinct on the one hand, and divination on the other, see Iamb. *De myst.* 3.26.

<sup>97</sup> Iamb. *De myst.* 3.18.30 and 26.40; cf. Plut. *De def. or.* 432B, which argues for a natural kinship between the psychic faculty of memory and the future.

<sup>98</sup> Plut. *Num.* 4.4. and *De def. or.* 413C. Essential works on Plutarch’s conception of providence are: JAN OPSOMER, « Quelques réflexions sur la notion de Providence chez Plutarque », in CARLOS SCHRADER, JOSÉ VELA, VICENTE RAMÓN (eds.), *Plutarco y la Historia. Actas del V Simposio Español sobre Plutarco, Zaragoza, 20-22 de junio de 1996*, Pressas de la Universidad de Zaragoza, Zaragoza 1997 (Monografías de Filología Griega, 8), p. 343–356; FRANCO FERRARI, « Provvidenza platonica o autocontemplazione aristotelica: la scelta di Plutarco », in LUC VAN DER STOCKT, FRANCES BONNER TITCHENER, HEINZ GERD INGENKAMP, AURELIO PÉREZ JIMÉNEZ (eds.), *Gods, Daimones, Rituals, Myths and History of Religions in Plutarch’s Works: Studies Devoted to Professor Frederick E. Brenk by the International Plutarch Society*, Universidad de Málaga, Málaga 2010, p. 177–192.

<sup>99</sup> Cf. Iamb. *De myst.* 3.12.10 and 25.

inspiration and prediction possible.<sup>100</sup> One of Iamblichus's most impressive innovations, that is, his novel interpretation of the *pneûma* (discussed in section III), is connected with the cosmological model he proposes. For Iamblichus, the *pneûma* is not only essential for Delphic divination, but also has an explanatory function, and plays a crucial ontological role within the cosmic structure.<sup>101</sup> That said however, while bringing the *pneûma* to the side of spirituality and transcendence, he provides a much less favourable treatment of matter. Iamblichus's ontology is constructed around one central assumption – repeated above, in various formulations – according to which the transcendent realm (the gods and the planets) is superior to the material realm and free from contamination (which Iamblichus refers to with verbs such as: ἐπιθολόω, μιάνω, χραίνω). He even argues that the historically significant practice of animal sacrifice, which was intended as one of the means of communication between mankind and the gods, is essentially worthless, because it does not establish any connection between these two worlds.<sup>102</sup>

There is only one case of effective communication between the contingent and the divine, which is the one established by the theurgist. The theurgist is able to connect to the transcendent realm, by acting according to the laws of sympathy and activating the right symbols in the material cosmos.<sup>103</sup> Iamblichus's views on divination can thus be modelled as a kind of pyramid. The lowest levels are occupied by the more fallacious forms of divination, in which matter plays a significant role,<sup>104</sup> while the higher levels incorporate practices that are less and less entangled with materiality, and hence purer and closer to philosophical contemplation (θεωρία). At the top of the pyramid is 'divine divination,' the truthful knowledge and science of the future, which is extremely useful and ennobling for human souls.<sup>105</sup> By thus envisioning Iamblichus's different forms of divination as forming a pyramidal structure we are able to escape the aporetic need to identify Iamblichus as either a dualist or a monist.

---

<sup>100</sup> The beneficent action of the gods within the contingent world, and on behalf of human beings is called *energeia* (ἐνέργεια); it is a transcendent force in which human beings participate (Iamb. *De myst.* 3.17.10). For a thought-provoking reading of the dynamics of *sympatheia* as a force embracing the whole cosmos, interpreted in light of philosophical friendship (φιλία), see the excellent work by MICHAEL SCHRAMM, *Freundschaft im Neuplatonismus, Politisches Denken und Sozialphilosophie von Plotin bis Kaiser Julian*, De Gruyter, Berlin-Boston 2013, ch. 2: *Jamblich*, esp. p. 126–129.

<sup>101</sup> See also VAN LIEFFERINGE, *Jamblique*, p. 44.

<sup>102</sup> Iamb. *De myst.* 5.4.32–35.

<sup>103</sup> For the use of symbols in rites and theurgy, see the fascinating passage: Iamb. *De myst.* 7.2.

<sup>104</sup> Some examples include the reading of *charaktères* (3.13.1), all wrong kinds of inspiration (3.14.30 and 3.25.1–10), and daemonic invocations (3.22.1).

<sup>105</sup> Iamb. *De myst.* 3.10.3–4.

VI. *Concluding Remarks*

This study may also tell us something about the wider developments of the Platonic tradition in later antiquity. In the two centuries intervening between Plutarch and Iamblichus, divination became increasingly relevant for pagans, who were forced to come to terms with the vision of prophecy proposed by Christians. Many pagan philosophers, especially Platonists and Stoics, did their best to support the cause of divination, and this theoretical endeavour often required a profound revision of other areas of philosophical reflection, such as theology, ontology, psychology, and the theory of knowledge. Eventually, it resulted in the accentuation of transcendence, a process that is generally referred to as the 'sacralisation' of philosophical discourse.

Platonist philosophers share a specific line of reflection on divination that distinguishes them from other ancient thinkers. Due to their generally twofold ontological system, the first and foremost problem they face is to justify the communication between the contingent and the transcendent plan, a problematic interaction on which the whole architecture of divination is inevitably founded. Plutarch's main theoretical difficulties concern the explanation for how material factors such as the *pneûma* might come into contact with and affect immaterial elements such as the soul, and vice versa. Iamblichus faces the same questions, but makes substantial changes to the components involved in the process of divination – a tactical manoeuvre, rooted in his metaphysical system, that allows him to find effective solutions to questions Plutarch left unsolved. The main improvement lies in Iamblichus's new way of conceiving the material principle. While Plutarch introduces contingency and irrationality as essential elements that determine earthly phenomena and their explanations, Iamblichus designs a cosmology in which the power of divine *noûs* is preeminent over materiality.<sup>106</sup> By making the divine power an overarching governing and causal principle that embraces the entire world, Iamblichus escapes the traditional Platonic *aporia* concerning the huge chasm between human beings and the gods. Finally, the reflections of both Plutarch and Iamblichus prove that it is impossible to theorise divination without including it in a coherent and comprehensive account of the cosmos.

---

<sup>106</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.20.5–10.

### Bibliography

Addey, Crystal, « Ecstasy between Divine and Human: Re-assessing Agency in Iamblichean Divination and Theurgy », in John F. Finamore, John Philips (eds.), *Literary, Philosophical and Religious Studies in the Platonic Tradition: Proceedings of the Seventh Annual International Society for Neoplatonic Studies Conference*, Academia Verlag, Bonn 2013, p. 7–24.

— « In the Light of the Sphere: The Vehicle of the Soul and Subtle Body Practices in Neoplatonism », in Jay Johnston, Geoffrey Samuel (eds.), *Religion and the Subtle Body in Asia and the West: Between Mind and Body*, Routledge, London 2013 (Routledge Studies in Asian Religion and Philosophy), p. 149–167.

— *Divination and Theurgy in Neoplatonism. Oracles of the Gods*, Ashgate, Farnham-Burlington 2014 (Ashgate Studies in Philosophy and Theology in Late Antiquity).

Agosini, Matteo, « Giamblico e la divinazione κατὰ τὸ φανταστικόν. Verso l'integrazione di un genere divinatorio: il caso dell'idromanzia », in Helmut Seng, Luciana G. Soares Santoprete, Chiara. O. Tommasi Moreschini (eds.), *Formen und Nebenformen des Platonismus in der Spätantike*, Universitätsverlag Winter, Heidelberg 2016 (Bibliotheca Chaldaica, 6), p. 376–382.

Athanassiadi, Polymnia, « A Global Response to Crisis: Iamblichus' Religious Programme », in Christoph Riedweg (ed.), *PHILOSOPHIA in der Konkurrenz von Schulen, Wissenschaften und Religionen: Zur Pluralisierung des Philosophiebegriffs in Kaiserzeit und Spätantike*, Berlin, De Gruyter 2017, p. 257–290.

— « Dreams, Theurgy and Freelance Divination: The Testimony of Iamblichus », *Journal of the Roman Studies*, 83 (1993), p. 115–130.

Babbitt, Frank C., *Plutarch. Moralia, Volume V: Isis and Osiris. The E at Delphi. The Oracles at Delphi No Longer Given in Verse. The Obsolescence of Oracles*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge (MA) 1936 (Loeb Classical Library, 306).

Boys-Stones, George R., « Plutarch on the Probable Principle of Cold: Epistemology and the *De primo frígido* », *Classical Quarterly*, 47 (1997), p. 227–238.

— *Platonist Philosophy 80 BC to AD 250. An Introduction and Collection of Sources in Translation*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 2018 (Cambridge Source Books in Post-Hellenistic Philosophy).

Busine, Aude, « La consultation de l'oracle d'Apollon dans le discours de Jamblique », *Kernos*, 15 (2002), p. 187–198.

Casanova, Angelo, « Plutarch as Apollo's Priest at Delphi », in Lautaro Roig Lanzillotta, Israel Muñoz Gallarte (eds.), *Plutarch in the Religious and Philosophical*

*Discourse of Late Antiquity*, Brill, Leiden 2012 (Studies in Platonism, Neoplatonism, and the Platonic Tradition, 14), p. 151–157.

Clarke, Emma C., John M. Dillon, Jackson P. Hershbell, *Iamblichus: De mysteriis. Translated with an Introduction and Notes*, Society of Biblical literature, Atlanta 2003 (Writings from the Greco-Roman World, 4).

Dillon, John M., Wolfgang Polleichtner, *Iamblichus of Chalcis: The Letters, Edited with a Translation and Commentary*, Society of Biblical Literature, Atlanta 2009 (Writings from the Greco-Roman World, 19).

Donini, Pierluigi, « Problemi del pensiero scientifico a Roma: Il primo e il secondo secolo d.C. », in Gabriele Giannantoni, Mario Vegetti (eds.), *La scienza ellenistica. Atti delle tre giornate di studio (Pavia, 14–16 aprile 1982)*, Bibliopolis, Napoli 1984, p. 353–374.

Ferrari, Franco, « Provvidenza platonica o autocontemplazione aristotelica: la scelta di Plutarco », in Luc Van der Stockt, Frances Bonner Titchener, Heinz Gerd Ingenkamp, Aurelio Pérez Jiménez (eds.), *Gods, Daimones, Rituals, Myths and History of Religions in Plutarch's Works: Studies Devoted to Professor Frederick E. Brenk by the International Plutarch Society*, Universidad de Málaga, Málaga 2010, p. 177–192.

— « Le système des causes dans le platonisme moyen », in Carlo Natali, Cristina Viano (eds.), *Aitia II. Avec ou sans Aristote. Le débat sur les causes à l'âge hellénistique et impérial*, Peeters, Leuven 2014, p. 185–205.

Finamore, John, John Dillon, *Iamblichus' De anima. Text, Translation, and Commentary*, Leiden–Boston, Brill 2002 (Philosophia Antiqua, 92).

Flacelière, Robert, Jean Irigoin, *Plutarque, Oeuvres morales. Tome I, 1re partie: Introduction générale, Traités 1–2*, Les Belles Lettres, Paris 1987, (Collection des universités de France Série grecque - Collection Budé, 312).

Frazier, Françoise, « Delphes dans les 'Dialogues Pythiques' de Plutarque: un 'lieu inspiré' », in Jean-Marc Luce (ed.), *Delphes et la littérature d'Homère à nos jours*, Classiques Garnier, Paris 2018, p. 209–233.

Frenschkowski, Marco, *Offenbarung und Epiphanie. Band 1: Grundlagen des spätantiken und frühchristlichen Offenbarungsglaubens*, Mohr Siebeck, Tübingen 1995 (Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament, 2/79).

Lecerf, Adrien, « L'évolution du concept de principe dans le premier néoplatonisme. Un bref parcours », in Marc-Antoine Gavray, Alexandra Michalewski (eds.), *Les principes cosmologiques du platonisme: Origines, influences et systématisation*, Brepols, Turnhout 2017, p. 187–223.

Meeusen, Michiel, « How to Treat a Bee-Sting? On the Higher Cause in Plutarch's *Causes of Natural Phenomena*: the Case of *Quaest. Nat.* 36-37 », *Quaderni urbinati di cultura classica*, 105 (2013), p. 131–157.

Morrow, Glenn R., John M. Dillon, *Proclus' Commentary on Plato's Parmenides*, Princeton University Press, Princeton 1987.

Opsomer, Jan, « Quelques réflexions sur la notion de Providence chez Plutarque », in Carlos Schrader, José Vela, Vicente Ramón (eds.), *Plutarco y la Historia. Actas del V Simposio Español sobre Plutarco, Zaragoza, 20-22 de junio de 1996*, Prensas de la Universidad de Zaragoza, Zaragoza 1997, p. 343–356 (Monografías de Filología Griega, 8).

— « Neoplatonist Criticisms of Plutarch », in Aurelio Pérez Jiménez, Francesc C. Bordoy (eds.), *Estudios sobre Plutarco: Misticismo y religiones místicas en la obra de Plutarco. Actas del VII Simposio Español sobre Plutarco, Palma de Mallorca, 2-4 de noviembre de 2000*, Ediciones Clásicas Madrid, Madrid-Málaga 2001, p. 187–199.

— « Self-motion according to Iamblichus », *Elenchos*, 33 (2012), p. 259–290.

Panagiotis, Pavlos, « Christian Insights into Plotinus' Metaphysics and his Concept of Aptitude (Ἐπιτηδεϊότης) », *Acropolis*, 1 (2017), p. 5–32.

Pérez Jiménez, Aurelio, « Plutarch and Transgressions of Nature: Stylistic Analysis of *De facie in orbe lunae* 926C-D », in Michiel Meeusen, Luc Van der Stockt (eds.), *Natural Spectaculars: Aspects of Plutarch's Philosophy of Nature*, Leuven University Press, Leuven 2015 (Plutarchea Hypomnemata), p. 215–226.

Roskam, Geert, « Socrates' δαίμόνιον in Maximus of Tyre, Apuleius, and Plutarch », in Delfim F. Leão, Françoise Frazier (eds.), *Tychè et Pronoia: la marche du monde selon Plutarque*, Centro de Estudos Clássicos e Humanísticos da Universidade de Coimbra, Coimbra 2010, p. 93–108.

Saffrey, Henri Dominique, Alain-Philippe Segonds (eds.), *Porphyre. Lettre à Anébon l'Égyptien. Texte établi, traduit et commenté*, Les Belles Lettres, Paris 2012 (Collection des universités de France Série grecque - Collection Budé 492).

Saffrey, Henri Dominique, Alain-Philippe Segonds, Adrien Lecerf (eds.), *Jamblique, Réponse à Porphyre (De mysteriis). Texte établi, traduit et annoté*, Les Belles Lettres, Paris 2013 (Collection des universités de France Série grecque - Collection Budé 496).

Sandbach, Francis H., *Plutarch. Moralia, Volume XV: Fragments*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge (MA) 1969 (Loeb Classical Library, 429).

Schramm, Michael, *Freundschaft im Neuplatonismus, Politisches Denken und Sozialphilosophie von Plotin bis Kaiser Julian*, De Gruyter, Berlin–Boston 2013.

Sheppard, Anne, « *Phantasia* and Inspiration in Neoplatonism », in Mark Loyal (ed.), *Studies in Plato and the Platonic Tradition. Essays Presented to John Whittaker*, Routledge, London 1997, p. 201–210.

Simonetti, Elsa G., *A Perfect Medium? Oracular Divination in the Thought of Plutarch*, Leuven University Press, Leuven 2017, (Plutarchea Hypomnemata).

— « Plutarch and the Neoplatonists: Porphyry, Proklos, Simplicios », in Katerina Oikonomopoulou, Sophia Xenophontos (eds.), *Brill's Companion to the Reception of Plutarch*, Brill, Leiden-Boston 2019 (Brill's Companions to Classical Reception, 20), p. 136–153.

Struck, Peter T., *Divination and Human Nature: A Cognitive History of Intuition in Classical Antiquity*, Princeton University Press, Princeton 2016.

— « Iamblichus on Divination: Divine Power and Human Intuition », in Anna Marmodoro, Irini F. Viltanioti (eds.), *Divine Powers in Late Antiquity*, Oxford University Press, Oxford 2017, p. 75–87.

Tanaseanu-Döbler, Ilinca, *Theurgy in Late Antiquity. The Invention of a Ritual Tradition*, Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht Verlage, Göttingen 2013 (Beiträge zur europäischen Religionsgeschichte, 1).

Van der Eijk, Philip J., *Medicine and Philosophy in Classical Antiquity: Doctors and Philosophers on Nature, Soul, Health and Disease*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 2005.

Van Liefferinge, Carine, « Jamblique, lecteur de Plutarque? », *Revue de philosophie ancienne*, 16 (1998), p. 37–53.

Van Nuffelen, Peter, « Galen, divination and the status of medicine », *Classical Quarterly*, 64 (2014), p. 337–352.



# MS PARIS, BIBLIOTHÈQUE DES MISSIONS ÉTRANGÈRES 1069: THE FRENCH-ARABIC DICTIONARY OF FRANÇOIS PETIS DE LA CROIX (1653–1713)?

SONJA BRENTJES  
MAX PLANCK INSTITUTE FOR THE HISTORY OF SCIENCE

## *Abstract*

This paper analyses an anonymous French-Arabic dictionary preserved in Paris, Bibliothèque des Missions étrangères. I argue that it seems to be a copy of a dictionary compiled by the early modern French Orientalist and diplomat François Pétil de la Croix, the younger. Beyond the question of authorship, I survey the themes and structure of the dictionary and discuss the compiler's cultural insights into Ottoman and Safavid societies and the cultural barriers that his translations reveal.

## *Key Words*

Study of Arabic in Early Modern France, Travelers in the Middle East, History of Knowledge.



Dictionaries, grammars and conversation books were important tools in the seventeenth century for cross-cultural contacts. Many of them, whether complete or merely fragmentary, are preserved, but rarely studied, although they provide insights into the expectations and skills of the compilers to engage directly with a person of another culture. The vocabulary and phrases found in those sources document the scope and character of the topics about which a compiler wished to talk or write. They illustrate his education, his beliefs and his knowledge of foreign languages. Many of the works assembled by missionaries, merchants, interpreters, scholars or gentlemen travelers from France, Italy, England, German principalities or the Low Countries do not contain more than a few hundred words, rudimentary elements of grammar or a small set of phrases. Their main themes are religion, aspects of daily life, desires to interact with women and some basic knowledge of arithmetic, astronomy, geometry or geography.

A minority of dictionaries and grammars, in particular, was more fulsome and included several hundreds of words or described the main components of Arabic, Persian or Turkish grammar, often following the standards of Latin grammar

books. Exceptional examples of dictionaries also exist, which can cover several ten thousand words plus at times a series of phrases. Such an exceptional dictionary is the object, which I will discuss in this paper. It is the big French-Arabic dictionary MS 1069, owned by the library of the Missions étrangères in Paris. It contains 1905 pages. Neither its date nor its author is known. MS 1069 is the only so far known version of this large collection of words and phrases with the specifics that characterize them. No other known French-Arabic dictionary from the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries resembles it. Hence, all interpretations offered in this paper are based on this single, anonymous manuscript.

My paper surveys the content of the dictionary and highlights some of the cultural achievements made by its compiler as well as some of the cultural obstacles, which he did not manage to overcome. In the first section, I offer arguments for the time of compilation and a proposal for who the compiler of the long list of words and expressions may have been. The second section supports my proposal regarding the compiler by information taken mainly from the diary of this man. The third section discusses the dictionary's structure and formal properties. Sections four to six analyze the content of the dictionary according to its major word clusters: Muslim education and cultures; religious matters; politics, navigation, crafts and commerce. Section seven surveys examples expressing the cultural boundaries with which the compiler struggled and how he dealt with them. Section eight summarizes the results and highlights the main insights into a prime example of an early modern dictionary of two languages of essential relevance to politics, trade and culture.

### *I. Time of Composition and Possible Authorship*

The Missions étrangères were founded in Paris between 1658 and 1663 and run since 1659 by the Propaganda Fide in Rome. This sets a lower limit for the acquisition of the dictionary.

No further information about the origin of the work is available in the library of the Missions. Hence, the only available source for reflecting about when this project has been carried out and who might have composed it is the dictionary's content. This content provides clear information about the time span during which the collection was finalized. The repeated references to Louis XIV as a child and then the ruling king of France limits its production to the period between 1643 and 1715.<sup>1</sup> The search for the historical origin of key words in MS 1069 in the database built for the *Dictionnaire de l'Académie Française* documents the existence

---

<sup>1</sup> MS 1069, p. 115, 264, 1002, 1490, 1580, 1685.

of a number of terms from the seventeenth century.<sup>2</sup> This confirms that the work compiling this large set of words was carried out in the second half of the seventeenth or at the latest in the early eighteenth centuries.

These results do not prove, however, that the version extant today in the library of the Missions étrangères is the version written or dictated by its compiler. MS 1069 contains a few elements that suggest its being a copy of an earlier version. One of those elements is the contradiction between the French and the Arabic terms in a single line. Examples are Alexis and *rashā* (spelled in this manner) or Allidade (spelled in this manner) and Ya'qūb, Dalīla.<sup>3</sup> Alexis is an ancient Greek male personal name; *rashā*, as spelled and vocalized in the dictionary, can either be read as the verb *rashā* or the noun *rishā*,<sup>4</sup> none of which represents a personal name. Neither are the two words semantically related to Alexis, since Alexis seems to be derived from *aléxō* to ward off, turn away, defend etc., while *rashā* and *rishā* mean very different things, among them to bribe or to conciliate someone with something, the rope of a bucket or a lunar mansion.<sup>4</sup> *Allidade*, being a misspelled medieval transliteration of *al-iḏāda*, a kind of ruler attached to an astrolabe, some other instrument or functioning itself as such, is clearly not related to the ancient lovers Jacob and Delila. Such mistakes point to a loss of at least one, if not more lines during copying.<sup>5</sup>

A second indicator that MS 1069 is a copy of an earlier version is the existence of elementary scribal mistakes in comparison to correctly written related words. An example is the absence of the *alif* as a carrier of a *kisra* (a short i) in front of *ṭāliyānī*, which corresponds to *Italien*.<sup>6</sup> In the line above, *Italie* is properly transcribed with such an *alif* as *iṭāliya*. Other examples of this type are the vocalization of *madrasatun* with a sign for the absence of a vowel (*sukūn*) not only on the *dāl* (d), but also on the *mīm* (m), the vocalization of *bi-'awn* (*illāhi wa-tawfīqihī*) with two *dammas* (short u) instead of one *damma* and one *sukūn*, the misspelling of *daftarun* as *waftarun*, the replacement of *yā* (a long i) in *ta'rīf* by a *kisra*, the spelling of *ya'dubu* with a *waw* (a long u) instead of a *damma* (*ya'dūbu*), the confused rendering of perspective as *'ilm al-manṭūrāt* instead of *'ilm al-manẓūrāt* or more appropriately *'ilm*

<sup>2</sup> See, for instance, the following entries at < <https://www.dictionnaire-academie.fr> > (last accessed 17 March 2021): *canicule* (for Sirius); *censure*; *propagande*; *dissertation*; *exactitude*; *laboratoire*; *libertinage*; *pléonasme*; *raffinement* (sic!); *salon* (MS 1069, p. 198, 219, 322, 522, 658, 957, 982, 1301, 1438, 1593).

<sup>3</sup> MS 1069, p. 36, 39.

<sup>4</sup> < <http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/morph?l=a%29le%2Fcew&la=greek#lexicon> > (last accessed 17 March 2021); EDWARD WILLIAM LANE, *An Arabic-English Lexicon*, 8 parts, Librairie du Liban, Beirut 1968, pt. III, 1001.

<sup>5</sup> MS 1069, p. 103.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 948.

*al-manāẓir* or the presentation of the Arabic translations for *jardin potager* and *potage* in a wrong order.<sup>7</sup>

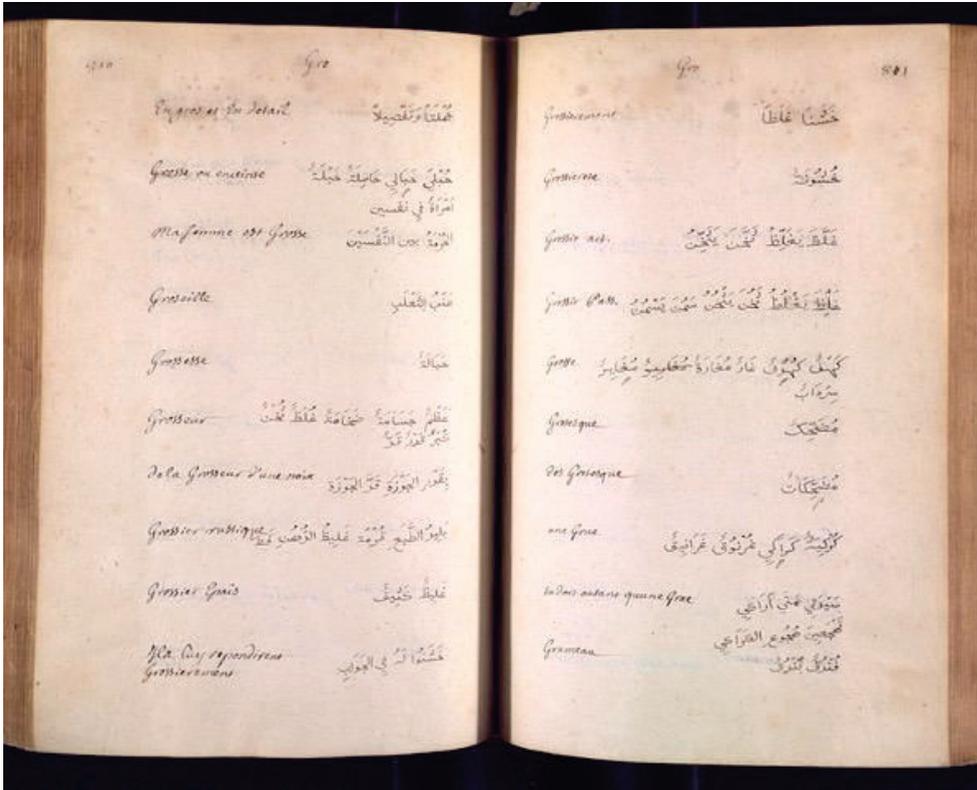


Fig. 1. MS 1069, p. 800–801. © Institut de recherche France-Asie/MEP

A third element identifying MS 1069 as a copy are a few instances where a word or more were crossed out. A particularly forceful example is the crossing out of the Persian word *hindūwānah* (water melon) on page 1048 for *membrane* followed by *jildun rakikun*, because it appears in its proper place in the previous line as one of three translations of *melon d'eau*.

In addition to entries pointing to a copyist at work there are also entries that document the involvement of more than one person in MS 1069. Such entries appear in visibly different handwritings, often also the usage of a differently colored ink and at times in references to other pages, which do not agree with the content of the corresponding page numbers in MS 1069. One such case appears, for

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., p. 5, 27, 59, 75, 443, 1257, 1332, 1344.

instance, in the transliteration of numerals on page 220. The person who was responsible for this transliteration used spoken, not literary Arabic such as *tlatamya* instead of *thalāthami'a*. Another case is the addition of the words *Lievre* with its Arabic correspondances *arnab*, *arānib* and *Abūl-Ḥasan* on page 986 and *Livre* for *kitāb*, *kutub* and *safr* (sic) on page 993. Both examples are written by at least one different hand with a different ink. The first example refers the entry to page 980 and the second to pages 981 and 982. These entries probably refer to a second dictionary from which the lemmata were added. While this second dictionary can of course have been the work of some other compiler I think it is more likely that the additional entries were taken from an older version of the dictionary extant in MS 1069. The page numbers provide a justification of why they were added and a specification of where they were found in this older version. Hence, the person who provided those references participated most likely as a proofreader of MS 1069.

As for the collection's composer two elements in the manuscript of the Missions étrangères provide suggestions. One is the appearance of two more names on its pages. The other are some of the specifics of its content with regard to lexic and information about Muslim education and intellectual traditions. The two names are « monsieur du bois » and « monsieur de la Croix », following one after the other as illustrations of the lemma « monsieur ». <sup>8</sup> The first refers in all likelihood to Philippe Goibaut Sr. Du Bois La Grugère (1626–1694). <sup>9</sup>

The rich and comprehensive content of MS 1069, which I will discuss in the following sections, differs clearly from most other French-Arabic dictionaries of the period that I have seen. The strongly worldly character of many of its topics sets it apart from dictionaries compiled by missionaries. This makes it implausible to consider missionaries like Bernard de St. Thérèse (1597–1669), one of the founders of the Missions étrangères, as possible authors. The mix of vocabulary and the intimate familiarity with matters of Islamic education and scholarship point vocally to another group of French men, who produced French (or Latin) dictionaries of Arabic, Persian, Turkish and other languages in the early modern period – the secretaries and translators of the French embassy in Istanbul and later language professors, court translators and officials in other positions in Paris. For the second half of the seventeenth and the first decade of the eighteenth centuries only two members of this group appear as likely candidates for the ancestor of MS 1069 – the colleagues and friends François Pétis de la Croix (the younger) (1653–1713) and Antoine Galland (1646–1715). <sup>10</sup> I have six reasons to opt for the first of

---

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., p. 1084.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> In order to accept this proposal, one has to know many of the other early modern dictionaries involving western European languages on the one hand or Arabic, Persian or Turkish on the other. Such a large comparative study is beyond the scope of this paper. But having seen

the two: the intimate knowledge of Muslim educational, intellectual and religious terms, an indirect reference to the *Shāhnāma*, a direct reference to features of Iranian landscape and geography, an entry stating that someone was a natif of Paris (*wa-Bārīs mawaladuhu* [sic]), clear spelling differences in French between MS 1069 and the journals of Antoine Galland and several lexical and interpretive agreements between the Arabic-Latin dictionary compiled and written by Pétis de la Croix.<sup>11</sup> Further support for this suggestion can be found in Pétis de la Croix's description of his physical and educational journeys in the Ottoman and Safavid Empires during ten years of his life, which I will summarize in the following section.

## II. *Who Was François Pétis de la Croix (the Younger)?*

François Pétis de la Croix (the younger) was the son of the Arabic interpreter of Louis XIV, François Pétis de la Croix (1622–1695). In 1695, he inherited his father's office and became the most successful diplomatic mediator of the French crown in North Africa (1681–1687). He had substantially improved his knowledge of languages (Arabic, Turkish, Persian), whose study he had already begun with his father, and acquired his knowledge of social customs and codes during 10 years of travels and studies in the Ottoman and Safavid Empires, with long sojourns in Aleppo (1670–1674), Isfahan (1674–1676) and Istanbul (1676–1680). As manuscripts in the Bibliothèque nationale de France show, part of Pétis de la Croix's training in Aleppo consisted in correcting, annotating and translating Arabic scholarly texts.<sup>12</sup> He wrote about this phase of his training:

I arrived in Aleppo November 19, 1670. The first thing I did there was to find three teachers. I took one for teaching me the vernacular. He knew a little Latin. The second whom I hired was for the literary Arabic. He knew no European language, but he was a very gifted man in the Oriental erudition. The third one showed me the Arabic script, which one calls *naskhī*. As soon as I spoke that language, I dismissed the first teacher. In his place, I took a mullah to teach me poetry. I took the service of these three people as long as I was in that town. But after a while I hired a fourth teacher to begin learning Turkish, which one spoke in Persia, and six months later a fifth one for the music of the Arabs to execute as much as possible according to the order that I had received to penetrate this science as much as possible in the manner in which one knew it in the Levant. [...] Finally, after having read and

---

numerous French, Italian, Latin and German works of this kind I strongly believe that my identification of François Pétis de la Croix as the ultimate author of the ancestor of the manuscript I discuss in this paper is as solid as possibly can be.

<sup>11</sup> MS 1069, p. 449, 1085 or 6 (the pagination was changed), 1113. The entry of having been a natif of Paris only applies to Pétis de la Croix, because Galland was born in Rollot. See MS Paris, BnF, Arabe 4343.

<sup>12</sup> MS Paris, BnF, Arabe 1683; perhaps also MS Paris, BnF, Arabe 1473.

studied 38 volumes of books in Arabic about history, geography, geometry, arithmetic, philosophy, poetry, chancery letter-writing, books on religion, the Qur'ān and others, and several in Syriac and *karshūnī*, seeing nothing more in prose and verse, which I could learn in Aleppo, I prepared myself to go to Persia according to the order, which I had in my instructions.<sup>13</sup>

On his way to Isfahan, he met scholars in several towns, who invited him to discuss with them poetry and theology. He stayed in Shiraz for five days, because he wished to visit the city's schools of higher education. He found that one taught poetry, theology, « occult philosophy », mathematics and law there.<sup>14</sup> After his arrival in Isfahan, he presented himself first to Raphael du Mans, the head of the Capuchin house in Iran, on order of his French superiors. Du Mans taught him the basics of Persian.<sup>15</sup> It took Pétis de la Croix some time to find a suitable local teacher who spoke Arabic well. He reports with pride that he and his teacher worked so hard that after six months he spoke « an elegant Persian », i.e. a highly Arabicized literary language.<sup>16</sup>

Once being able to converse with the Muslim elite, he took a Zoroastrian as a second teacher, who knew no Arabic and learned from him not only spoken New Persian, but also Middle Persian. Then he turned to further Iranian languages and New Persian dialects.<sup>17</sup> Six months of studying the *Shāhnāme* with some Mullah Karīm followed. Then he hired a knowledgeable person linked to the Safavid court to learn the intricacies of the courtly language and behavior, both of which he found extremely difficult to master. At the end, he wished to study theological matters in verse form (*mathnavī*), but could not find a teacher for the money he offered. He turned to the madrasas and won the head of the Mavlavī order in town to take him as a disciple for about five months. In addition to these one-to-one classes, Pétis de la Croix entered quickly into relations with men of the Safavid family, helped by Raphael du Mans, who invited him not only for recitations of poetry, but to all the lectures Isfahan's leading scholars gave to them.<sup>18</sup> The last language he studied with a native speaker in Isfahan was Tatar, which probably meant Chaghatay Turkish or Uzbek, but without reaching a higher level.<sup>19</sup> Over five more pages, Pétis de la Croix then describes what else he did in Isfahan on order of the French court and its minister Colbert. In a short manner one could say

<sup>13</sup> FRANÇOIS PÉTIS DE LA CROIX, « Extraits du Journal du Sieur Fr. Petits fils, professeur en arabe, ... », ed. M. LANGLÈS, *Magasin encyclopédique ou Journal des Sciences, des Lettres et des Arts*, 5 (1808), p. 281–282, 290.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 317–318.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 320.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 321.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 322–323.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 324–327.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 329.

his task consisted in a fully exhaustive description of everything and everyone which or who was found in Isfahan: the buildings, gardens, scholars, artisans, the royal family, the different religious communities, the arts and the sciences, the animals and plants, the produce of agriculture, books and paintings as well as any other thing or person to be found in or around town.<sup>20</sup> The dictionary I discuss here reflects this broadness of matters, themes and people to a large degree. This is a major argument for Pétis de la Croix's authorship and a feature that sets this work apart from its contemporaries.

In the Ottoman capital, Pétis de la Croix served as secretary for the French ambassadors Charles Marie François Olier, Marquis de Nointel (1635–1685; ambassador in Istanbul from 1670–1679), for whom he translated a great number of letters exchanged between the two courts as proof for his philological competence, and Gabriel-Joseph de Lavergne, Comte de Guilleragues (1628–1684; ambassador in Istanbul from 1679–1684). After his return to Paris, he engaged in translating various Arabic, Persian and Turkish historical and literary works as well as diplomatic messages and reports. He learned Armenian and Amharic. In 1692, Pétis de la Croix was appointed professor of Arabic at the Collège Royal in addition to his courtly office.<sup>21</sup> In this period, he not only continued to translate, among other items the substantial, bibliographical encyclopedia *Kashf al-zunūn*, of Ḥajjī Khalīfa (d. 1657), but to compose dictionaries for Arabic, Turkish, Persian and Armenian in French or Latin as well as an Arabic grammar and some exercise collections. A list of publications and unpublished works was compiled by Sebag.<sup>22</sup> Unfortunately, Sebag did not provide information on the libraries, which hold the manuscripts or the manuscripts's sigla. He might have merely taken this information from the supplement to Moreri's 18th-century historical, genealogical and geographical dictionary.<sup>23</sup> Hence, it is impossible to say whether the French-Arabic dictionary listed by the two authors might be (or has been) the ancestor of the one that I discuss.<sup>24</sup>

The analysis of the content of MS 1069 that follows now will further support my proposal that the dictionary's compiler was most likely François Pétis de la Croix

---

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., 330–335.

<sup>21</sup> For an analysis of his teaching program see PIERRE AGERON, MUSTAPHA JAOUHARI, « Le programme pédagogique d'un arabisant du Collège royal, François Pétis de La Croix (1653–1713) », *Arabica*, 61 (2014), p. 396–453.

<sup>22</sup> PAUL SEBAG, « Sur deux orientalistes français du XVIIIe siècle: F. Pétis de la Croix et le sieur de la Croix », *Revue de l'Occident musulman et de la Méditerranée*, 25 (1978), p. 97–101. A document of Pétis de la Croix's works compiled in the eighteenth century was recently published by TSETSUO NISHIO, « Un document inédit à propos des ouvrages de François Pétis de la Croix (1653–1713) », *Bulletin of the National Museum of Ethnology*, 42/4 (2018), 411–433.

<sup>23</sup> LOUIS MORERI, *Supplément au grand dictionnaire historique, genealogique, géographique, &c.*, vol. II, La Veuve Lemercier et. al., Paris 1732, Letter P, p. 47.

<sup>24</sup> SEBAG, « Sur deux orientalistes français », p. 98.

(the younger). Pétis de la Croix left Istanbul in 1680 for Paris. While he had perhaps started collecting data for his later works during his time in the Ottoman and Safavid Empires, the substantial work of compiling such a long dictionary may rather have taken place in Paris between 1692 and 1713 during his professorship.

### III. Structure and Formal Properties of MS Paris, M.E. 1069

The dictionary is organized according to the French alphabet, presenting nouns and verbs with a first capital letter and verbs in the infinitive.<sup>25</sup> I follow the French spelling of the early modern source and avoid modernizing it according to today's standards. Since occasionally, the spelling in the dictionary differs from other early modern forms of spelling, I indicate such differences by adding (sic). In the case of Arabic, Persian or Turkish, I provide the spelling of the dictionary when given. Otherwise I follow the rules of classical Arabic grammar and Steingass's *Comprehensive Persian-English Dictionary*.

The Arabic presents verbs in the third person singular first for the perfect and then for the imperfect. Numerous nouns appear in the singular and the plural, but not always. Repeatedly, more than one plural form is given. This feature may not only reflect the good grammatical training that the dictionary's author had received, but may also point to his usage of one of the famous Arabic dictionaries and/or grammars. The French is at times complemented by Latin words or expressions (see, for instance: *caporal* [fr.], *decurio* [lat.]), while some of the Arabic terms are also translated into Persian (*murabbaʿ*, *jār kūshah*), complemented by Turkish words or are simply transliterations of Italian words (*antūn*; *tak*; *būṣulah*; *qātūliqī*; *bulūkbāshī*; *qunṣul*; *ghalyūn*, *karmalītān*).<sup>26</sup> The transliterated words are mostly terms for specific missionary orders, Christian names, some military, navigational or commercial terms like the gallion (*ghalyūn*), the magnetic compass (*būṣulah*) or the consul (*qunṣul*). The presence of Turkish translations such as *bulūkbāshī* (*bölükbaşı*, squadron's head) may indicate that no Arabic terms had been coined or that for those concepts only Turkish words were used when speaking or writing Arabic.<sup>27</sup>

<sup>25</sup> One of the reviewers asked which dictionary would not be organized in such a manner but also wished to know whether it was organized thematically. The answer is no in both points. I know dictionaries of different kinds of structure, even if they are organized alphabetically as the one, I discuss here. See, for an example, SONJA BRENTJES, « MS or. fol. 100. Adam Olearius' and Haq Virdī's (c. 1584–1650) Persian-Latin Dictionary », in KIRSTEN BAUMANN, CONSTANZE KÖSTER, UTA KUHL (eds.), *Adam Olearius – Neugier als Methode*. Tagungsband zur Internationalen Tagung 'Der Gottorfer Hofgelehrte Adam Olearius. Neugier als Methode?' Schloss Gottorf, Schleswig, 24–27. Juni 2015, Michael Imhof, Petersberg 2017, p. 144–151.

<sup>26</sup> The vocalization given here and in further examples below is that of the dictionary.

<sup>27</sup> MS 1069, p. 57, 87, 201, 205–6, 212, 287, 335, 769.

In addition to simple nouns and verbs, the dictionary contains numerous compounds and phrases. The latter are not ordered according to the letter of the first word of either of the two, but a word determining the content of the French compound or phrase. Simple examples are *Dieu aidant* and *Pierre d'aigle*, which both appear under the letter A.<sup>28</sup> The reader of the French words is often helped by some explanatory note such as *Air Element*, which is often missing on the Arabic side.<sup>29</sup> In cases, where a French word has different meanings or different spellings, a cross reference is provided. Examples are *agacer v. irriter* or *annoblir v. ennoblir*.<sup>30</sup> Synonyms are often, albeit not always, given in both languages (in various cases the vocalization is, however, faulty). Examples are *avancement, progress*<sup>31</sup> = *taraqāḥ, sabaq* (sic), *izdībād, iqbāl*; *avancer, étendre* = *murra, yamurru*; *avancer, proposer* = *dhakara, yadhkuru mas'ala*; *cabale* (sic), *ligne, intrigue* = *ittifāq, ta'āhud*; *citation* = *isnād, asādīd* (sic); *shahāda, shawāhid*; *istishhād*; *definir* = *'arrafa, yu'arrifu; waṣafa, yaṣifu; ḥadda, yaḥiddu*.<sup>32</sup> While many cases consist of one word only, there are also many instances where word clusters are given. Most often, such clusters consist of a substantive and an adjective or a substantive, a verb and a nomen agentis like *Armenien* and *Armenie* or *argument, argumenter* and *argumenteur*.<sup>33</sup> Other cases encompass several nouns or present words of similar content. Such clusters sometimes also include phrases. Examples are *argent, argent monoïé, je n'ai point d'argent, argent vif, argenté*; *arpent, arpenter, arpentage, arpenteur, instrument pour arpenter* or *artifice, artificiel, artificieusement, artificieux, feu d'artifice* and *user d'artifice*.<sup>34</sup> Occasionally, such clusters appear at the wrong position of the alphabet such as *art, artisan, les artisans, artisan mécanique, habile artisan*, of which one word, namely *artisan*, later appears at the appropriate position.<sup>35</sup> These clusters may imply that the author may have combined here traditions of French dictionaries with those of Arabic dictionaries.

Many Arabic words are fully vocalized, but not all words are translated. The vocalization often seems to reflect a spoken Arabic. This holds true in particular for the frequent use of *ḍamma* instead of *kisra* or *fatḥa* (a short a). The presence of some rarely used signs in the vocalization of Arabic compounds highlight the excellent knowledge of classical written Arabic of the dictionary's author. An example is the *waṣla* ʾ, which signals the so-called weak *hamza*. Its use in the dictionary is restricted to approximately the first thirty pages.<sup>36</sup>

---

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., p. 27–28.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., p. 32.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., p. 23, 53.

<sup>31</sup> There is no punctuation between the words or phrases.

<sup>32</sup> MS 1069, p. 105, 189, 272, 443.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid., p. 78–79.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid., p. 77, 81, 86–87.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid., p. 82–83, 87.

<sup>36</sup> See, for instance, Ibid, p. 23, 27.

Beyond the described structural properties of this dictionary a few formal characteristics should be listed. The manuscript is paginated with Arabo-Indian numbers in western European format. Not being a codicologist, I did not reflect on the script of the numbers and thus cannot vouch for the time of pagination. Neither can I give any information on the type of paper, cover or binding. Most of the dictionary is written in the same hand. But as already stated above, other hands, using different inks, can also be found.

#### IV. *The Thematics Breadth of MS 1069*

A dictionary of 1905 pages contains of course many lemmata. Thus, it can be expected that a broad array of themes is covered by them. A comprehensive analysis needs to be done once the work is digitized. The summary I provide here is offered as a starting point. In a highly aggregate form, the topics can be described as covering politics and diplomacy, religions, the sciences, Muslim education, nature, commerce, piracy, architecture, geography, health, food, war and luxury. A lower aggregation brings out a detailed vocabulary for plants, spices, animals, metals, Muslim education, astronomy/astrology, piracy and navigation, politics, geography and weaponry. Diplomacy and religion come in as a second close. Among the less often served themes we find sweets, cloths, behavioral values, women, jewelry, colors, the crafts, titles and offices.

The vocabulary of the anonymous dictionary shows its compiler in more than one function. He certainly worked with Arabic books, integrated words and expressions learned from his teachers, showed himself aware of Turkish geographical, military and other terminology, which he added to Arabic terms or used instead of an older Arabic terminology, and appears clearly as a translator. The first function comes to the fore which regard to the many birds and other animals found in the dictionary like *milan*, *pan*, *pelican*, *pincon* or *plongeon*.<sup>37</sup> This set of words supports the suggestion of Pétis de la Croix's authorship, since he also translated Kamāl al-Dīn al-Damīrī's (1344–1405) *Kitāb al-ḥayawān* (The Book of the Animals) into French. Another group of words and expressions, which reflect de la Croix's learning experience, concern scientific, medical, philosophical, grammatical and religious terms. Examples are *dieu aidant*, *ame intellectuelle*, *ame sensible*, *les attributs de Dieu*, *cancer maison du zodiaque*, *chirurgie*, *colique*, *l'éloquence science*, *ephemerides*, *epilepsie*, *fievre quotidienne*, *les etoiles fixes*, *frenesie*, *les intelligences et les ames celestes*, *letre ponctuée*, *letre sans point*, *le monde intelligible*, *les mathematiques*, *le 1° mobile*, *mouvant mobilis*, *des notes marginales*, *object de science*, *octave en musique*, or *opposition en astrologie*.<sup>38</sup> In contrast to the examples below,

---

<sup>37</sup> Ibid., p. 1068, 1189, 1236, 1282, 1304.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid., p. 27, 44, 103, 197, 260, 284, 574, 625, 709, 716, 751, 923, 976, 1020, 1075, 1101, 1132, 1140, 1151, 1164.

which show de la Croix as translator, these words and expressions are paired with terms used by Muslim and to a lesser extent Christian subjects in the Ottoman and/or the Safavid Empires.

The second domain of words listed above is reflected by the many terms for scholarly disciplines of the canon of higher education in Islamic societies or for expressions related to studying, learning or teaching in forms characteristic of Muslim educational language. Pétis de la Croix lists not merely simple words like *apprendre*, *enseigner*, *faire savoir* or *leçon*, *faire leçon*, *cours des études*, *classe école* or *instruction*, but offers simple sentences or sayings characteristic for the world of the madrasa.<sup>39</sup> Among the numerous sentences and phrases related to study and education we find: « Il falloit etudier nos leçon », « les viles ou j'ai etudié », « apprendre la science sous quelquun », « commentaire avec citations », « se distinguer en une science », « J'étudie de peur d'être blamé », « tous les savants lui cedent en science », « Ibn Isaac est de ceux qui ont condamné la chimie », or « Je suis tout prest d'étudier ».<sup>40</sup>

The author's familiarity with Turkish terminology is represented by the use of *namsah* (*namshah*?) for Germany, *majār* for Hungary, *bilād al-filamink* for the Low Countries or *leh* for Poland.<sup>41</sup> Other geographical terms confirm his familiarity with Arabic geographical literature. He translated for instance *Esclavonie* as well as *Moscovie* with the literary term *bilād al-ṣaqāliba* (the Land of the Slavs) or *Pont Euxin* with the typical misplacement of diacritical signs in Arabic (Persian or Ottoman Turkish) texts as *baḥr nīṭūs* instead of *baḥr buntūs*.<sup>42</sup>

The function of translator appears when religious, scholarly or political concepts, traditions, rulers or forms of governance are transferred from a Catholic or French context into Arabic and more rarely from a Muslim context into French. The scholarly vocabulary includes history, medicine, mathematics and other sciences, philosophy and theology. Examples are words like *anatomie*, *apoplexie*, *arc en ciel*, *les regles d'arithmetique*, *atome*, *axiom*, *capricorne*, *cosmographie*, *Darius*, *epiphanie*, *mouvement circulaire*, *le moteur de l'univers*, *la mécanique* or *vicaire*.<sup>43</sup> The French political and administrative vocabulary that Pétis de la Croix wished to provide Arabic expressions for includes words like *ambassadeur*, *Votre M.té toujours auguste*, *citoyen* and *citoyenne*, *magistrat*, *lis pour les voleurs*, *maire de ville* or *parlement*. Their identifications as *wāfid*, *wufūd* and *marsūl*, *ḥaḍaratuka al-jalīla wa-sa'ādatuka al-āliyya*, *baladī* and *ḥaḍarī* plus their respective feminine forms, *shaykh*, *ṭumghat* (instead of *ṭamghat*) *al-sulṭān*, *mutawallī* (instead of *mutawallin*) and *al-dīwān al-āli* I

---

<sup>39</sup> Ibid., p. 67, 275, 382, 971.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid., p. 67, 217, 272, 309, 524, 686, 1088, 1175, 1268, 1365.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid., p. 35, 845, 1185, 1319.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid., p. 635, 657, 1094.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid., p. 50, 58, 74, 78, 97, 125, 156, 202, 261, 270, 365, 418, 626, 1012, 1039, 1043, 1863.

will discuss in section six.<sup>44</sup> These and other words highlight Pétis de la Croix's serious wish to enable a conversation about structural aspects of the French kingdom as well as its system of punishment.

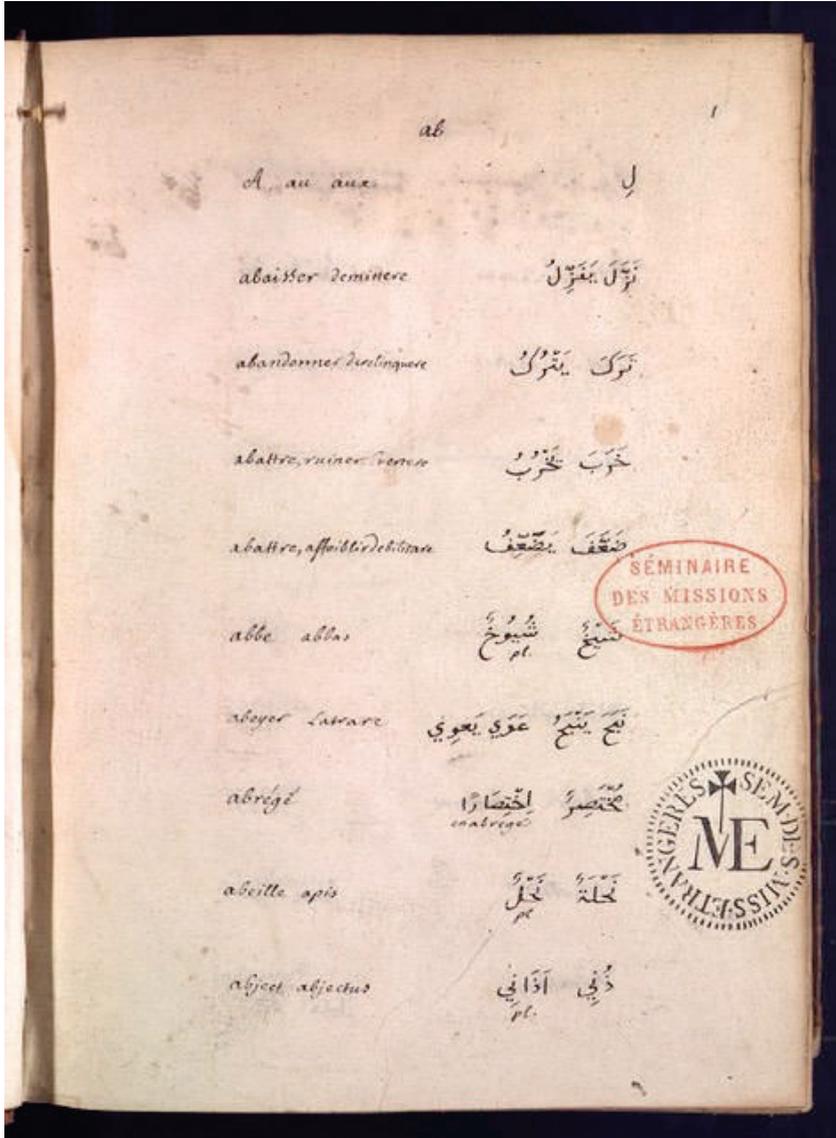


Fig. 2. MS 1069, p. 1, © Institut de recherche France-Asie/MEP.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid., p. 43, 115, 273, 1010, 1016, 1238.

V. *Insights into Muslim Higher Education and Cultures*

In the late seventeenth century, Muslim higher education in the Ottoman Empire took mainly place in two institutional contexts: the madrasa and the palace school. The latter was not directly accessible to Pétis de la Croix. A further institutionalized context of intellectual training was the Sufi lodge. A person who wished to acquire the knowledge taught at madrasas or Sufi lodges did not have to formally inscribe in any of them. He also could hire a private teacher from these milieus. The Muslim educational landscape of Safavid Iran resembled that of their western neighbors with the difference that the law and the *ḥadīth* taught there was that of the 12-Shīʿī community. The madrasa organization was not bureaucratized to the same degree nor do we have clear information about a palatial school for the Georgian military slaves. Pétis de la Croix mostly learned with private teachers. He studied Arabic and Persian with them and Ottoman and Chagatay Turkish. His travel account leaves no doubt that he read the Qurʾān and various exegetical works, was introduced into the world of Sufism and studied historical, geographical, mathematical and literary works. His dictionary suggests that he also received some information about the disciplines of *uṣūl al-dīn* (foundations of faith), *ʿilm al-bayān* (rhetoric), the four main philosophical sciences of logic, metaphysics, natural philosophy and ethics taught at Ottoman and Safavid *madāris* at the very least in form of texts on the classification of the sciences, medicine, astronomy, astrology, music and some of the so-called occult disciplines like physiognomy and chiromanty as well as basic divinatory practices such as *fāl*.

Although the vocabulary in his dictionary would not have enabled any of its students to engage in a more profound discussion on any subject of those disciplines, it is much richer than any comparable dictionary produced by a Catholic or Protestant visitor of either of the two Muslim countries. It does not merely list the most elementary terms, but goes in some fields substantially farther. This is particularly true for astronomy and medicine. In many cases, it relies on terms used by scholars and reflects the language of educational and other texts. The other early modern Arabic, Persian or Turkish dictionaries compiled by a traveler from Europe that I have explored reflect the daily-life language of Christian minorities and differ significantly from the standard language of Muslim scholarly practices.

Biographical dictionaries from the Ottoman Empire provide access to structure, canon and themes of madrasa education in the major cities. Muḥammad al-Muḥibbī's (d. 1699) *Tārīkh khulāṣat al-athar fī a'yān al-qarn al-ḥādī'ashar* (The History of the Quintessential Trace on the Eminent Men of the Eleventh Century), for instance, lists the so-called traditional sciences (*al-ʿulūm al-naqliyya*), which include the reading of the Qurʾān, its exegesis, the sayings of the Prophet and his companions, Islamic law in three of its four main Sunni schools (shafīʿī, ḥanafī, ḥanbalī), the so-called rational sciences (*al-ʿulūm al-ʿaqliyya*), which encompass the

two disciplines that teach the foundations of faith or law, philosophical subjects, medicine, for some authors also the philological disciplines and occasionally astrology, alchemy and parts of magic, and finally the mathematical sciences (*al-‘ulūm al-riyāḍiyya*) with geometry and mensuration, arithmetic, algebra, number theory and magic squares, astronomy and theoretical music (al-Muḥibbī 1284/1867). Manuscripts indicate that within the cluster of the philological disciplines of grammar, declination or semantics, but often not specifically listed in Ottoman biographical dictionaries as subjects of study, the earlier disciplines of *adab* also had their place. Pétis de la Croix’s dictionary reflects this component too as it provides its readers with words, expressions and phrases from the rational and the mathematical sciences.<sup>45</sup>

Educational institutions appear regularly. Most of them are correctly identified in Arabic, but not all of them correspond precisely to the French original. In most of those cases, this reflects the existence of cultural boundaries, which I will discuss in section six. In contrast to many of his traveling contemporaries, Pétis de la Croix knew that there existed two types of schools: *kuttāb* and *madrasa*.<sup>46</sup> He identifies them as *classe* or *école*, without explaining their difference, the first being for children acquiring elementary education, the second for adolescents and adults who had progressed to the higher stage of learning. On a later occasion, he translates *college* as *madrasa*, *madāris*, indicating therewith his understanding of the level of education provided there.<sup>47</sup> Afterwards, he identifies the students at the *kuttāb* as children, although this is limited to the Arabic translations where the word *escolier* is used (*awlād al-kuttāb*).<sup>48</sup>

It should be highlighted that often, although not always, the French part of the dictionary lists feminine forms for nomina. This applies also to students. The French feminine form *escolieres* is rendered as *banāt al-kuttāb*.<sup>49</sup> European travelers to the Ottoman Empire reported since the second half of the sixteenth century about elementary schools for girls.<sup>50</sup> Teachers (*maitre*, *precepteur*) are rendered as *mu‘allim*, *ustādh*, *murabbī* and the Turkish *lālah* (sic).<sup>51</sup> In a variant of the master he translates *maitre aux arts* as *mullā*, *mu‘allim*, *shaykh al-kuttāb* and *mudarris*,

<sup>45</sup> Ibid., p. 44, 53, 55, 58, 71, 74, 78, 96, 147, 156, 194, 206, 220-1, 267, 270, 286, 297, 544, 554, 571, 708-709, 785, 788, 798-799, 1310-1311, 1318, 1337, 1390, 1411-1415, 1547, 1551, 1556-1558, 1570-1571 et al.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid., p. 275.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid., p. 286.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid., p. 320, 555.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid., p. 555.

<sup>50</sup> SONJA BRENTJES, « The Interest of the Republic of Letters in the Middle East, 1550-1700 », *Science in Context*, 12/3 (1999), p. 435-468.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid., p. 1017, 1348; the term is of Turkoman origin; see CLIFFORD EDMUND BOSWORTH, « Lālā », in PERI J. BEARMAN et al. (eds.), *Encyclopaedia od Islam*, New Edition, vol. XII, Supplement, Brill, Leiden 2004, p. 547.

equalizing thus the different terms on the level of the kind of knowledge, which they teach. On the institutional level, however, he ranks these terms differently. He identifies, for instance, the *madrasa* not only as a school, but also as an academy. Hence, he translates *mudarris* also as *academicien* as well as *professeur*.<sup>52</sup>

More revealing about the familiarity of the dictionary's compiler with the customs inside the *madrasa* than the mere names of the two kinds of schools and their teachers is the set of correspondences that he provides for words like *débat*, *debatre ou disputer*, *disputte*, *dissertation*.<sup>53</sup> He listed as members of their semantic field in Arabic *munāzara*, *baḥṭh*, *mubāḥatha*, *jadal*, *mujādala*, *munāza'a*, *munāqara*, *musājara* (sic, *mushājara*) and *mushātama*. Under the entry *débat* he attributes all those activities and disciplines to the *madrasa*: « kamā tajrī fi l-madāris » (as they take place in the *madāris*).<sup>54</sup>

The amusing aspect of the list of Arabic terms is that Pétis de la Croix clearly understood the ad hominem nature of many debates and controversies that *madrasa* teachers and other scholars engaged in, but concealed them to his French readership. While the first part of the Arabic terms except for *baḥṭh* and *mubāḥatha* also can signify highly offensive oral encounters, the second part is outspokenly mean. The scholars bicker, quarrel, wrangle, fight or vituperate.

Pétis de la Croix non-surprisingly also learned the terminology of codices, copies, commentaries, gloses, supergloses, epitomes or quotations: *ṣaḥīfa*, *nuskha*, *matn*, *sharḥ*, *ḥāshiya*, *tafsīr*, *ta'liqa*, *ta'wīl*, *khātima*, *tatimma*, *mukhtaṣar* and *mu'jiz* (sic), *isnād* and *shahāda* or *istishhād*.<sup>55</sup> A commentary with quotations he translates as *sharḥ bi-qāla aqūlu* (a commentary with: he said: I say).<sup>56</sup> Since the latter is not a technical terminus, but a description of a textual mode, he probably learned it through reading philosophical or theological texts with his Muslim teachers.

In addition to names of disciplines, institutions, professions and scholarly themes, the dictionary also lists names of scholarly authorities and in a few cases designations of historical periods. Here it becomes clear that the compiler wished to help visitors of the two Islamicate empires, above all probably missionaries, to broaden the knowledge of ancient authorities among the people they encountered during their travels. There is no name of a scholar from any Islamicate society to be found in the dictionary. Nor does it contain names of early modern scholars from France, England, the Low Countries, Italy or Germany. The only scholarly authorities who appear in the book lived in antiquity and are mostly of Greek and to a small extent of Roman descent. In some cases, Arabic or Arabo-Syriac transliterations, which clearly come from local sources in the Ottoman or Safavid

<sup>52</sup> MS 1069, p. 5, 1394.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 420–421, 521–522.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 420.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 272, 280, 285, 625, 627, 670, 789, 1132.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 272.

Empires, are used as for instance for Aristotle: *Aristū*, *Aristātālīs*.<sup>57</sup> In other cases, such Arabicized forms are avoided and Greek or Latin forms are transliterated as for Pliny, although the French uses the vernacular forme *Pline*: *Bilīnīyūs*.<sup>58</sup>

Let me now turn to the dictionary's scholarly content. Its vocabulary shows that in the late seventeenth century ancient and medieval theories, concepts and subjects continued to be appreciated and believed in. The new sciences are almost invisible. Aristotle's concept of the first mover, the differentiation of the soul in intelligible and sensible or of animals in rational and irrational, the theory of the four elements, the identification of meteors as « sublime exhalations of high air », humoral pathology and astrological, divinatory and alchemical themes are explicitly represented, while the new ideas of gravitation, differential and integral mathematics, the inclined plane, heliocentrism or ellipses as planetary paths are absent.<sup>59</sup> Even more particular expressions such *corps elementaire* testify to Pétis de la Croix's intellectual affiliation to late scholastic Aristotelism in Christian Europe.<sup>60</sup> Nonetheless, the new atmosphere in the sciences and the production of books in some European countries left an imprint on the dictionary's vocabulary. It talks of printing (*ṭab'*), printing presses (*maṭbū'*), journals (*daftar yawmī* [daily notebook, register, ledger]), ingénieurs (*muṣannif al-ālāt al-ḥarbiyya wa-mi'mār al-ḥuṣūn* [the composer of war instruments and the architect of fortresses]), innovations (*bid'a*) or inventions (*ikhtirā'*, *ayjād* (sic, *ījād*) [only for the second word: production, creation]).<sup>61</sup>

This small list of terms illustrates the main problems that Pétis de la Croix faced and the choices he made. *Daftar yawmī* intensifies the meaning that the word *daftar* had acquired in the early modern period as a register or ledger with daily made entries, but it certainly does not describe the newspaper, which Pétis de la Croix apparently had in mind. But since there did not yet exist newspapers in the Ottoman or Safavid Empires, his choice to specify that he meant some daily (made) booklet is the closest he could come to transfer the meaning of the new product. He made a similar choice when he described the content of the word *ingénieur*. He could have chosen *muhandis*, which was a well-established Arabic term for builders of canals, water-lifting and similar machines or architects in general. But he obviously wished to explain the French neologism *ingénieur* and its professional content and status to an audience in the Middle East.

*Ikhtirā'* seems to have been a more widely spread term with the meaning of invention in the two early modern Islamic societies, since it is found in the same interpretation in a Persian-Italian dictionary with later added Turkish and

<sup>57</sup> Ibid., p. 78.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid., p. 1303.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid., p. 44, 71, 114, 147, 198, 202, 265–266, 322, 524, 527, 850, 856, 923, 1012, 1061.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid., p. 361.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid., p. 884–885, 910, 914, 933, 942.

Armenian translations, in all likelihood produced by a Carmelite missionary in Isfahan before 1622.<sup>62</sup> *Īyād*, however, may have been of a more limited usage, if it is not another example of Pétis de la Croix's own identification as rendering sufficiently well the French term.

Problematic is the translation of *innovation* by *bid'a* without further explanation or specification, since here a French term with by then positive connotations is identified with an Arabic term with clearly negative meaning. The Persian-Italian dictionary shows that this negative meaning was fully understood by the missionaries: *inuentione mala = bid'at*.<sup>63</sup> If Pétis de la Croix thought that the French invention had a negative connotation like *bid'a*, he either worked with a much older vocabulary, compiled in the 16th or earlier 17th centuries when indeed invention was not yet primarily considered as a positive act, or he was one of those who rejected the semantic change of the word longer than other parts of French society. A *nouvelle question* or a *nouveau cas* he translates as *ḥadītha*, a word, which, while less spectacularly *negatif*, had also drawn critical comments from conservative corners, when the Mamluks described with it the changes they had introduced in the Meccan customs of pilgrimage.<sup>64</sup>

Mostly absent are the traditional sciences and *taṣawwuf* (MS 1069, pp. 296, 508, 729, 1572, 1884). This is surprising not only because Pétis de la Croix spoke freely about his study of the Qur'ān, *ḥadīth* and Sufi practices in his travel account, but because the knowledge of religious doctrines and beliefs was essential for diplomacy and the apostolic mission. The few terms present in the dictionary suggest moreover that the clientele of the dictionary was meant to converse primarily with Sunni Muslims. For such an interpretation speaks, for instance, the claim « tout le mahometisme roule sur le hatits (sic) », (*madār al-islām 'alā l-ḥadīth*) and the absence of any clear Shī'ī pronouncement (MS 1069, p. 1572).

## VI. Religious Matters

The vocabulary on educational and intellectual matters of the anonymous dictionary favors Muslim institutions and traditions. This differs when religious matters are concerned. Here, it is clearly the French user of the dictionary whose upbringing, beliefs and expectations are privileged. New Catholic institutions like the Propaganda Fide, new communal developments among Christians in France, the Low Countries und German lands like Lutherans or Huguenots are mentioned and conversion is taken to mean exclusively conversion to Catholicism, although the Arab speaker would not always understand this point with certainty.<sup>65</sup> A new

---

<sup>62</sup> MS Città del Vaticano, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Borg. Pers. 14, fol. 131a,20.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, fol. 131b,1.

<sup>64</sup> MS 1069, p. 1135.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 321, 350–351, 853, 1007.

convert is, for instance, called in Arabic *qarīb al-‘ahd bi’l-dīn* [having adopted recently the faith (or religion)].<sup>66</sup> This could be, of course, any kind of religion. This is, however, part of Pétis de la Croix’s intention when speaking about religions. They are clearly not of equal standing to him. Conversion to Islam, for instance, is not seen as a choice between religions, but as a choice between people or states.<sup>67</sup> Some of this vocabulary is presented with negative sub-tones. In numerous cases, the Arabic correspondances are either transliterations or translations produced by Pétis de la Croix himself. Although Pétis de la Croix undoubtedly also learned with Syriac Christians, their religious doctrines have no presence in the dictionary, although he mentions their language Syriac and their designation as a religious community.<sup>68</sup> If expressions refer to Islam, it is declared to be a doctrine created by Muḥammad, i.e. Mahometisme, or a false religion.<sup>69</sup> In a few cases like the annunciation of the virgin, Muḥammad’s companions, the five prayers or Muḥammad’s flight from Mecca the correct local expressions are presented.<sup>70</sup> In one case, he identifies in French an Arabic term as shared by Muslims and Christians, explaining that *qibla* means « the place towards which one turns for praying to God; with the Christians Jerusalem; with the Mahomedans Mecca ».<sup>71</sup> On the Arabic side, however, he adds two exclusively clearly Islamic terms, i.e. *ka’ba* and *baytu llāhi l-ḥarām* [the Holy house of God = *ka’ba*]. Between the two is written *baniyya*, possibly a misspelling for *binya*, which is a much more general term than any of the other three, since it means building structure.

The Christian vocabulary includes basic Christological events like the annunciation of the virgin, apocalypse, beatitude, epiphany, eucharist, the religious acts in human life like baptisme or apparition, religious ways of life like the anachorete or the purpose of the contemporary activities of Catholic orders in the Ottoman or Safavid Empires like the apostolat, conversion and the writing of apologies, institutions like the already mentioned Propaganda Fide or the archbishopry and important figures of different standing like God’s lamb, the antichrist, the apostles, Christophles, Barabbas or Chrysosthomos.<sup>72</sup>

As in other semantic contexts, religious vocabulary is not only presented in single words, but important concepts are also narrated in form of short sentences like « Il luy apparut en forme de colombe ». <sup>73</sup> When a Christian term does not exist for rendering an Islamic term properly, Pétis de la Croix sometimes correctly explains their significance as is the case with *barzakh*. Here he explains in French:

<sup>66</sup> Ibid., p. 351.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid., p. 1827.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid., p. 1727.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid., p. 1728.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid., p. 50, 296, 1371, 1545.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid., p. 1370.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid., p. 50, 54, 56, 58–59, 61, 75, 135, 144, 265, 626, 654.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid., p. 61.

« Limbe séjour des ames depuis la mort jusqu'au jour du jugement selon les mahometans » [limbo, abode of the souls since the death until the day of judgment, according to the Mahomedans].<sup>74</sup> In cases, where the religious concepts are shared between Christianity and Islam, Pétis de la Croix provides in Arabic only the Christian description, ignoring the Islamic alternative. The French terms do not indicate this cultural reductionism. An example is *ascencion*, which is translated as « irtifā' sayyidinā al-masīḥ ilā l-samā'i » [the ascension of our Lord, the Messiah, to the heaven].<sup>75</sup> In the corresponding Islamic context, the lengthy descriptive translation could be simplified to *mī'rāj*. Since it is highly unlikely that Pétis de la Croix did not know neither the word nor the story told about it, his abstention from using Islamic terminology and providing information about Islamic concepts and stories was in all likelihood a conscious, intentional decision. Since he says in his travel account very clearly that in Iran Christians, in particular foreign visitors, could speak comparatively freely about their religious beliefs and traditions, while their Muslim hosts would reply with information on their own beliefs and traditions, this lack of Islamic religious terminology and concepts seems to underline that the dictionary's users were primarily seen to be active in Sunni Mediterranean societies.<sup>76</sup>

One of the relatively few Islamic concepts in the dictionary is *ismā'u* (sic) *llāhi l-ḥusnā* [the beautiful names of God].<sup>77</sup> Pétis de la Croix translated the expression as *les attributs de Dieu* [the attributes of God]. This rendition is surprising, since it interprets the expression instead of translating it. Moreover, it limits the rich discussions of divine attributes to the concept of God's 99 names.<sup>78</sup> But a look into Pétis de la Croix's Arabic-Latin dictionary shows that he indeed believed the two translations to be valid. This is one of the instances referred to at the beginning that link the two dictionaries with each other. Vocalizing the expression in the same manner as in M 1069, he rendered it in Latin as *99 nomina sancta seu attributa dei*.<sup>79</sup>

Another Islamic concept given in MS 1069, which was important for polite behavior, is the wish that God may have mercy upon an interlocutor and the proper answer to such a wish, namely « may God recompense you ».<sup>80</sup>

Pétis de la Croix registered even less terms about Jews and their beliefs and practices than those referring to Islamic matters. They are historico-geographical terms like Galilee or Judea, the name of the religion and its practitioners together

<sup>74</sup> Ibid., p. 988.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid., p. 87.

<sup>76</sup> PÉTIS DE LA CROIX, « Extraits du Journal », ed. LANGLEËS, p. 317.

<sup>77</sup> MS 1069, p. 103.

<sup>78</sup> See, for instance, CATARINA BELO, « Mu'tazilites, Al-Ash'ari and Maimonides on Divine Attributes », *Veritas - Revista de Filosofia*, 52/3 (2007), p. 117-131.

<sup>79</sup> MS Paris, BnF, Arabe 4343, fol. 70a, 5-6.

<sup>80</sup> MS 1069, p. 149.

with Judas Iscariot.<sup>81</sup> This meagre set of terms seems to be chosen because of their relevance for Christian history. Negative religious terms Pétis de la Croix wanted his readers to learn are *apostate, atheist, blasphemateur, blasphème, la crusade contre les infidels, herétique, idolatrie, schismatique*.<sup>82</sup> In his phrase on conversion he indicates one of the reasons why one has to know such words: to separate the good from the bad peas as in Cinderella's tale. Conversion to the Catholic religion meant to him « al-rujū' 'an al-rafḍ wa'l-dukhūl fī l-dīn al-qātūlīqī » [revocation of disavowal and entrance into the Catholic faith].<sup>83</sup> The first half phrase carries, however, two further connotations. If « al-rujū' 'an al-rafḍ » is read or heard in a context of early modern conversions from Catholicism (or Protestantism) to Islam, it could mean that Pétis de la Croix thought here of the return from being a renegade. If it is, however, read or heard in the context of inter-Islamic communal strife it could signify a return from or disavowal of Shī'ī Islam. This ambiguity may suggest that Pétis de la Croix learned such a phrase while in Aleppo, but certainly not in Isfahan, if it is not simply another case of his own efforts to describe what for him conversion to Catholicism meant.

#### VII. *Politics, Navigation, Crafts and Commerce*

A very attractive aspect of Pétis de la Croix's dictionary is the remarkable number of words and compounds about navigation, war, captives, piracy, the crafts, diseases, plants, animals, alchemy and commerce. The dictionary clearly has one leg strongly anchored in the realities of life and diplomacy of the late seventeenth and early eighteenth century. It is not limited to elite knowledge cultures, religions and traveling. This quantitative presence of lived realities and the broad scope of its terminology leaves little doubt that one of the dictionary's functions was to provide future secretaries and interpreters of French ambassadors with the needed knowledge to talk about capitulations, the freeing of captives, arms and the treatment of diseases. Although no statistics is available for the dictionary since there does not exist yet a digitized form of it, the many terms for ships, anchors, pilots, cannons, bombs, guns, gunners, the arsenal, ports, troops, the leftovers of a battle, the compass, maps, admirals, sailors, corsairs, pirates, captives, ransom or bullets are amazing.<sup>84</sup> As other words of the dictionary, they reflect the culturally mixed activities on all levels of confrontation and cooperation in the Mediterranean, since they point to military as well as peaceful undertakings and use genuine Arabic words as well as transliterations of mostly

<sup>81</sup> Ibid., p. 949, 951.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid., p. 58, 97, 158, 403, 836, 866, 1609.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid., p. 350.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid., p. 46, 74, 79, 87, 144, 162, 168, 171, 194, 199, 201–205, 212, 229, 403, 409, 413, 423, 427–428, 700, 704, 729, 762, 780, 782, 905, 910, 978–979, 1044, 1093, 1099, 1108, 1115–1116, 1274, 1276–1277 et al.

Italian words. They are listed alone, side a side or together with each other. They also contain asymmetries as other word clusters in the dictionary, which either point to misunderstandings or shifts in semantic fields of older words. An example is the identification of *khanjar*, which still means *dagger*, as a *bayonet*.<sup>85</sup> The perhaps most interesting of the phrases connected to this word cluster is Pétis de la Croix's statement that money is the nerve of war.<sup>86</sup> Any Middle Eastern interlocutor would have missed his point, however, since the translations listed on the right side of the phrase say: *marāt* (sic) *al-jihād* [times of jihad]; *al-māl lā mulk illā bi-rijāl* [financial property only becomes supreme authority with men]; *lā rijāl illā bi'l-māl* [no men without financial property].<sup>87</sup>

Among the vocabulary for the crafts, craftsmen and produce like clockmakers, goldsmiths or builders, the words and expressions around the balance are particularly visible, since they appear more often and in greater variety than any of the other terms. Not only do the basic terms for the equal- and unequal-armed balances appear, i.e. *mīzān* and *qabbān*.<sup>88</sup> Pétis de la Croix also collected translations for the scales, the beam, the tongue, the counterweights, the people using such balances and a courtly office for balances.<sup>89</sup> The head of the office was the *qabbānī*.<sup>90</sup> Some people with such *nisbas* have left texts behind, which are more than lists of weights, but deal with the theory of the balance. A search for the office in Arabic sources suggests that it already existed before and parallel to its use in the Ottoman realm. The fifteenth-century Meccan historian Ibn Fahd reported about various officials, among them the *mashhūd al-qabbān* (the one who witness the steelyards, weightmaster?), who imposed non-Islamic taxes on merchants.<sup>91</sup> Stilt collected a few references to the *qabbānī* from Ibn al-Ukhuwa (d. 1329) and al-Maqrīzī (1364–1442). They indicate that the task of such a person was to go to the market place with a steelyard and weigh for buyers and sellers.<sup>92</sup> No comprehensive history of the office exists, however, for any of the Middle Eastern dynasties.

#### VIII. Cultural Boundaries

Cultural boundaries reflect the distances between social, economic and political structures and modes of living in different societies, here France, the Ottoman and

---

<sup>85</sup> Ibid., p. 144.

<sup>86</sup> Ibid., p. 1121.

<sup>87</sup> Ibid., p. 1121.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid., p. 131, 1261.

<sup>89</sup> Ibid., p. 131, 140, 719, 964, 1261.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid., p. 1261.

<sup>91</sup> JOHN MELOY, « Imperial Strategy and Political Exigency: The Red Sea Spice Trade and the Mamluk Sultanate in the Fifteenth Century », *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, 1231 (2003), p. 5.

<sup>92</sup> KRISTEN STILT, *Islamic Law in Action: Authority, Discretion, and Everyday Experiences in Mamluk Egypt*, Oxford University Press, Oxford 2011, p. 137–139.

the Safavid Empire. When trying to render them comprehensible in a different language, one can opt for a cultural or a philological identification of the different items or one can try to explain their meaning to the other side. A cultural translation identifies one item here with an item there, like academy with madrasa. It also can translate a cultural identification of an item in its home culture rather than the item itself, like Christophle as the carrier of Christ. Philological rendition can also follow two different approaches. One is transliteration, where the foreign word is transliterated either according to its written or its spoken form. The other is the literal translation of its components. When meaning is explained, like in the case of Islamic religious matters, such explanations show the degree of familiarity of the dictionary's compiler with the beliefs, customs, institutions or structures of the foreign society as well as the willingness to recognize and respect difference.

Pétis de la Croix used all of these strategies in his dictionary when creating equivalences. Not all transliterations are, however, his invention. Several rather reflect the longstanding cultural mix and interdependence in and around the Mediterranean up to the Caspian Sea between Christian and Islamicate societies and their peoples. Literal translations of either the French or the Arabic terms can be found repeatedly. In some cases, Pétis de la Croix identified French institutions, customs or rituals with specific institutions, customs or rituals of the Ottoman and Safavid Empires. Most of them belonged to Muslim cultural spaces, but some also were borrowed from Christian communities. Finally, he identified terms from older Arabic literature with phenomena either from intellectual history in ancient or Latin Europe or from contemporary Ottoman and French politics and social stratification or geography at large.

Several such crossings of boundaries were quite successful and provided both reader and listener of the vocabulary with the chance to comprehend the other's meaning. In other cases, Pétis de la Croix's choices will have seriously misled an interlocutor in an Islamicate society. Examples of successful cultural translation are *baqlava* as *almond pastry*, *anachorite* as *ḥabīs* [hermite], *apoticaire* as *sharābāt-*j** [the producer and/or seller of syrups], *canonical* as *shar'ī*, or *Chaldea* as *'irāq al-'arab* or *'arabī* [the Arabic Iraq].<sup>93</sup> Misleading are Pétis de la Croix's renderings of *academy* as *madrasa*, *tradition of the ancients* as *manqūlat al-salaf* [transmitted from the forefathers], *antarctic* and *arctic* as *southern* and *northern*, *authority* as *isnād*, which is a chain of transmitters of sayings of the Prophet or of other information, of *Babylon* not only as *bābil*, but also as *Baghdad*, *charlatan* as *liar*, *comedy* as *lu'bu* (sic) *taqlīdīn* [a play of imitation].<sup>94</sup> Babylon and Baghdad are located at different coordinates in Iraq, but European writers, travelers and readers believed against

<sup>93</sup> MS 1069, p. 41, 50, 59, 199, 229.

<sup>94</sup> Ibid., p. 5, 51, 56, 76, 122, 127, 243, 289.

better evidence well into the eighteenth century that this was not the case. Their desire to translate the Islamicate world into the geography and history of Greek antiquity overtook their willingness to trust eyewitnesses to the contrary like Pietro della Valle. The translation of comedy as « a play of imitation » tries hard to render a certain aspect of the show, but misses out in the sense that *la'ib* or *li'ib* means rather a game with balls, swords or horses, to name only a few examples, than a play on a stage. Even worse is Pétis de la Croix's decision to take *taqlīd* as the compound's second element, since this word would have first and foremost reminded a Muslim interlocutor of his legal duty to follow the interpretations of the law and other religious commandments by a *mujtahid* or renovator of Islam in any given century.

Depending on the mood of the listener to the following failed identifications, he might either become exasperated or shake his head in amazement about the incomprehensible information provided by his foreign guest. Pétis de la Croix's dictionary namely teaches that Mount Caucasus is Mount Qāf, the mythical mountain of the Qur'ān, which encompasses the earth, and that a censor is somebody who either bickers, getting in an argument or a denier.<sup>95</sup> The first failed identification might actually be the result of a mistake by the copyist, since the Caucasus is Qafqāz. The second identification had to fail, since there was no institution like censorship in Islamicate societies. The choice of Arabic expressions for such an unknown institution may, however, reflect Pétis de la Croix's own exasperation with its interferences in his life as an author.

Differences in the scholarly development during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries between France and other Catholic or Protestant countries in Europe and Islamicate societies become also visible in Pétis de la Croix's efforts to build bridges. The word cosmography in the sense of geography did not exist and mathematical geography or geodesy had become a part of *'ilm al-hay'a*. Pétis de la Croix chose to ignore this disciplinary difference and translated cosmography as *rasm al-dunyā* [drawing of the world], *qiyās al-arḍ bi'l-handasa* [measurement of the earth with geometry] and *ma'rifat al-kūrat* (sic) *bi-'ilm al-handasa* [knowledge of the sphere with geometry]. The profession of a cosmographer did not exist at all. Nonetheless, Pétis de la Croix identifies such a person as *rāsīm al-dunyā* [the draftsman of the world].<sup>96</sup> An interesting choice, oscillating between Arabic and French concepts of curiosity in the seventeenth century, is the translation of *curious* with *lover of rare things* (or: *gifts*) and *curiosity* with *love of details*.<sup>97</sup> In Arabic, *tuḥfa* combines as its meanings *gift*, *curiosity* and *rarity* among other things, but not *details*. The love of details, on the other hand, is one of the aspects that defined the

---

<sup>95</sup> Ibid., p. 212, 219.

<sup>96</sup> Ibid., p. 365.

<sup>97</sup> Ibid., p. 413.

newly found appreciation of curiosity in early modern Christian Europe, including France.

Between these two extremes there are translations that miss somehow the right point, although they are close to the intended meaning, or that impose a particular view, held by Pétis de la Croix, on an existing Arabic term. The type of almost correct cross-cultural renderings include simple mistakes in explanatory translations like the translation of *antipodes* as *people who live below the earth*, the reduction of a large field of meaning on the side of the French term by much more limited concepts as the translation of *apparition* as *dreams* and the effort to find some term used in Islamic scholarly culture for a historical period that they neither named nor considered of particular value to their own cultural identity as in the case of *antiquity*, which Pétis de la Croix first renders as *the old* and then by *the ancient philosophers*.<sup>98</sup>

Finally, there are translations where it is not clear, which kind of transformation took place to produce the registered results. In two cases, for example, I could determine the language into which Pétis de la Croix translated only with the help of colleagues: strawberry (*fraise*) and raspberry (*framboise*).<sup>99</sup> The former is rendered in the dictionary as *qūjā bimishi* and the latter as *jilk*.<sup>100</sup> Allowing for errors with regard to the diacritical points and including the deviations between Arabic forms of Turkish words and the letters spoken forms, *qūjā bimishi* is most likely *koca yemiş*, while *jilk* renders *çilek*. Spelling errors are not the only issues here, however. At stake is also the history of fruit names. Today, *koca yemiş* stands for the reddish, globular fruits of the *Arbutus unedo* L. and *çilek* for strawberry. According to nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Turkish dictionaries, this was not always the case. The two terms could also signify other fruits. According to Şemseddin Sami, *koca yemiş* grows in the mountains and is similar to *çilek*.<sup>101</sup> Redhouse identified raspberry as *aqaç çilegi*, commenting that it was a « strawberry that grows on a tree ». <sup>102</sup> Pétis de la Croix's dictionary might well reflect a similar linguistic and botanical situation for the late seventeenth century.

### IX. Conclusions

I hope to have provided sufficiently plausible arguments for my belief that the ancestor of the anonymous dictionary was in all likelihood compiled by François Pétis de la Croix between 1680 and 1713. I also hope to have shown that it is a

<sup>98</sup> MS 1069, 57, 58, 61.

<sup>99</sup> I thank Feza Günergün, Istanbul, Evrim Binbaşı, Bonn and Maria Pia Pedani, Venice.

<sup>100</sup> MS 1069, 747.

<sup>101</sup> ŞEMSEDDİN SAMİ, *Kamus-i Türkî*, İkdâm Matbaası, Dersaadet 1317 (1901–1902), p. 1090.

<sup>102</sup> JAMES WILLIAM REDHOUSE, *English and Turkish Dictionary*, pt. II: *Turkish-English*, Bernard Quaritch, London 1857, p.638.

unique product, full of impressive knowledge, insights, efforts of good will and cultural limitations. It was as much an offer to understand the people with whom a learner of the words, expressions and phrases of this dictionary might eventually converse as it was a chance to inform such potential interlocutors about political, social, cultural, religious, material and natural things of major interest to Pétis de la Croix and his contemporaries in France. The preference for Sunni interlocutors shines through a number of choices Pétis de la Croix made when deciding which words to include and how to render them. This is not surprising. The Ottoman Empire and the North African states of Tripoli, Tunis, Algiers and Morocco were the primary political partners of France in the late seventeenth century.

The dictionary shows that it was possible for a seventeenth-century young Frenchman to acquire an intimate knowledge of the intellectual worlds of the Ottoman and Safavid Empires, even when he did not manage to cross all the cultural boundaries set by his upbringing in Paris. Muslim scholars in Aleppo and Isfahan accepted him as a student and taught him as if he were one of their more ordinary Muslim charges. It was the intellectual generosity of those teachers that transformed Pétis de la Croix into the most successful interpreter of the French court and gave him skills that were recognized and appreciated both by the French court and its Muslim counterparts in North Africa and Istanbul.

The dictionary lives through the thus acquired amazing knowledge of the scholarly worlds of the Ottoman and Safavid Empires, its at times witty and at times critical ditties about scholars, wars and daily life as well as its cultural, intellectual and personal limitations to a one-sided recognition of Catholicism as the only true religion, an overwhelming focus on scientific content widely outdated in the late seventeenth or early eighteenth centuries and not clearly situated within Muslim scholarship. The dictionary leaves no doubt about Pétis de la Croix's particular familiarity with astronomy as practiced at the madrasa in form of a dominantly textual knowledge. But it also reveals minor traces of late-Aristotelian debates in Catholic and Protestant Europe, while being widely innocent of any of the new concepts, ideas and methods. The only inkling that this might not fully be a correct reflection of Pétis de la Croix's knowledge is the rendition of curiosity as love for detail, since this was a new rhetoric of knowledge and responsibility for the higher good during the first half of the seventeenth century. But it was mostly out of fashion by the end of that time.

The fact that this copy is not an autograph, but a product of someone else and the realm of readers, who actively corrected and annotated the work of the compiler, prevents a full understanding of which of the deviations and mistakes are the results of Pétis de la Croix's work and which slipped in at a later stage. But the fact alone that the dictionary had been used, cross-referenced in its ancestor and with other knowledge products shows that the dictionary did not live as a

lonely inhabitant of a dusty shelf. It had a life of its own. Too bad it cannot tell us who its users were and what they did with the newly acquired knowledge.

## Bibliography

### Manuscripts

MS Paris, BnF, Arabe 1473.

MS Paris, BnF, Arabe 1683.

MS Paris, BnF, Arabe 4343.

MS Paris, Missions Étrangères, 1069.

MS Città del Vaticano, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Borg. Pers. 14.

### Texts and Studies

Ageron, Pierre, Mustapha Jaouhari, « Le programme pédagogique d'un arabisant du Collège royal, François Pétis de La Croix (1653–1713) », *Arabica*, 61 (2014), p. 396–453.

Belo, Catarina, « Mu'tazilites, Al-Ash'ari and Maimonides on Divine Attributes », *Veritas - Revista de Filosofia*, 52/3 (2007), p. 117–131.

Bosworth, Clifford Edmund, « Lālā », in Peri J. Bearman et al. (eds.), *Encyclopaedia od Islam*, New Edition, vol. XII, Supplement, Brill, Leiden 2004, p. 547.

Brentjes, Sonja, « The Interest of the Republic of Letters in the Middle East, 1550–1700 », *Science in Context*, 12/3 (1999), p. 435–468.

— « MS or. fol. 100. Adam Olearius' and Haq Virdī's (c. 1584–1650) Persian-Latin Dictionary », in Kirsten Baumann, Constanze Köster, Uta Kuhl (eds.), *Adam Olearius - Neugier als Methode*. Tagungsband zur Internationalen Tagung 'Der Gottorfer Hofgelehrte Adam Olearius. Neugier als Methode?' Schloss Gottorf, Schleswig, 24–27. Juni 2015, Michael Imhof, Petersberg 2017, p. 144–151.

Galland, Antoine, *Journal d'Antoine Galland pendant son séjour à Constantinople, 1672–1673*, ed. by Charles Schefer, Leroux, Paris 1871 (reprint Kessinger Publishing, LLC, Whitefish, MZ 2009; Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 2012).

— *Le Journal D'Antoine Galland (1646–1715): La Période Parisienne (1712–1713)*, 3 vols., ed. by Frédéric Bauden et al., Peeters Publishers, Leuven 2011–2015 (Association pour la promotion de l'histoire et de l'archéologie orientales. Mémoires, 6–9).

Günergun, Feza, « Travellers in the Field: Conveying Botanical Material from Ottoman Turkey to Western Europe (16th and 17th c.) », unpublished.

Lane, Edward William, *An Arabic-English Lexicon*, 8 parts, Librairie du Liban, Beirut 1968.

Meloy, John, « Imperial Strategy and Political Exigency: The Red Sea Spice Trade and the Mamluk Sultanate in the Fifteenth Century », *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, 1231 (2003), p. 1–19.

Moreri, Louis, *Supplement au grand dictionnaire historique, genealogique, géographique, &c.*, vol. II, La Veuve Lemercier et. al., Paris 1732.

al-Muḥibbī, Muḥammad, *Tārīkh khulāṣat al-athar fī a'yān al-qarn al-hādī 'ashar*, al-Maṭba'a al-Miṣriyya al-Waḥbiyya, Būlāq 1284/1867.

Pedani, Maria Pia, *La grande cucina ottomana. Una storia di gusto e di cultura*, Il Mulino, Bologna 2012 (Intersezioni, 395).

Pétis de la Croix, François, « Extraits du Journal du Sieur Fr. Petits fils, professeur en arabe, ... », ed. by M. Langlès, *Magasin encyclopédique ou Journal des Sciences, des Lettres et des Arts*, 5 (1808), p. 277–376.

Nishio, Tsetsuo, « Un document inédit à propos des ouvrages de François Pétis de la Croix (1653–1713) », *Bulletin of the National Museum of Ethnology*, 42/4 (2018), 411–433.

Redhouse, James William, *English and Turkish Dictionary*, part. II: *Turkish-English*, Bernard Quaritch, London 1857.

Sami, Şemseddin, *Kamus-i Türki*, Ikdam Matbaasi, Dersaadet 1317 (1901–1902).

Sebag, Paul, « Sur deux orientalistes français du XVIIIe siècle: F. Petis de la Croix et le sieur de la Croix », *Revue de l'Occident musulman et de la Méditerranée*, 25 (1978), p. 89–117.

Steingass, Franz Joseph, *A Comprehensive Persian-English Dictionary, Including the Arabic Words and Phrases to Be Met with in Persian Literature*, Routledge & K. Paul, London 1892.

Stilt, Kristen, *Islamic Law in Action: Authority, Discretion, and Everyday Experiences in Mamluk Egypt*, Oxford University Press, Oxford 2011.

URL

<http://www.perseus.tufts.edu>

<https://www.dictionnaire-academie.fr>

FRA ETIMOLOGIE E TROPI:  
ALLO SCRITTOIO CON ‘MAGISTER ROBERTUS’  
(*Dicta* 109, 110, 111)

BETWEEN ETYMOLOGIES AND TROPES:  
AT THE *SCRIPTORIUM* WITH ‘MAGISTER ROBERTUS’ (*Dicta* 109, 110, 111)

PIETRO B. ROSSI  
UNIVERSITY OF TORINO

*Abstract*

Fra gli scritti di Roberto Grossatesta solo in parte editi e studiati sono da ritenere di particolare interesse le raccolte di *Dicta*, di *Sermones* e dei commenti ai *Salmi* 1–100. La caratteristica comune a queste raccolte sembra sia quella di non essere state fatte oggetto di una vera e propria revisione finale da parte dell’autore. Quanto ai *Dicta*, ci è giunto il *colophon* (che si trova però come prologo in parte dei manoscritti) in cui l’autore parla in prima persona e ci illumina sulla genesi della raccolta, sugli scopi che l’hanno originata, sugli anni in cui l’ha costituita (« dum in scolis morabar »). Allo scopo di apportare nuovi elementi che possano contribuire a fare maggiore chiarezza sulla genesi della raccolta dei *Dicta*, si propone l’esame dei *Dicta* 109, 110 e 111.

*Parole chiave*

Robert Grosseteste, *Dicta*, Sua conoscenza della lingua greca, *Etymologicum Gudianum*, *Etymologicum Magnum*.

*Abstract*

Of special interest among Robert Grosseteste’s somewhat understudied writings are his collections of *Dicta*, *Sermones*, and commentaries on *Psalms* 1–100. What these works have in common is the fact that they appear not to have been subjected to any actual revision by the author. For the *Dicta*, a *colophon* (appearing as a prologue in some manuscripts) has been transmitted to us. In this *colophon*, the author speaks in the first person and informs us about the genesis of the collection, its purposes, and the years when it was composed (« dum in scolis morabar »). The present study examines *Dicta* 109, 110, and 111 with the aim of providing new evidence about the origin of the *Dicta*.

*Keywords*

Robert Grosseteste, *Dicta*, Grosseteste’s knowledge of Greek, *Etymologicum Gudianum*, *Etymologicum Magnum*.



I.

Nonostante la particolare attenzione dedicata da non pochi studiosi al pensiero e alle opere di Roberto Grossatesta a cominciare dagli anni Cinquanta del secolo scorso, non sono certo di irrilevante valore alcuni suoi scritti ancora inediti. James McEvoy, instancabile animatore del rinnovato interesse per il vescovo di Lincoln a partire dall'inizio degli anni '80, non perdeva occasione per tracciare lo *status quaestionis* dei lavori fatti e prospettare *desiderata*.<sup>1</sup> Fra gli scritti inediti, in parte già fatti oggetto di tesi di dottorato o di articoli con l'edizione di singole composizioni su temi particolari, sono da ritenere di notevole importanza le raccolte di *Dicta*, di *Sermones* e dei commenti ai *Salmi* 1–100.<sup>2</sup> La caratteristica comune a queste raccolte sembra sia quella di non essere state fatte oggetto di una vera e propria revisione da parte dell'autore. In effetti, pur essendo tramandata ognuna da alcuni manoscritti, il loro *corpus* non è costante in tutti i testimoni, e, inoltre, ora un *dictum*, ora un sermone, ora il commento a un salmo

---

<sup>1</sup> Cf. JAMES MCEVOY, *The Philosophy of Robert Grosseteste*, Clarendon, Oxford 1982, p. 455–504; ID., « Editions of Grosseteste Planned and in Progress, and Some *desiderata* for the Future », in ID. (ed.), *Robert Grosseteste: New Perspectives on His Thought and Scholarship*, Abbazia S. Petri-Brepols, Steenbrugis–Turnhout 1995 (*Instrumenta Patristica*, 27), p. 395–405; ID., « *Robertus Grossatesta Lincolnensis. An Essay in Historiography, Medieval and Modern* », in MAURA O'CARROLL (ed.), *Robert Grosseteste and the Beginnings of a British Theological Tradition*. Papers delivered at the 'Grosseteste Colloquium' (Greyfriars, Oxford, 3<sup>rd</sup> July 2002), Istituto storico dei Cappuccini, Roma 2003 (*Bibliotheca Seraphico-Cappuccina*), p. 21–99. Progressivi quadri d'insieme emergono dai volumi collettanei: EVELYN A. MACKIE, JOSEPH GOERING (eds.), *Editing Robert Grosseteste*. Papers given at the Thirty-Sixth Annual Conference on Editorial Problems University of Toronto (2–4 November 2000), University of Toronto Press, Toronto 2003; JACK P. CUNNINGHAM (ed.), *Robert Grosseteste. His Thought and Its Impact*, Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, Toronto 2012 (*Papers in Mediaeval Studies*, 21); JOHN FLOOD, JAMES R. GINTHER, JOSEPH W. GOERING (eds.), *Robert Grosseteste and His Intellectual Milieu. New Editions and Studies*, Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, Toronto 2013 (*Papers in Mediaeval Studies*, 24); JACK P. CUNNINGHAM, MARK HOCKNULL (eds.), *Robert Grosseteste and the Pursuit of Religious and Scientific Learning in the Middle Ages*, Springer International Publishing AG, Cham 2016 (*Studies in the History of Philosophy of Mind*, 18).

Ringrazio Luigi Silvano per alcuni suggerimenti a proposito degli *Etymologica* e Matteo Di Giovanni per il prezioso aiuto e la consulenza, e anche Andrea A. Robiglio, Cecilia Panti e Luigi Campi. Devo a Gianfranco Fioravanti la segnalazione del passo del *Periphyseon* che ha dato il via a ulteriori considerazioni; a lui il mio sentito grazie.

<sup>2</sup> Sul sito <[https://issuu.com/ordereduniverse/docs/dicta\\_1-147\\_bodley\\_fp](https://issuu.com/ordereduniverse/docs/dicta_1-147_bodley_fp)> (ultimo accesso 30 Marzo 2021) è consultabile la trascrizione dei *Dicta*, corredata dalla individuazione delle fonti esplicitamente citate, curata da JOSEPH W. GOERING e EDWIN J. WESTERMANN, lavoro meritorio e di grande utilità (ROBERTUS GROSSETESTE, *Dicta, e cod. Oxoniense, Bodley 798*); per i commenti ai *Salmi*: ELIZABETH M. STREITZ, « Robert Grosseteste, Commentarius in Psalmos, I–XXXVI », Diss., University of Southern California 1996; per i sermoni: SUZANNE PAUL, « An Edition and Study of Selected Sermons of Robert Grosseteste », 2 vols., Diss., University of Leeds 2002. Per lo studio e l'edizione di singoli detti, sermoni o commenti si vedano alcuni contributi e le bibliografie presenti nei volumi citati alla nota precedente.

compare in una e nell'altra raccolta, o è presente nell'una e non nell'altra. In ogni caso, il *terminus a quo* per chiunque voglia iniziare a considerare la tradizione di queste raccolte resta sempre l'indagine condotta da S. Harrison Thomson, che ai *Dicta* e ai sermoni ha dedicato particolare attenzione, e ha portato a termine una prima ricognizione che ha fornito dati attendibili relativi alla presenza degli stessi testi nelle differenti collezioni.<sup>3</sup>

Quanto ai *Dicta*, ci è giunto il *colophon* (che si trova però come prologo in parte dei manoscritti) in cui l'autore parla in prima persona e ci illumina sulla genesi della raccolta, sugli anni in cui l'ha costituita, sul processo e sugli scopi che l'hanno originata:

In hoc libello sunt 147 capitula, quorum quedam sunt brevia verba que, dum in scolis morabar, scripsi breviter et incomposito sermone ad memoriam; nec sunt de una materia, nec ad invicem continuata, quorum titulos posui ut facilius quod vellet lector possit inveniri. Spondentque plerumque plus aliquot tituli quam solvant capitula lectori. Quedam vero sunt sermones quos eodem tempore ad clerum vel ad populum feci.<sup>4</sup>

Callus definiva questo intervento *recapitulatio*,<sup>5</sup> e in effetti Grossatesta sembra voler informare coloro che si accostano a questa raccolta che si tratta di una specie di 'soggettario', frutto di annotazioni talvolta occasionali, altre volte sollecitate da impegni pastorali, altre ancora note prese nel corso di digressioni dovute – potrebbe sembrare – alla necessità di spiegare o chiarire perplessità o dubbi, magari a seguito di altre letture. E per di più, le note non sarebbero state riviste, ma lasciate nella forma primordiale e non ricontrollate: « incomposito sermone ad memoriam ». In un recente contributo, Joseph W. Goering, che ha curato l'edizione online dei *Dicta* (proseguendo il lavoro iniziato da Edwin J. Westermann nella tesi di dottorato),<sup>6</sup> ha fatto lo *status quaestionis* dal punto di vista storiografico, proponendo risposte soprattutto alle domande relative al momento in cui i *Dicta* furono scritti e quando furono messi a disposizione dei lettori, ma non trascurando il problema della relazione fra questi, i *Sermoni* e i commenti ai *Salmi*.<sup>7</sup> L'ipotesi elaborata da Goering è articolata. Egli propone di

<sup>3</sup> Cf. SAMUEL H. THOMSON, *The Writings of Robert Grosseteste, Bishop of Lincoln, 1235–1253*, University Press, Cambridge (Mass.) 1940, p. 75–76 (Commento ai *Salmi*), 161–191 (*Sermones*), 214–232 (*Dicta*).

<sup>4</sup> ROBERTUS GROSSETESTE, *Dicta*, ed. GOERING, WESTERMANN, p. 2.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. DANIEL A. CALLUS, « The Oxford Career of Robert Grosseteste », in *Oxoniensia*, 10 (1945), [p. 42–72], p. 67; ID., *Robert Grosseteste as Scholar*, in ID. (ed.), *Robert Grosseteste Scholar and Bishop. Essays in Commemoration of the Seventh Centenary of His Death*, Oxford 1955, [p. 1–69], p. 30.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. EDWIN J. WESTERMANN, « An Edition, with Introduction and Notes, of 'Dicta' I–L of Robert Grosseteste, Bishop of Lincoln, 1235–1253 », Diss., University of Colorado 1942.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. JOSEPH W. GOERING, « Robert Grosseteste's 'Dicta'. The State of the Question », in FLOOD, GINTHER, GOERING (eds.), *Robert Grosseteste and His Intellectual Milieu*, p. 64–86.

collocare la redazione dei *Dicta* quando Grossatesta insegnava nel convento dei Francescani a Oxford, quindi attorno al 1230, e prospetta che siano stati raccolti nella redazione che possediamo durante il suo episcopato, quindi a partire dalla sua elezione alla cattedra di Lincoln nel 1235.<sup>8</sup> Chi si è occupato del vescovo di Lincoln è al corrente del fatto che si è certi che egli era uso, oltre che annotare i margini dei codici, prendere appunti su *cedule*, che – come nel caso delle sue glosse alla *Fisica* – sono state trascritte in successione *post mortem*, assumendo la forma di un testo continuo.<sup>9</sup> L'ipotesi prospettata da Goering è condivisibile, perché riesce almeno in parte a dare ragione del fatto che parecchi *dicta*, oltre ad essere presenti anche nella raccolta dei sermoni, documenterebbero l'insegnamento di un vescovo, non di un semplice sacerdote. Tuttavia, si deve rilevare che è l'argomento oggetto di non pochi *dicta* a porre problemi, data la indubbia eterogeneità dei temi sviluppati o semplicemente enunciati, come si può constatare dall'elenco dei titoli (*capitula*, come li definisce Grossatesta nel prologo/*colophon*) che Goering pubblica nella prima appendice al suo contributo.<sup>10</sup> Data questa caratteristica della raccolta, non sembra del tutto convincente la proposta di interpretare le parole « *dum in scolis morabar* » come riferentisi al solo periodo di insegnamento della teologia presso i Minori; inoltre, se alcuni *Dicta*, che sono in effetti dei sermoni, risulterebbero redatti con cura, come spiegare che non pochi altri sembrano effettivamente corrispondere come registro di scrittura all'affermazione: « *scripsi breviter et incomposito sermone ad memoriam* »?

## II.

Su questi aspetti certo non marginali della questione torneremo in chiusura. Allo scopo di apportare nuovi elementi che possano contribuire a fare maggiore chiarezza sulla genesi della raccolta dei *Dicta* – o forse a rendere ancor più problematiche le fasi della sua composizione – si intende proporre al lettore l'esame di tre *dicta* che non hanno relazione con i temi toccati o sviluppati dalla maggior parte degli altri. Essi, per un verso, portano a confermare quanto già sappiamo della multiforme *curiositas* di Grossatesta, visto che si tratta di brevi testi tradotti da lessici greci, diversi dal *Suda*, fino ad ora ritenuta la fonte certo non unica, ma principale delle notizie di vario genere presenti in suoi scritti; per

---

<sup>8</sup> Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 73–75.

<sup>9</sup> Sulla questione delle glosse alla *Fisica* si veda l'esauriente analisi di NEIL T. LEWIS, « Robert Grosseteste's *Notes on the Physics* », in MACKIE, GOERING (eds.), *Editing Robert Grosseteste*, p. 103–134.

<sup>10</sup> Cf. GOERING, « Robert Grosseteste's 'Dicta' », p. 77–83. L'appendice è utile e preziosa, perché Goering la correda con le indicazioni bibliografiche dei singoli *dicta* pubblicati, e con la segnalazione di quelli presenti fra i sermoni e/o nei commenti ai *Salmi* in una seconda appendice (*ibid.*, p. 84–86).

un altro verso, ci portano a domandarci ancora una volta quando, dove, con chi o da chi egli abbia incominciato ad apprendere la lingua greca.

Alcuni ‘avvisi al lettore’ prima di passare ai tre testi. I *Dicta* sono stati tramandati da numerosi manoscritti e, come si è accennato sopra, la loro tradizione interseca quelle dei sermoni e dei commenti ai Salmi, e di conseguenza lo studio critico della loro tradizione richiederebbe un’analisi comparata delle tradizioni dei tre gruppi di scritti del vescovo di Lincoln, scritti che sino ad ora non sono stati sistematicamente indagati alla ricerca di eventuali altri luoghi cui potrebbe corrispondere come fonte un lessico greco. Quella che è qui data non è quindi l’edizione del testo latino dei tre *dicta*, né tantomeno una loro edizione critica, che comporterebbe anche l’esame della tradizione greca degli *Etymologica*, bensì è la loro trascrizione fatta da E. J. Westermann, reperibile online,<sup>11</sup> di seguito alla quale viene riportato il testo greco degli *Etymologica* per permettere agli studiosi interessati di fare un primo confronto a riprova di quanto affermato. Si è voluto rendere noto il rinvenimento di tre ‘schede’ dei *Dicta* in cui è stato possibile individuare la fonte greca cui ha attinto Grossatesta nelle sue ‘annotazioni’. Chi si occupa del vescovo di Lincoln sa bene che egli continua a riservare delle sorprese, e che un lavoro d’insieme sulla presenza e sull’uso da lui fatto delle fonti, in particolare dei lessici greci, sarà possibile quando saranno studiati sistematicamente i suoi scritti.<sup>12</sup>

Nella trascrizione, quando si è ritenuto di modificare il testo di Westermann – da lui trascritto usando solo il manoscritto di Oxford, Bodleian Library, Bodley 798 (qui di seguito indicato dalla sigla O) – o di documentare varianti utili a una migliore valutazione del testo, si è fatto ricorso al manoscritto di Londra, British Library, Royal 6.E.V (ff. 61vb–62rb, di seguito indicato dalla sigla L). Si è ritenuto di ricorrere a questo manoscritto fra i numerosi testimoni della tradizione dei *Dicta* perché già S. H. Thomson segnalava che esso tramanda « more Grosseteste material than any other single MS, save perhaps the damaged Cottonian MS Otho D. x. It is a large folio codex written about the middle of the fourteenth century. It was once (XIV<sup>2</sup>) *Liber ecclesie sancte Marie de Merton* ». <sup>13</sup> Il codice contiene anche l’*Hexaameron*, nella cui tradizione figura nella parte alta dello stemma;<sup>14</sup> inoltre, è

<sup>11</sup> Vedi sopra, nota 2.

<sup>12</sup> Nella recente edizione della traduzione del *De Caelesti Hierarchia* e delle *Notulae* di Grossatesta gli editori hanno individuato otto luoghi – quasi esclusivamente etimologie – per i quali hanno rinviato al *Gudianum*, ma non li hanno sottoposti ad esame; cfr. ROBERTUS GROSSETESTE, *Versio Caelestis Hierarchiae Pseudo-Dionysii Areopagitae*, ed. DECLAN ANTHONY LAWELL, JAMES McEVROY, JAMES STANLEY McQUADE, Brepols, Turnhout 2015 (Corpus Christianorum. Continuatio mediaevalis [= CCCM], 268), p. 325–326 dell’*Index fontium et locorum parallelorum*.

<sup>13</sup> THOMSON, *The Writings of Robert Grosseteste*, p. 11.

<sup>14</sup> ROBERTUS GROSSETESTE, *Hexaameron*, ed. RICHARD C. DALES, SERVUS GIEBEN, Oxford University Press, London 1982, p. 3.

uno dei codici usati nell'edizione di scritti astronomici di Grossatesta.<sup>15</sup> Si è ritenuto inoltre di verificare alcuni luoghi dei tre *Dicta* controllando il testo del ms. Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, 257 (di seguito indicato con la sigla C). Oltre alle sigle di questi tre codici, nelle pagine che seguono si useranno le seguenti sigle e abbreviazioni per rinviare alle edizioni dei lessici bizantini:

EG.Sturz = *Etymologicum Graecae linguae Gudianum et alia grammaticorum scripta* (...), ed. FRIEDRICH W. STURZ, Leipzig 1818 (ripr. Olms, Hildesheim–New York 1973).

EG.De Stef. = *Etymologicum Gudianum quod vocatur*, ed. ALOYSIUS DE STEFANI, Fasc. I litteras A-B continens; Fasciculus II litteras B (Βωμολόχοι) – Z (Ζεῖαί) continens, Leipzig 1909–1922 (ripr. Hakkert, Amsterdam 1965).

EM = *Etymologicum Magnum seu verius Lexicon* (...), ed. THOMAS GAISFORD, Oxford 1848 (ripr. Hakkert, Amsterdam 1962).

In caso di corrispondenza del latino con lezioni greche presenti nel testo dell'una o dell'altra edizione degli etimologici è stato dato avviso in nota. Inoltre, per meglio segnalare la corrispondenza fra il testo latino e quello greco si è ritenuto utile introdurre segni di paragrafo, assenti nei testi originali. Infine, si fa presente che per il testo latino si è seguita la grafia della trascrizione di Westermann, ad eccezione della grafia del nesso 'ci', che si è preferito scrivere 'ti'. Si è voluto, inoltre, conservare le traslitterazioni latine dei termini greci presenti nei tre *Dicta* così come si leggono nei codici, traslitterazioni che il lettore interessato è comunque in grado di comprendere e di valutare alla luce dei termini greci corrispondenti.

(a) *Dictum 109. <Unde derivatur hoc nomen 'Deus'>*

'Theos' Grece, 'Deus' Latine, et mutatur 't' aspiratum in 'd', et 'o' in 'u', et sic ab hoc nomine 'Theos' fit hoc nomen 'Deus'.

<§. 1>. Hoc autem nomen 'Theos' apud Grecos dirivatur ab hoc verbo 'theo' quod est 'curro'. Deus enim quasi cursor velocissimus ubique est presens, et omnia implens omniaque preocupans. Unde<sup>16</sup> in libro *Sapientie*, de summa sapientia, que Deus est, scriptum est: « Omnibus mobilibus mobilior est sapientia » (*Sap* 7, 24). Et ad sponsum dicit sponsa in *Canticum*<sup>17</sup> *Canticorum*: « Fuge, dilecte mi, assimilare capre, hinnuloque cervorum super montes aromatum » (*Cant* 8, 14). Et in prophetia scriptum est: « Celum et terram ego implebo, dicit Dominus » (cf. *Ier* 13, 13; *Ag* 2, 7-8).

---

<sup>15</sup> CECILIA PANTI, *Moti, virtù e motori celesti nella cosmologia di Roberto Grossatesta. Studio ed edizione dei trattati 'De sphaera, De cometis, De motu supercelestium*, SISMEL-Edizioni del Galluzzo, Firenze 2001 (Corpus Philosophorum Medii Aevi. Testi e studi, 16), passim.

<sup>16</sup> Unde] et add. L.

<sup>17</sup> Canticum] O

<§. 2>. Vel dicitur hoc nomen ‘Theos’ ab hoc verbo ‘tho’, quod signat apud Grecos ‘compono’ vel ‘facio’. Deus enim omnium est factor et ordinator. Fecit enim Deus in principio celum et terram et omnem ornatum eorum (cf. *Gen* 2, 1), et per eius sapientiam et verbum « omnia facta sunt, et sine ipso factum est nichil » (*Io* 1, 3).

<§. 3>. Vel dicitur hoc nomen ‘theos’ ab hoc verbo ‘tho’, quod apud Grecos idem est quod ‘video’. Ipse namque est omnia videns. « Omnia enim », ut dicit Apostolus, « nuda sunt et aperta oculis eius, ad quem nobis sermo » (*Hebr* 4, 13). Et in *Ecclesiastico* scriptum est: « Omnia opera eorum velud sol in conspectu Dei; et oculi eius sine intermissione in viis eorum aspicientes » (*Eccli* 17, 16). Et sciendum quod ab hoc verbo ‘tho’ fit nomen ‘thos’, et per adiectionem ‘e’ littere fit hoc nomen ‘theos’.

<§. 4>. Vel dicitur ‘theos’, secundum quosdam, a calore. ‘The<r>motis’ enim Grece Latine<sup>18</sup> ‘caliditas’ est, a quo nomine putantur<sup>19</sup> hoc nomen ‘theos’ derivari, quod bene ipsi convenit, de quo dicitur: « A summo celo egressio eius, et occursus eius usque ad summum eius; nec est qui se abscondat a calore eius » (*Psal* 18, 7).

<§. 5>. Vel dicitur ‘theos’ ab hoc verbo ‘theo’, quod est ‘incendo’ vel ‘inflammo’, quod ei congruit de quo dicitur: « Deus noster ignis consumens est » (*Hebr* 12, 29).

<§. 6>. Hoc quoque verbum Grecum ‘tho’ in una significatione idem est quod ‘firmo’, unde non<sup>20</sup> congrue potest derivari hoc nomen ‘theos’. De Deo namque dicitur: « Et ipse enim firmavit orbem terre, qui non commovebitur » (*Psal* 92, 1); et iterum: « Qui firmavit terram super aquas » (*Psal* 135, 6). Et in Ysaia scriptum est: « Hec dicit Dominus Deus, creans celos, et extendens eos; firmans terram, et que germinant ex ea » (*Is* 42, 5).

<§. 7>. Signat etiam hoc verbum ‘tho’ idem quod ‘letor’. Et de<sup>21</sup> Deo dicimus: « Exultatio mea, erue me a circumdantibus me »<sup>22</sup> (*Psal* 31, 7).

<§. 8>. Significat quoque hoc verbum ‘tho’ idem quod ‘pono’, et de Deo dicitur: « Qui posuit fines tuos pacem » (*Psal* 147, 14).

<§. 9>. Significat insuper idem quod ‘lucror’, et bene congruit ei qui nos perditos sua passione lucratus est, et pretio sui sanguinis redemit. Unde Apostolus: « Empti enim estis pretio magno » (*I Cor* 6, 20).

<§. 10>. Secundum moralem autem intelligentiam bene congruit ab hiis omnibus rationibus nomen Deo imponi. Ipse enim precurrit et prevenit nos per gratiam prevenientem, et preveniendo sua gratia nos componit et conformat in novum hominem, ut simus initium aliquod creature eius, exuti veterem hominem et induti novum, renovati et reformati « spiritu mentis vestre » (cf. *Eph* 4, 22-4).

---

<sup>18</sup> Latine] om. O.

<sup>19</sup> Putantur] putatur C

<sup>20</sup> Non] om. C

<sup>21</sup> de] om. OL

<sup>22</sup> me] om. L.

Sicque compositos et innovatos vultu sui beneplaciti in nobis, nos<sup>23</sup> respicit illuminans super nos vultum suum. Vultus enim Domini super nos illuminatione ampliori et augmentata calefacit caritate, augmentatoque caritatis calore accendit<sup>24</sup> et inflamat, et vitiorum rubiginem, hoc est ex prioribus vitiis relictam consuetudinem, consumit. Sicque calefactos et accensos per perseverantiam confirmat, confirmatisque iam ipse fit exultatio, contempto mundano gaudio. Exultantium<sup>25</sup> vero in ipso solo fines ponit pacem. Sicque pacificatos in filios adoptionis lucratus est, quia « beati pacifici: quoniam filii Dei vocabuntur » (Mt 5, 9).

EG, Sturz, col. 258, 57–259, 10:

Θεοὺς, ὁ Ἀπολλόδωρος ἀπὸ τοῦ θεῖν. τινὲς δὲ ἀπὸ τῆς θερμότητος. ὁ δὲ Ἀπολλόδωρος καὶ ἀπὸ τοῦ εἶναι τοῦ θεάσασθαι τὴν ἀκτίνα τοῦ ἡλίου καὶ τῆς σελήνης, οἱ δὲ ἀπὸ τῆς θερμότητος λέγουσιν, ἀπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ ἄρχοντα τὸν θάνατον, ψυχρὸν ὄντα κατ' ἀντίφρασιν, ὡς καὶ θερμοῦ θεῖν τὸ ἱερὸν Αἰγυπτίων, ψυχροποιὸν γὰρ ἔστι.

Θεὸς, διὰ τοῦ θείν ἤγουν τρέχειν καὶ προφθάνειν τὰ πάντα· ἢ διὰ τὸ αἶθειν ἤγουν φλογίζειν. ἢ διὰ τὸ θεωρεῖν τὰ πάντα. ὅθεν καὶ οἱ τοῖς ὀφθαλμοῖς τῆς καρδίας θεωροῦντες αὐτὸν θεοὶ ἐκλήθησαν. ὡς τὸ ἐγὼ εἶπα, θεοὶ ἔστε.

EM, col. 445, 42–50:

ΘΕΟΣ: Παρὰ τὸ θέω, τὸ τρέχω, εἰς ὃν πάντες τρέχομεν. Παρὰ τὸ θέω καὶ θεύω, θεὸς, ὡς φωλεύω φωλεός· οἱ γὰρ ἀρχαῖοι, ὡς ἐπὶ τὸ πλεῖστον, ἐπὶ ἡλίου καὶ σελήνης καὶ ἀστέρων (ἀστατοῦσι γὰρ) ἐτίθεσαν τὸ ὄνομα· παρὰ τὸ αἰεὶ θεῖν καὶ κινεῖσθαι. Καὶ ἐπὶ τοῦ χωρὶς τούτων λεγομένου θεοῦ λέγοιτ' ἄν, παρὰ τὸ πανταχοῦ εἶναι καὶ περιθεῖν· ἢ παρὰ τὸ θῶ, τὸ κατασκευάζω καὶ ποιῶ, ὁ πάντων ποιητῆς, καὶ τῆς τῶν πάντων κατασκευῆς αἴτιος, γίνεται θεός καὶ θεός.

EM, col. 461, 5–14:

Θῶ: Σημαίνει τὸ κατασκευάζω καὶ ποιῶ, ἐξ οὗ καὶ θεός· θῶ, τὸ τρέφω, ἐξ οὗ καὶ θεοῖν ἢ εὐωχία· θῶ, τὸ θηλάζω, ἐξ οὗ καὶ θηλή ὁ μασθός, καὶ θῆλυς, ἢ ἔχουσα μασθοῦς καὶ θηλάζουσα· θῶ, τὸ ἔδραιῶ, ἐξ οὗ καὶ θῶκος, ὁ θρόνος· θῶ, τὸ τίθημι, ἐξ οὗ καὶ θίς, ὁ σωρὸς τῶν χρημάτων· θῶ, τὸ ἀπολαύω, ἐξ οὗ καὶ θῶραξ. Ἔστι δὲ καὶ ἄλλα δύο διὰ τοῦ ο καὶ ω· θῶ, τὸ καταβάλλω καὶ ζημιῶ, ἐξ οὗ καὶ θωγή· τὸ δὲ διὰ τοῦ ο μικροῦ σημαίνει τὴν ταχύτητα. Γίνεται δὲ παρὰ τὸ θέω, τὸ τρέχω. Σημαίνει δὲ καὶ τὸ [τρέχω, καὶ τὸ] βλέπω· οἶον, Ἔργα θεῶν.

Come già segnalavano A. Carlotta Dionisotti prima<sup>26</sup> e successivamente Tiziano Dorandi e Michele Trizio nella loro *editio princeps* del *Liber qui vocatur Suda* delle

<sup>23</sup> nos] reficit add. et exp. L.

<sup>24</sup> accendit] ascendit O.

<sup>25</sup> Exultantium] exultantem O

<sup>26</sup> Cf. A. CARLOTTA DIONISOTTI, « Robert Grosseteste and the Greek Encyclopedia », in JACQUELINE HAMESSE, MARTA FATTORI (eds.), *Rencontres de cultures dans la philosophie médiévale. Traductions et*

voci del *Suda* tradotte da Grossatesta,<sup>27</sup> la voce ‘Deus’ – come del resto anche alcune altre – non figura fra quelle tradotte da Grossatesta, anche se compare fra le 71 elencate in apertura. In effetti, se si leggono le voci 178, 179 e 180 del *Suda*, si può constatare che non sono particolarmente significative.<sup>28</sup> Così non è per la voce dell’*Etymologicum Gudianum* e per quelle dell’*Etymologicum Magnum*. Se si segue la scansione dei paragrafi, si può constatare e verificare come Grossatesta attinga all’una e all’altra delle voci dei due lessici per arricchire – potremmo dire – il campo etimologico-semanticò e quello allegorico del termine θεός, ricorrendo anche alla voce Θῶ del *Magnum*.

Come potremo verificare anche per il *Dictum* 110 a proposito del termine *gastrimargia*, è da ritenere probabile che Grossatesta abbia voluto ricorrere ai dizionari enciclopedici bizantini a sua disposizione per verificare e, forse, andare oltre le fonti latine – o rese accessibili in latino – relative all’etimologia di *Deus*. In effetti, egli poteva trovare in un passo del libro I del *Periphyseon* l’etimologia del nome *Deus*:

N. Huius itaque nominis etymologia a graecis assumpta est. Aut enim a uerbo quod est ΘΕΩΡΩ (hoc est uideo) deriuatur, aut ex uerbo ΘΕΩ (hoc est curro), aut – quod probabilius est, quia unus idemque intellectus inest – ab utroque deriari recte accipitur. Nam cum a uerbo ΘΕΩΡΩ deducitur, ΘΕΩC uidens interpretatur. Ipse enim omnia quae sunt in se ipso uidet, dum nihil extra se ipsum aspiciat quia nihil extra ipsum est. Cum uero a uerbo ΘΕΩ ΘΕΩC deducitur, currens recte intelligitur. Ipse enim in omnia currit et nullo modo stat sed omnia currendo implet, sicut scriptum est: « Velociter currit sermo eius ». Attamen nullo modo mouetur. De deo siquidem uerissime dicitur motus stabilis et status mobilis. Stat enim in se ipso incommutabiliter nunquam naturalem suam stabilitatem deserens, mouet autem se ipsum per omnia ut sint ea quae a se essentialiter subsistunt. Motu enim ipsius omnia fiunt. Ac per hoc unus idemque intellectus est in duabus interpretationibus eiusdem nominis, quod est deus. Non enim aliud est deo currere per omnia quam uidere omnia; sed sicut uidendo, ita et currendo fiunt omnia<sup>29</sup>.

---

*traducteurs de l’Antiquité tardive au XIV<sup>e</sup> siècle*. Actes du Colloque international organisé par la SIEPM et l’Università degli Studi di Cassino (Cassino, 15–17 June 1989), UCL. Institut d’études médiévales, Louvain-la-Neuve–Cassino 1990 (Textes, études, congrès, 11. Rencontres de philosophie médiévale, 1), [p. 337–353], p. 351.

<sup>27</sup> Cf. TIZIANO DORANDI, MICHELE TRIZIO, « *Editio princeps* del ‘Liber qui uocatur *Suda*’ di Roberto Grossatesta », *Studia graeco-arabica*, 4 (2014), [p. 145–190], p. 159: « Liber qui uocatur *Suda* continet 71 capitula, qui sic incipit ex libro interpretatorio parcium orationis grecarum qui grece uocatur *Suda*, Primum caput sic incipit deus etc., secundum temporibus ».

<sup>28</sup> Cf. ADA ADLER (ed.), *Suidae Lexicon*, 5 vols., Teubner, Stuttgart 1967–1971 (Lexicographi Graeci, 1. Sammlung wissenschaftlicher Commentare), vol. II, p. 699.

<sup>29</sup> Cfr. JOANNES SCOTTUS ERIUGENA, *Periphyseon* I, ed. ÉDOUARD JEAUNEAU, Brepols, Turnhout 1996, p. 18.436–19.453 (CCCM, 161).

L'editore correda il testo di un ricco rinvio alle possibili fonti alle quali avrebbe potuto attingere direttamente l'Eriugena, e la loro lettura ci dà modo di accostarci all'*humus* in cui si muoveva Grossatesta probabilmente già negli anni del suo insegnamento presso i Francescani fino all'elezione alla cattedra di Lincoln nel 1235. Fra le fonti cui si rinvia nell'apparato dell'edizione – fra le quali Macrobio, Gregorio Nisseno, Gregorio Nazianzeno –<sup>30</sup> richiamano la nostra attenzione soprattutto il *De divinis nominibus* dello pseudo-Dionigi e il *De fide orthodoxa* del Damasceno, perché Grossatesta ne fece a sua volta le traduzioni, nonostante le versioni già esistenti. Nel *De divinis nominibus* poteva incontrare la divinità che tutto 'osserva' e 'circoscrive', che è origine del tutto e a tutto provvede, e pure l'affermazione della sua 'staticità'.<sup>31</sup> Nel Damasceno – che dipende dal Nazianzeno – trovava la conferma dell'etimologia del nome 'Deus' che poteva leggere nel *Periphyseon*. Gli studiosi che hanno affrontato la cronologia delle traduzioni di testi greci fatte da Grossatesta collocano la versione del *De fide orthodoxa* fra le prime, se non addirittura la prima, perché essa si presenta piuttosto come una *retractatio* di quella di Burgundione, e collocabile verso il 1238-39.<sup>32</sup> Il passo del *De fide* è così reso nelle due traduzioni:

Burgundione:

Secundum vero nomen: theos (id est Deus), quod dicitur ab eo quod est thein (id est currere), et fovere universa; vel ab ethin, id est ardere: Deum (?) enim ignis consumens omnem malitiam est; vel a theaste (id est considerare) universa: nulla enim latent, immo omnium est considerator. Consideravit enim omnia ante generationem eorum, intemporanee (id est sine tempore) excogitans, et singulum secundum suam voluntatem intemporaneam (id est sine tempore) cogitationem, quae est praedeterminatio et imago et exemplum, in praedeterminato tempore fit.<sup>33</sup>

---

<sup>30</sup> Cfr. Ibid., p. 18.

<sup>31</sup> Per i rispettivi luoghi si veda *Corpus Dionysiacum*, 1: Ps.-DIONYSIUS AREOPAGITA, *De divinis nominibus*, ed. BEATE R. SUCHLA, de Gruyter, Berlin-New York 1990 (Patristische Texte und Studien, 33), p. 224–225 (XII.2); p. 212–214 (IX.8–10), e la nuova edizione critica DIONYSII AREOPAGITAE *De divinis nominibus*, praefationem, textum apparatus, Anglicam versionem instruxit SALVATOR LILLA, Edenda curavit CLAUDIUS MORESCHINI, Alessandria, Edizioni dell'Orso 2018, p. 111 e 101–103.

<sup>32</sup> Per la discussione del problema si veda JAMES MCEVOY, « Questions of Authenticity and Chronology Concerning Works Attributed to Robert Grosseteste and Edited 1940–1980 (I) », in *Bulletin de Philosophie Médiévale*, 23 (1981), p. 64–90, in part. p. 68; McEvoy concorda con D. A. Callus nel collocare le versioni del *corpus* dionisiano fra il 1239 e il 1241–42, valutazione condivisa dagli editori del *De Celesti Hierarchia*: ROBERTUS GROSSETESTE, *Versio Caelestis Hierarchiae Pseudo-Dionysii Areopagitae*, ed. LAWELL, MCEVOY, MCQUADE, p. XIX.

<sup>33</sup> Cfr. JOANNES DAMASCENUS, *De fide orthodoxa*, *Versions of Burgundio and Cerbanus*, ed. ELIGIUS M. BUYTAERT, St. Bonaventure University, St. Bonaventure (N.Y.) 1955 (Franciscan Institute Publications. Text series, 8), p. 49.20–50.28.

Grossatesta:

Secundum autem nomen, theos, id est deus, quod dicitur vel a thein, id est currere, et circumsequi universa, vel ab aithein, quod est ardere. Deus enim ignis con/rb/sumens omnem malitiam est; vel a theiastai (!), id est videre et considerare omnia. Ipse enim est quem nichil latet et omnium contemplator [Seu speculator vel visor *in marg.*]. Consideravit enim et vidit omnia ante [ante *iter.*] generationem ipsorum intemporaliter excogitans et unumquodque secundum voluntativam ipsius intemporalis cogitationem, que est predeterminatio et ymago et exemplum, in predeterminato tempore fit.<sup>34</sup>

Sebbene non sia disponibile un'edizione, il confronto della versione del Lincolniense con quella di Burgundione segnala già la peculiare sua caratteristica a tendere da un lato a una maggiore accuratezza lessicale, dall'altro a 'glossare' allo scopo di rendere la pregnanza semantica di alcuni termini. In particolare, è da notare la differente resa in latino del verbo περιέπειν (Burgundio: *fovere*; Grossatesta: *circumsequi*) e della frase ἀλάθητος γάρ ἐστι καὶ πάντων ἐπόπτης.<sup>35</sup> Del verbo ἔπω Grossatesta non rende il significato che ha assunto con la preposizione περί come prefisso, ma preferisce esplicitarne la portata semantica traducendo alla lettera il prefisso e il verbo, proponendo in questo modo quasi una metafora dell'azione di Dio che 'conserva e custodisce avvolgendo', scelta questa tipica del suo modo di tradurre. Più coerente, poi, col testo greco e meglio resa in latino la frase che abbiamo segnalato sopra. Di tutte queste fonti 'alternative' rispetto ai lessici greci non troviamo traccia nel *Dictum*, e questa constatazione mi sembra porti a sottolineare quanto Grossatesta dice al lettore nel *colophon* / prologo a proposito della natura dei testi raccolti: «scripsi breviter et in composito sermone ad memoriam», quindi quasi un 'sogettario' ma non organizzato secondo un ordine tematico o alfabetico. Va notato in ogni caso che nei lessici in effetti egli trovava e poteva 'riconoscere' quanto la tradizione plurisecolare cristiana aveva preso attingendo al sapere antico, poi rivisitato e teologicamente riformulato a proposito dell'etimologia del nome θεός, e tuttavia non incontriamo alcun segno da parte sua di un eventuale 'riconoscimento' di nozioni già note, neppure di quanto si trovava in Eriugena o nel Damasceno.

Per quanto concerne il §. 10, di cui non è stata rinvenuta corrispondenza in greco, mi sembra sia ammirevole l'interpretazione anagogica che Grossatesta elabora a partire dalle fonti greche. Tuttavia, non è possibile escludere cautelativamente che egli abbia potuto attingere ad altre fonti, come potremo verificare a proposito del *Dictum* 110, perché in quel caso trova nel lessico greco

<sup>34</sup> Cfr. MS Città del Vaticano, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Chigi A VIII 245, fol. 7ra-b. Devo la trascrizione del passo alla liberale cortesia di Onorato Grassi, che ringrazio.

<sup>35</sup> Cfr. *Die Schriften des Johannes von Damaskos*, II: Ἐκδοσις ἀκριβῆς τῆς ὀρθοδόξου πίστεως. *Expositio fidei*, ed. BONIFATIUS KOTTER, de Gruyter, Berlin-New York 1973 (Patristische Texte und Studien, 12), p. 31.14 e p. 32.16-17.

anche l'interpretazione che nella tradizione esegetica latina si configura come anagogica.

(b) *Dictum 110. <Unde derivatur hoc nomen 'castrimargia'>*

<§. 1>. 'Castrimargia' nomen Grecum est, sed unde dirivetur hoc nomen vel quid signat secundum anagogiam nullus veterum grammaticorum vel rethorum Grecorum recordatus est. Aristoteles vero, in libro *De animalibus*, recordatur animal quod dicitur 'margos', scilicet quod hoc animal nascitur de putredine inter terram et aquam, et ex quo natum est, hoc animal non cessat comedere terram donec, comedendo, perforans terram exit in terre superficiem. Cum vero exierit, moritur, et iacet mortuum tribus diebus, et post tres dies venit nubes pluvie, et pluit super ipsum, et sic reviviscit, nec ultra terram comedit. Et ex hoc qui fuerunt post veteres philosophos ammoniti, multum comedentes vocaverunt 'castrimargos'. 'Castir' enim Greco sermone ventrem signat.

<§. 2>. Potest autem secundum intellectum speculativum sic sumi huius animalis natura. Passiones et concupiscentie carnales, que non sunt nisi in anima, licet carnis dicantur, a putredine nature corrupte nascuntur, et postquam nate sunt, non cessant comedere cor eis subiectum, donec exeant in manifestationem per operationem exterius cognoscibilem. Sed, exeuntes, plerumquemoriuntur tribus virtutibus animi, et sic gratia Spiritus Sancti superveniens, sicut per nubes doctrine, dat stillicidia cognitionis et vivificat, non secundum priorem vitam, que fuit in passionibus desideriorum, sed secundum vitam virtutum Deo approximantem.

<§. 3>. Quidam<sup>36</sup> vero aliam attribuunt huic nomini 'castrimargia' derivationem. Dicitur enim 'castrimargia' quasi ventris vel circa<sup>37</sup> ventrem insania, a 'gastir', quod est 'venter', et hoc verbo Greco 'margeno', quod signat Latine 'insanio', unde et 'margos' Grece dicitur 'insanus'.

Sunt apud Grecos duo nomina gulositatis vitium signantia, videlicet 'castrimargia' et 'lemargia'. Attamen habent in signando hec nomina differentiam, quia 'castrimargia' est ventris nimia saturitas, 'lemargia' vero gutturis delectatio in dulcedine et suavitate saporum. Dirivatur autem 'lemargia' a 'lemos', scilicet, quod est guttur, quasi gutturis insania.

EG.De Stef., p. 298.7–299.15:

<§. 1> περί Γαστριμαργίας τί ἐστὶ γαστριμαργία; καὶ πόθεν ὠνόμασαι; καὶ κατὰ ἀναγωγὴν πῶς θεωρεῖται; οὐδεὶς οὔτε γραμματικῶν οὔτε ῥητόρων ἐμνημόνευσε ταύτης. Ἀριστοτέλης δὲ ἐν τῷ περὶ ζῶων λόγῳ μέμνηται ζώου μάργου λεγομένου, καὶ ὅτι γεννᾶται ἀπὸ σήψεως μεταξὺ τῆς γῆς καὶ τοῦ ὕδατος, καὶ ἀφ' οὗ γεννηθῆ, οὐ παύεται γαιηφαγοῦν, ἕως οὗ ἐκτρυπῆσαν τὴν γῆν εἰς ἐπιφάνειαν ἐξέλθῃ ὅταν

---

<sup>36</sup> Quidam] Deinde L.

<sup>37</sup> circa] aliqua O.

δὲ ἐξέλθῃ, θνήσκει καὶ κεῖται νεκρὸν τρεῖς ἡμέρας, καὶ μετὰ τὰς τρεῖς ἡμέρας ἔρχεται νέφος βροχῆς, καὶ βρέχει ἐπάνω αὐτοῦ, καὶ ἀναζῆ μηκέτι γαιηφαγοῦν. καὶ ἐκ τούτου οἱ μετὰ<sup>38</sup> τοὺς ἀρχαίους φιλοσόφους ὀρμηθέντες<sup>39</sup> τοὺς πολυφάγους γαστριμάργους ἀπεκάλεσαν<sup>40</sup>.

<§. 2> δύναται δέ τις εὐσεβῶς τοῖς οὖσι κατὰ θεωρίαν ἐπιβαλεῖν τὰ εἰρημένα· πᾶν γὰρ πάθος ἀπὸ σήψεως γεννᾶσθαι πέφυκεν, καὶ ἐπειδὴν γεννηθῆ, οὐ παύεται ἐσθίον τὴν ὑποστήσασαν καρδίαν, ἕως ἂν διὰ τῆς γνωστικῆς ἕξεως εἰς φανέρωσιν ἔλθῃ, καὶ ἔλθὼν θνήσκει ταῖς τρισὶ δυνάμεσι τῆς ψυχῆς· καὶ οὕτως ἡ χάρις τοῦ ἀγίου πνεύματος, ὡς διὰ νέφους τῆς διδασκαλίας ἐπιφανείσα, σταλαγμοὺς δίδωσι τῆς γνώσεως καὶ ζωοποιεῖ οὐ κατὰ τὴν προτέραν ἐμπαθῆ ζωὴν, ἀλλὰ κατὰ τὴν ἐνάρετον καὶ θεῶ οικείαν.

<§. 3> Γαστριμαργία· ἡ περὶ τὴν γαστέρα μανία· μαργαίνειν γὰρ λέγεται παρὰ τοῖς ἕξω τὸ μαίνεσθαι καὶ μάργος καλεῖται ὁ μανιώδης· παρὰ τὸ μαργαίνειν, ὅ ἐστι μαίνεσθαι, τὴν γαστέρα. διαφέρει δὲ γαστριμαργία λαιμαργίας· γαστριμαργία μὲν γὰρ ἐστὶν ἡ τῆς γαστρὸς χόρτασις, λαιμαργία δὲ ἡ τοῦ λαιμοῦ ἡδονή, ἧτοι τὰ γλυκάσματα.

EM, col. 222.5–24:

<§. 1> ΓΑΣΤΡΙΜΑΡΓΟΣ: Πόθεν ἐτυμολογεῖται οὐδεὶς οὔτε γραμματικῶν οὔτε ῥητόρων ἐμνημόνευσεν. Ἀριστοτέλης δὲ ἐν τῷ περὶ Ζῴων μέμνηται ζῶου μάργου λεγομένου, καὶ ὅτι γεννᾶται ἀπὸ σήψεως μεταξὺ τῆς γῆς καὶ τοῦ ὕδατος· καὶ ἀφ' οὗ γεννηθῆ, οὐ παύεται γηίφαγοῦν, ἕως οὗ ἐκτρυπῆσαν τὴν γῆν εἰς ἐπιφάνειαν ἔλθοι· καὶ ἔλθὼν, θνήσκει τρεῖς ἡμέρας. Ἔρχεται γὰρ νέφος βροχῆς, καὶ βρέχει ἐπάνω αὐτοῦ· καὶ ἀναζῆ, μηκέτι γηίφαγοῦν. Καὶ ἐκ τούτου οἱ μετὰ τοὺς ἀρχαίους φιλοσόφους ὀρμηθέντες, τοὺς πολυφάγους γαστριμάργους ἐκάλεσαν.

<§. 2> Δύναται δέ τις εὐσεβῶς τοῖς οὖσιν ἐπιλαβεῖν τὰ εἰρημένα. Πᾶν γὰρ πάθος ἀπὸ σήψεως γίνεται· καὶ ἐπὶ γεννηθῆ, οὐ παύεται ἐσθίον τὴν ὑποστήσασαν καρδίαν, ἕως ἂν διὰ τῆς γνωστικῆς ἕξεως εἰς φανέρωσιν ἔλθοι· καὶ ἔλθὼν, θνήσκει ταῖς τρισὶ δυνάμεσι τῆς ψυχῆς· καὶ οὕτως ἡ χάρις τοῦ Ἁγίου Πνεύματος διὰ νέφους τῆς διδασκαλίας ἐπιφανείσα, σταλαγμοὺς δίδωσι γνώσεως, καὶ ζωοποιεῖ οὐ κατὰ τὴν πρότερον ἐμπαθῆ ζωὴν, ἀλλὰ κατὰ τὴν ἐπ' ἀρετῆ καὶ θεῶ οικείαν.

Il *Dictum* 110 mi sembra un significativo caso che testimonia la natura dell'interesse di Grossatesta per la comprensione di termini e concetti certamente non del tutto estranei al lessico latino,<sup>41</sup> di fronte ai quali tuttavia

<sup>38</sup> οἱ μετὰ EG.Sturz et EM] οἶμαι EG.De Stef.

<sup>39</sup> ὀρμηθέντες EG.Sturz et EM] ὀρμηθέντας EG.De Stef.

<sup>40</sup> ἀπεκάλεσαν EG.Sturz et EM] ἀποκαλέσαι EG.De Stef.

<sup>41</sup> Il termine *gastrimargia* è presente in Cassiano per indicare il vizio della gola: « (...) nunc arripere conluctationem adversus octo principalia vitia vestri orationibus domino confortante disponimus, id est primum gastrimargiae, quae interpretatur gulae concupiscentia, secundum fornicationis, tertium »: JOANNES CASSIANUS, *De institutis coenobiorum*, ed. MICHAEL PETSCHENIG, GOTTFRIED KREUZ, Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften, Wien 2004 (Corpus scriptorum

avvertiva la necessità di poterli collocare nel loro contesto culturale e linguistico. Chi scrive, quando si è imbattuto la prima volta in questo *dictum* dubitava di poter arrivare a una sua soddisfacente comprensione e interpretazione, fuorviato in parte dal rinvio al *De animalibus* di Aristotele, quasi che quel trattato potesse essere la fonte almeno della parte iniziale del *dictum*. In effetti, nell'ultimo capitolo del libro III del *De partibus animalium* Aristotele sta portando a termine lo studio comparato dei sistemi digestivi di alcune specie di animali, e rileva che alcuni animali hanno un intestino dilatato, dilatazione che provoca la ricerca di abbondante cibo, divenendo «ingordi o riguardo alla quantità del cibo oppure riguardo alla frequenza dei pasti »:

Ἅσα μὲν οὖν εἶναι δεῖ τῶν ζώων σωφρονέστερα πρὸς τὴν τῆς τροφῆς ποίησιν εὐρυχωρίας μὲν οὐκ ἔχει μεγάλας κατὰ τὴν κάτω κοιλίαν, ἕλικας δ'ἔχει πλείους καὶ οὐκ εὐθυέντερά ἐστιν. Ἡ μὲν γὰρ εὐρυχωρία ποιεῖ πλήθους ἐπιθυμίαν, ἡ δ'εὐθύτης ταχυτήτα ἐπιθυμίας· διόπερ ὅσα τῶν ζώων ἢ ἀπλᾶς ἔχει ἢ εὐρυχώρους τὰς ὑποδοχάς, τὰ μὲν εἰς πλήθος γαστρίμαργα τὰ δ'εἰς τάχος ἐστίν<sup>42</sup>.

È evidente che il passo in questione non può essere all'origine di ciò che diventa metafora e quasi apologo, figura del percorso dalla sottomissione alla carne-terra-materia, e alla conseguente morte, alla rinascita per vivere una vita secondo virtù. I compilatori bizantini dei lessici hanno attinto sicuramente a una tradizione nella quale il passo aristotelico aveva probabilmente offerto lo spunto per stigmatizzare l'ingordigia e la voracità, permettendo di conseguenza di passare dall'anatomia, all'etimologia, alla lettura morale, anagogica, lettura alla quale aveva accennato anche Aristotele nell'*Etica Nicomachea*. La rilettura del contributo di Carlotta Dionisotti ha permesso di risalire ai lessici e alla riconduzione del *dictum* a quel contesto. Quel contributo, infatti, è corredato da due appendici, la prima delle quali offre l'elenco di luoghi in cui Grossatesta

---

ecclesiasticorum latinorum, 17), p. 81.10-13; lo si incontra poi in altri autori latini dell'Alto Medioevo (veicolato anche attraverso le traduzioni di Massimo il Confessore dell'Eriugena) e successivamente del secolo XIII (ad es. Alberto Magno, Alessandro di Hales, Ruggero Bacone). Su Cassiano e sulla dottrina relativa ai vizi capitali si veda l'ormai classico saggio di CARLA CASAGRANDE, SILVANA VECCHIO, *I sette vizi capitali. Storia dei peccati nel Medioevo*, Einaudi, Torino 2000, passim.

<sup>42</sup> ARISTOTELES, *De partibus animalium* III.14, 675b23-28, in Id., *Opere biologiche*, trans. DIEGO LANZA, MARIO VEGETTI, UTET, Torino 1996<sup>2</sup>, p. 676. Nelle versioni greco-latine medievali del *De partibus* solo in quella di Guglielmo di Moerbeke compare il termine *gastrimarga* traslitterato, mentre nella *Translatio Anonyma* *gastrimarga* è reso con *gulosa* (cf. MS Padova, Biblioteca Antoniana, XVII, 370, fol. 106vb); è tuttavia da tener presente che la versione di Moerbeke risale al 1260 circa. Nella versione di Scoto del passo si legge *gulosum* (cf. ARISTOTELES, *De animalibus: Michael Scot's Arabic-Latin translation*, ed. AAFKE M. I. VAN OPPENRAAIJ, 2 vols., Brill, Leiden-Boston-Köln 1998, vol. II, p. 143-144).

aveva fatto ricorso all'*Etymologicum Gudianum*<sup>43</sup>. Nell'elenco figura il termine 'gastrimargi', con il rinvio alla versione grossatestiana dell'anonimo commento greco al libro III dell'*Etica Nicomachea*:

Et sunt secundum abundantiam in his peccantes dicti 'gastrides' (id est ventrosi, vel 'gastrimargi', quasi ventris habentes insaniam, dicti a 'gastir', quod est venter et hoc verbo 'margeno', quod est insanio), qui superreplent se ipsos et ventrem appetentes qualemcumque cibum.<sup>44</sup>

Nella sua traduzione della *Nicomachea* Grossatesta aveva lasciato traslitterato il termine γαστρίμαργοι<sup>45</sup>, come pure il termine γάστριδες del commento, ma ha inserito la glossa esplicativa derivata dal *Gudianum*<sup>46</sup>. Quell'indicazione ha permesso di risalire alla fonte dell'intero *dictum*. Si è voluto dare anche il testo del *Magnum* per permettere un confronto, pur essendo evidente che il *dictum* è la traduzione integrale della voce del *Gudianum*, con rari interventi di Grossatesta, indispensabili per coordinare alcuni capoversi.

(c) *Dictum 111. <De concordia et diversitate nominum filiarum Iob in Latinis et Grecis codicibus>*

<§. 1>. In Iob legitur quod fuerunt ei<sup>47</sup> tres filie, et quod « vocavit Iob nomen unius Diem, et nomen secunde Cassiam, et nomen tertie Cornustibii » (*Iob* 42, 14). In Greco autem habetur quod 'vocavit nomen unius Imeran, et nomen secunde Cassiam, et nomen tertie Amaltheias keras'. In primo itaque et secundo nomine

<sup>43</sup> Cf. A. CARLOTTA DIONISOTTI, « On the Greek Studies of Robert Grosseteste », in A. CARLOTTA DIONISOTTI, ANTHONY GRAFTON, JILL KRAYE, *The Uses of Greek and Latin. Historical Essays*, University of London. Warburg Institute, London 1988 (Surveys and Texts, 16), [p. 19–39], p. 35–36.

<sup>44</sup> Cf. *The Greek Commentaries on the Nicomachean Ethics of Aristotle in the Latin Translation of Robert Grosseteste, Bishop of Lincoln († 1253)*, I: *Eustratius on Book I and the Anonymous Scholia on Books II, III, and IV*, ed. H. PAUL F. MERCKEN, Brill, Leiden 1973 (Corpus Latinum Commentariorum in Aristotelem Graecorum, 6/1), p. 299.23–27. Cf. ARISTOTELE, *Etica Nicomachea* III.13, 1118b19–20.

<sup>45</sup> Cf. ARISTOTELES, *Ethica Nicomachea, Translatio Roberti Grosseteste Lincolnensis sive 'Liber Ethicorum'*, ed. R. A. GAUTHIER, Brill, Leiden–Bruxelles 1972 (Corpus philosophorum Medii Aevi. Aristoteles Latinus, 26, 1–3.3), p. 198.24: « Propter quod dicuntur isti gastrimargi ». Tommaso commenta attingendo alla glossa greca: « Et ideo tales dicuntur gastrimargi, a gastir, quod est venter, et margos, quod est furor vel insaniam, quasi furor vel insaniam ventris, quia scilicet implent naturam praeter indigentiam. Et tales fiunt illi qui sunt multum bestiales, quia videlicet ad hoc solum adhibent curam ut ventrem impleant absque discretione, sicut et bestiae » (THOMAS DE AQUINO, *Sententia libri Ethicorum*, in *Opera omnia iussu Leonis XIII P. M. edita*, t. XLVII.1, Ad Sanctae Sabinae, Romae 1969, p. 185.139–145; si vedano i rinvii all'anonimo commentatore greco e alla parafrasi di Alberto Magno dell'*Etica* nell'apparato delle fonti).

<sup>46</sup> Cf. *Eustratii et Michaelis et Anonyma in Ethica Nicomachea Commentaria*, ed. GUSTAVUS HEYLBUT, Typ. et impr. Reimer, Berlin 1892 (Commentaria in Aristotelem graeca, 20), p. 172.26–27: [...] οἱ λεγόμενοι γάστριδες οἱ ὑπερπληροῦν ἑαυτοῦς .

<sup>47</sup> ei] om. O hii (?) L.

patenter concordant Latini codices et Greci, quia 'Imera' Grece, 'dies' Latine. Hoc nomen vero<sup>48</sup> 'Cassiam' communiter habent codices utriusque. Sed in tercio nomine videntur dissonare, quia 'Amaltheias keras', hoc est Latine 'Amalthee'<sup>49</sup> cornu, quod non videtur consonare.

<§. 2>. De Amalthee cornu sic dicunt Greci. Cirea<sup>50</sup> pariens Iovem dedit ipsum ad nutriendum Amalthee, que Amaltea, cum non haberet lac, capre supposuit ipsum Iovem, unde 'capram habens' vocatus est. Iuppiter igitur capram historizavit in celo, et tollens unum de cornibus capre, dedit ipsum Amalthee, ordinans ipsi fieri omne quod peteret per cornu. Unde fortunatos et felices dicunt Greci habere cornu Amalthee.

<§. 3>. Cassia vero species est odorifera, et dirivatur, secundum Grecos, ab hoc verbo 'kaso', quod est 'orno', cuius verbi futurum est 'kaso', et ex ipso futuro, per adiectionem alterius 's', fit 'casso', quasi dicat ornatus sensus per bonum odorem.

<§. 4>. Imera autem apud Grecos dicitur ab hoc verbo 'imi'<sup>51</sup>, quod est 'mitto', quia dies mittit nos ad omnia. Vel dicitur 'imera' ab 'iliauges'<sup>52</sup>, quod est claritas. Vel dicitur 'imera' ab<sup>53</sup> hoc verbo 'imero'<sup>54</sup>, quod est 'mansuefacio', eo quod dies mansuefacit animalia, vel simpliciter quia<sup>55</sup> mansuefacit omnia. Vel dicitur 'imera' ab 'yno'<sup>56</sup>, quod est 'splendeo', et a 'marmero'<sup>57</sup>, quod est 'splendeo', ex quo etiam dicitur margarita.

EG.De Stef., p. 105.13–106.4:

<§. 2> Ἀμαλθείας κέρασ· τὸ θει δίφθογγον. ἡ Ῥέα τεκοῦσα τὸν Δία ἔδωκε τῇ Ἀμαλθείᾳ τρέφειν· ἡ δὲ οὐκ ἔχουσα γάλα αἰγὶ ὑπέβαλεν αὐτόν, ὅθεν αἰγίοχος ἐκλήθη. ὁ τοίνυν Ζεὺς τὴν μὲν αἶγα κατηστέρισεν<sup>58</sup> ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ, τὸ δὲ ἐν τῶν κεράτων ἀφελὼν τῇ Ἀμαλθείᾳ ἔδωκε παρασκευάσας αὐτῇ γενέσθαι πᾶν, ὅπερ αἰτήσῃ, διὰ τοῦ κέρατος. ὅθεν καὶ τοὺς εὐδαίμονας Ἀμαλθείας κέρασ ἔχειν φαμέν.

EG.Sturz, col. 302.31–34:

<§. 3> Κασία, εἶδος μυρσικουῦ. γέγονε δὲ παρὰ τὸ κάζω τὸ κοσμῷ, οὗ ὁ μέλλων κάσω, καὶ ἐξ αὐτοῦ πλεονασμῷ τοῦ ι, κασία, ἡ κοσμοῦσα διὰ τῆς εὐοσμίας τὰς αἰσθήσεις.

<sup>48</sup> Hoc nomen vero] Et hoc vero nomen L.

<sup>49</sup> Amalthee] amaltes O

<sup>50</sup> Ῥέα] in tex. Gr.

<sup>51</sup> iimi] scrips.: imu O iimi (?) L imi C

<sup>52</sup> iliauges] iverauges O: ἡλιαυγῆς in tex. Gr.

<sup>53</sup> ab ... imero] om. hom. C

<sup>54</sup> imero (= ἡμερώω?)] miero O.

<sup>55</sup> quia] qui OL

<sup>56</sup> Υνο = ἡλιώω (?)

<sup>57</sup> marmero (= μαρμαίρω?)] scrips.: marinero codd.

<sup>58</sup> καθιστόρησεν EM] κατηστέρισεν EG.De Stef.

EG.Sturz, col. 242.50–243.2:

<§. 4> Ἡμέρα, παρὰ τὸ ἴημι τὸ πέμπω, ἡ ἐκπέμπουσα ἡμᾶς πρὸς πάντα, καὶ δασύνεται, ἡμᾶρ δὲ ψιλοῦται, ἐπειδὴ τὰ (...).

Ἡμέρα, διὰ τοῦ η, ἀμέρα ἡμέρα (...) ἢ ὅτι ἡλιαυγῆς ἐστὶν ἡ ἡμέρα. ἢ οὕτως καλουμένη παρὰ τὸ ἡμέρα ποιεῖν τὰ ζῶα.

EM, col. 493.37–39:

<§. 3> Κασία: Εἶδος μύρου· γίνεται δὲ παρὰ τὸ κάζω, τὸ κοσμῶ, ὁ μέλλων, κάσω, ἐξ αὐτοῦ κασία, ἡ κοσμοῦσα διὰ τῆς εὐοσμίας τὰς αἰσθήσεις.

EM, col. 429.25–34:

<§. 4> Ἡμέρα: Ἡσίοδος σωματοποιῶν λέγει, Νυκτὸς δ' αὐτ' Αἰθήρ τε καὶ Ἡμέρη ἐξεγένοντο [...] Ἡ παρὰ τὸ ἴημι, τὸ πέμπω, ἡ ἐκπέμπουσα ἡμᾶς πρὸς πάντα. Πλάτων δέ [...].

Questo *dictum* ci mette in contatto con un esegeta dei Testi Sacri che è in grado di muoversi fra la loro tradizione latina e la loro versione in greco, allo scopo di comprendere le discordanze e la causa di queste. Il caso in questione riguarda la chiusa del Libro di Giobbe (il cosiddetto *Epilogus historicus*), e più precisamente la discordanza a proposito del nome della terza delle figlie del Patriarca, il cui nome è 'Cornustibii' ('Fiala di stibio') nella *Vulgata*, ma nel testo dei Settanta si legge: καὶ ἐκάλεσεν . . . τὴν δὲ τρίτην Ἀμαλθείας κέρας.<sup>59</sup>

La tradizione esegetica latina non apportava luce; infatti, Gregorio Magno nei *Moralia* non aveva reso meglio comprensibile il versetto, dal momento che aveva interpretato lo strano nome mettendolo in relazione con *tibia*, il flauto, che in origine era d'osso.<sup>60</sup> La lettura che dà Alberto Magno toglie in parte il velo al nome della terza figlia di Giobbe, specificando che il termine ebraico «aequivocum est ad splendorem et cornu», riuscendo comunque a far emergere la metonimia fra 'il corno contenente il belletto' e la bellezza della ragazza cui era

<sup>59</sup> Cf. *Septuaginta, Vetus Testamentum Graecum*, XI.4: *Iob*, ed. Auctoritate Academiae Scientiarum Gottingensis, Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, Göttingen 1982, p. 412.

<sup>60</sup> Cf. GREGORIUS MAGNUS, *Moralia in Iob XXXV*, 17, 43, ed. MARC ADRIAEN, Brepols, Turnhout 1979 (Corpus christianorum. Series latina 143B), p. 1803.1–1804.18: « Haec nomina, pro eo quod a virtutibus sumpta sunt, apte curavit interpres non ea sicut in Arabico sermone inventa sunt ponere, sed in latinum eloquium versa apertius demonstrare. Quis enim nesciat Diem vel Casiam latina esse vocabula? At vero in Cornustibii – quamvis non cornus, sed cornu dicitur, nec cantantium fistula tibia, sed tibia vocatur – in latina tamen lingua sermonis genere minime custodito, rem, credo prodere maluit, atque in eius linguae de qua transferebat proprietate perdurare. Vel quia per cornu et tibiam unum verbum ex utroque composuit, utrumque verbum per unam orationis partem in latina lingua transfusum quo voluit genere licite vocavit. Quid est ergo quod prima filia beati Iob Dies dicitur, secunda Casia, tertia vero Cornustibii vocata memoratur, nisi quia uniuersum genus humanum, quod benignitate conditoris atque eiusdem misericordia redemptoris eligitur, istis nominibus designatur? ».

stato dato quel nome.<sup>61</sup> Tommaso d'Aquino, che redige l'esposizione letterale del *Libro di Giobbe* durante il suo insegnamento presso la curia a Orvieto (c. 1263–1265), apre definitivamente il significato del nome, forse non senza l'influsso di Alberto:

(...) et ideo decentius fuit ut proles ei augetur non numero sed magis in valore. Quod occulte insinuatur in filiabus quae pulcherrimae fuisse leguntur, quarum pulchritudini etiam nomina conveniunt, sequitur enim « Et vocavit nomen unius Diem », scilicet propter claritatem eius, « et nomen secundae Cassiam », quae est species aromatica, propter suavitatem ipsius, « et nomen tertiae Cornustibii »: est autem stibium quo mulieres utuntur ad ornatum oculorum, secundum illud IV Reg. IX 30: « Depinxit oculos suos stibio et ornavit caput suum », quod quidem stibium in cornu a mulieribus conservatur, ut habeant ipsum paratum cum opus fuerit, unde vocavit eam Cornustibii ad designandam abundantem pulchritudinem oculorum; unde et de pulchritudine earum subditur « Non sunt autem inventae mulieres speciosae sicut filiae Iob in universa terra »<sup>62</sup>.

I Settanta avevano reso l'ebraico ricorrendo al 'corno di Amaltea', simbolo di prosperità e di abbondanza, Grossatesta aveva sciolto la lettera e il senso morale dei nomi delle figlie di Giobbe attraverso il lessico bizantino, ma nulla di tutto questo sembra essere 'uscito' dalla pergamena su cui aveva annotato gli appunti delle sue letture.

### III.

Quest'ultima annotazione ci riporta alle domande poste all'inizio e lasciate in sospeso. A conclusione di questa rapidissima incursione fra i *Dicta* vorrei fare due brevi considerazioni. Con la prima si vuole sottolineare il modo di procedere di Grossatesta nel traslare i contenuti della fonte greca al suo scritto. Egli, infatti,

---

<sup>61</sup> Cf. ALBERTUS MAGNUS, *Commentarii in Iob*, ed. MELCHIOR WEISS, Herder, Freiburg im Br. 1904, col. 511: « Et subiungit de nominibus filiarum propter excellentem honorem earum et pulchritudinem: Et vocavit nomen unius Diem, propter splendorem caritatis [claritatis in appar.] eius in honore. Iudit XV (10): 'Tu gloria Ierusalem, tu laetitia Istraël, tu honorificentia populi nostri'. Et nomen secundae Cassiam propter redolentiam famae. Ps (44, 9): 'Mirrha, et gutta, et casia a vestimentis tuis', supple, spirant, ut dicit Glossa. Et nomen tertiae Cornustibii. In Hebraeo nomen, pro quo translatum est cornu, aequivocum est ad splendorem et cornu. Unde Ex XXXIV (30), ubi unus interpres transtulit: 'Splendida facta est facies Moysi', alius dixit 'cornuta'. Stibium autem herba est, qua mulieres ad venustatem componunt facies et depingunt. Unde Ex XXIII (40): 'Circumlinisti stibio oculos tuos, et ornata es mundo muliebri'. Et IV Rg IX (30): 'Porro Iezabel, introitu Iehu audito, depinxit oculos suos stibio, et ornavit caput suum, et respexit per fenestram'. Et est sensus, quod adeo fuit decora, quod ad compositionem sui stibio non indiguit ».

<sup>62</sup> Cf. THOMAS DE AQUINO, *Expositio super Iob ad litteram*, in *Opera omnia iussu Leonis XIII P. M. edita*, t. XXVI, Ad Sanctae Sabinae, Romae 1965, p. 230.170-187.

non traduce sempre *verbum de verbo* ma neppure passa al registro di scrittura proprio della parafrasi. Confrontando, ad esempio, il testo latino del §. 2 del testo (a) con l'originale, si rileva come rielabori alcuni passaggi e riprenda invece *ad litteram* una sequenza di termini, per rendere in modo adeguato la valenza analogica della glossa greca. Vien da osservare che, in effetti, egli non viene meno al suo stile di 'glossatore', ma in questo caso è la sua *notula* ad adattare la fonte greca al lettore, al contesto 'latino'.

La seconda considerazione si ricollega, da una parte, alla questione della composizione e della finalità della raccolta dei *Dicta* e della sua relazione con le raccolte dei sermoni e dei commenti ai Salmi. Dall'altra, se consideriamo e valutiamo queste raccolte alla luce dell'ipotesi formulata da Goering, che colloca la composizione di gran parte della raccolta (con l'esclusione di alcuni sermoni) mentre il futuro vescovo insegnava teologia presso i Francescani, dobbiamo trarre la conclusione che egli era a suo agio con la lingua greca già attorno agli anni '30, non pochi anni prima di mettere in cantiere, con gli *adiutores* Nicola Siculo Greco e Giovanni Basingstoke, le considerevoli e importanti traduzioni che gli vengono riconosciute. Inoltre, sembrerebbe che già in quegli anni avesse facile accesso a lessici greci, almeno al *Suda* e all'*Etymologicum Gudianum*. Il rinvenimento di questi relativamente consistenti luoghi tradotti dal greco e inclusi nel suo 'soggettario' mi sembra aggiunga una tessera al non ancora ben definito mosaico della vita e delle opere del vescovo di Lincoln.

*Bibliography*

Manoscritti

Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, 257

Città del Vaticano, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Chigi A VIII 245.

Londra, British Library, Royal 6.E.V

Oxford, Bodleian Library, Bodley 798.

Padova, Biblioteca Antoniana, XVII, 370.

Testi e studi

Adler, Ada (ed.), *Suidae Lexicon*, 5 vols., Teubner, Stuttgart 1967–1971 (Lexicographi Graeci, 1. Sammlung wissenschaftlicher Commentare).

Albertus Magnus, *Commentarii in Iob*, ed. Melchior Weiss, Herder, Freiburg im Br. 1904.

Aristoteles, *De partibus animalium*, in Id., *Opere biologiche*, trans. Diego Lanza, Mario Vegetti, UTET, Torino 1996<sup>2</sup>.

— *De animalibus: Michael Scot's Arabic-Latin Translation*, ed. Aafke M.I. Van Oppenraaij, 2 vols., Brill, Leiden–Boston–Köln 1998.

— *Ethica Nicomachea, Translatio Roberti Grosseteste Lincolnensis sive «Liber Ethicorum»*, ed. René A. Gauthier, Brill, Leiden–Bruxelles 1972 (Corpus philosophorum Medii Aevi. Aristoteles Latinus, 26, 1-3.3).

Callus, Daniel A., « The Oxford Career of Robert Grosseteste », in *Oxoniensia*, 10 (1945), p. 42–72.

— « Robert Grosseteste as Scholar », in Id. (ed.), *Robert Grosseteste Scholar and Bishop. Essays in Commemoration of the Seventh Centenary of His Death*, Oxford 1955, p. 1–69.

Casagrande, Carla, Silvana Vecchio, *I sette vizi capitali. Storia dei peccati nel Medioevo*, Einaudi, Torino 2000.

Cunningham, Jack P. (ed.), *Robert Grosseteste. His Thought and Its Impact*, Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, Toronto 2012 (Papers in Mediaeval Studies, 21).

Cunningham, Jack P., Mark Hocknull (eds.), *Robert Grosseteste and the Pursuit of Religious and Scientific Learning in the Middle Ages*, Springer International Publishing AG, Cham 2016 (Studies in the History of Philosophy of Mind, 18).

Dionisotti, A. Carlotta, « On the Greek Studies of Robert Grosseteste », in A. Carlotta Dionisotti, Anthony Grafton, Jill Kraye, *The Uses of Greek and Latin. Historical Essays*, University of London. Warburg Institute, London 1988 (Surveys and Texts, 16), [p. 19–39].

— « Robert Grosseteste and the Greek Encyclopedia », in Jacqueline Hamesse, Marta Fattori (eds.), *Rencontres de cultures dans la philosophie médiévale. Traductions et traducteurs de l'Antiquité tardive au XIV<sup>e</sup> siècle*. Actes du Colloque international organisé par la SIEPM et l'Università degli Studi di Cassino (Cassino, 15–17 June 1989), UCL. Institut d'études médiévales, Louvain-la-Neuve–Cassino 1990 (Textes, études, congrès, 11. Rencontres de philosophie médiévale, 1), p. 337–353.

Ps.-Dionysius Areopagita, *De divinis nominibus*, ed. Beate R. Suchla, de Gruyter, Berlin–New York 1990 (Patristische Texte und Studien, 33. Corpus Dionysiacum, 1).

— *De divinis nominibus*, ed. Salvatore R. C. Lilla, Claudio Moreschini, Edizioni dell'Orso, Alessandria 2018 (Hellenica, 71).

Dorandi, Tiziano, Michele Trizio, « *Editio princeps* del 'Liber qui vocatur Suda' di Roberto Grossatesta », *Studia graeco-arabica*, 4 (2014), p. 145–190.

Flood, John, James R. Ginther, Joseph W. Goering (eds.), *Robert Grosseteste and His Intellectual Milieu. New Editions and Studies*, Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, Toronto 2013 (Papers in Mediaeval Studies, 24).

Goering, Joseph W., « Robert Grosseteste's 'Dicta'. The State of the Question », in John Flood, James R. Ginther, Joseph W. Goering (eds.), *Robert Grosseteste and His Intellectual Milieu. New Editions and Studies*, Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, Toronto 2013 (Papers in Mediaeval Studies, 24), p. 64–86.

Gregorius Magnus, *Moralia in Iob: libri XXIII–XXXV*, ed. Marc Adriaen, Brepols, Turnhout 1979 (Corpus christianorum. Series latina 143B).

Heylbut Gustavus (ed.), *Eustratii et Michaelis et Anonyma in Ethica Nicomachea Commentaria*, Typ. et impr. Reimer, Berlin 1892 (Commentaria in Aristotelem graeca, 20).

Joannes Cassianus, *De institutis coenobiorum*, ed. Michael Petschenig, Gottfried Kreuz, Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften, Wien 2004 (Corpus scriptorum ecclesiasticorum latinorum, 17).

Joannes Damascenus, *De fide orthodoxa, Versions of Burgundio and Cerbanus*, ed. Eligius M. Buytaert, Saint-Bonaventure University, Saint-Bonaventure (N.Y.) 1955 (Franciscan Institute Publications. Text series, 8).

— *Expositio fidei*, in *Die Schriften des Johannes von Damaskos*, II: Ἐκδοσις ἀκριβῆς τῆς ὀρθοδόξου πίστεως. *Expositio fidei*, ed. Bonifatius Kotter, de Gruyter, Berlin–New York 1973 (*Patristische Texte und Studien*, 12).

Joannes Scottus Eriugena, *Periphyseon*, Liber primus, ed. Édouard Jauneau, Brepols, Turnhout 1996, p. 18.436–19.453 (*Corpus Christianorum. Continuatio mediaevalis*, 161).

Lewis, Neil T., *Robert Grosseteste's «Notes on the Physics»*, in Evelyn A. Mackie, Joseph Goering (eds.), *Editing Robert Grosseteste. Papers given at the Thirty-Sixth Annual Conference on Editorial Problems University of Toronto (2–4 November 2000)*, University of Toronto Press, Toronto 2003, p. 103–134.

Mackie, Evelyn A., Joseph Goering (eds.), *Editing Robert Grosseteste. Papers given at the Thirty-Sixth Annual Conference on Editorial Problems University of Toronto (2–4 November 2000)*, University of Toronto Press, Toronto 2003.

McEvoy, James, « Questions of Authenticity and Chronology Concerning Works Attributed to Robert Grosseteste and Edited 1940–1980 (I) », in *Bulletin de Philosophie Médiévale*, 23 (1981), p. 64–90.

— *The Philosophy of Robert Grosseteste*, Clarendon, Oxford 1982.

— « Editions of Grosseteste Planned and in Progress, and Some desiderata for the Future », in Id. (ed.), *Robert Grosseteste: New Perspectives on His Thought and Scholarship*, Abbatia S. Petri–Brepols, Steenbrugis–Turnhout 1995 (*Instrumenta Patristica*, 27), p. 395–405.

— « *Robertus Grossatesta Lincolniensis. An Essay in Historiography, Medieval and Modern* », in Maura O'Carroll (ed.), *Robert Grosseteste and the Beginnings of a British Theological Tradition. Papers delivered at the 'Grosseteste Colloquium' (Greyfriars, Oxford, 3<sup>rd</sup> July 2002)*, Istituto storico dei Cappuccini, Roma 2003 (*Bibliotheca Seraphico-Capuccina*), p. 21–99.

Mercken, H. Paul F. (ed.), *The Greek Commentaries on the Nicomachean Ethics of Aristotle in the Latin Translation of Robert Grosseteste, Bishop of Lincoln († 1253)*, I: *Eustratius on Book I and the Anonymous Scholia on Books II, III, and IV*, Brill, Leiden 1973 (*Corpus Latinum Commentariorum in Aristotelem Graecorum*, 6/1).

Panti, Cecilia, *Moti, virtù e motori celesti nella cosmologia di Roberto Grossatesta. Studio ed edizione dei trattati 'De sphaera, De cometis, De motu supercelestium'*, SISMEL–Edizioni del Galluzzo, Firenze 2001 (*Corpus philosophorum Medii Aevi. Testi e studi*, 16).

Paul, Suzanne, « An Edition and Study of Selected Sermons of Robert Grosseteste », 2 vols., Diss., University of Leeds 2002.

Robertus Grosseteste, *Dicta, e cod. Oxoniense, Bodley 798*, in *Grosseteste's Dicta: A Working Edition*, ed. Joseph W. Goering, Edwin J. Westermann, Published on Nov 2, 2018 (<[https://issuu.com/ordereduniverse/docs/dicta\\_1-147\\_bodley\\_fp](https://issuu.com/ordereduniverse/docs/dicta_1-147_bodley_fp)>; ultimo accesso 30 Marzo 2021).

— *Hexaameron*, ed. Richard C. Dales, Servus Gieben, Oxford University Press, London 1982.

— *Versio Caelestis Hierarchiae Pseduo-Dionysii Areopagitae*, ed. Declan Anthony Lawell, James McEvoy, James Stanley McQuade, Brepols, Turnhout 2015 (Corpus christianorum. Continuatio mediaevalis, 268).

*Septuaginta, Vetus Testamentum Graecum, XI.4: Iob*, ed. Auctoritate Academiae Scientiarum Gottingensis, Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, Göttingen 1982.

Streitz, Elizabeth M., « Robert Grosseteste, Commentarius in Psalmos, I-XXXVI », Diss., University of Southern California 1996.

Thomas de Aquino, *Sententia libri Ethicorum*, in *Opera omnia iussu Leonis XIII P. M. edita*, t. XLVII, 2 vols., Ad Sanctae Sabinae, Roma 1969.

— *Expositio super Iob ad litteram*, in *Opera omnia iussu Leonis XIII P. M. edita*, t. XXVI, Ad Sanctae Sabinae, Romae 1965.

Thomson, Samuel H., *The Writings of Robert Grosseteste, Bishop of Lincoln, 1235-1253*, University Press, Cambridge (Mass.) 1940.

Westermann, Edwin J., « An Edition, with Introduction and Notes, of 'Dicta' I-L of Robert Grosseteste, Bishop of Lincoln, 1235-1253 », Diss., University of Colorado 1942.



# BORGES, LEIBNIZ Y LA METAFÍSICA DE LOS ESPEJOS\*

BORGES, LEIBNIZ AND THE METAPHYSICS OF MIRRORS

GRISELDA GAIADA  
NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF LA PLATA

## *Resumen*

Escéptico por vocación, Borges defendió, pese al vasto reservorio filosófico que animó su obra, una concepción de la metafísica singularmente provocativa: la metafísica no es más que una rama de la literatura fantástica. A partir de esta fórmula, que *prima facie* parece invalidar a aquélla en sus pretensiones epistémicas, abordaremos ciertas conexiones entre las letras de Borges y las de Leibniz con relación a lo que llamaremos una 'metafísica de los espejos'. Borges invocará a menudo el nombre de Leibniz y llevará a cabo la 'realización literaria' de un conjunto de tesis especialmente caras al filósofo. Aunque distantes en tiempo y lugar, un 'diálogo' parece producirse entre ambos en el cenáculo de una tradición común.

## *Palabras-clave*

Borges, Leibniz, metafísica, Dios, expresión universal.

## *Abstract*

Sceptical by vocation, Borges defended, despite the vast philosophical reservoir that animated his work, a singularly provocative conception of metaphysics: it is only a branch of the literature of fantasy. From this sentence, which *prima facie* seems to invalidate metaphysics in its epistemic pretensions, we will address some connections between Borges's and Leibniz's letters in relation to what we will call a 'metaphysics of mirrors'. Borges will often invoke the name of Leibniz and give 'literary form' to a set of theses being at the core of Leibnizian metaphysics. Although distant in time and space, it seems that a 'dialogue' takes place between both of them in the cenance of a common tradition.

## *Key Words*

Borges, Leibniz, Metaphysics, God, Universal Expression.



---

\* Este artículo fue realizado en el marco de una beca de nivel superior de la Agencia Nacional de Promoción Científica y Tecnológica, obtenida por el proyecto de investigación: 'La metafísica modal leibniziana: necesidad y contingencia. Contradicciones y fisuras en el pensamiento de Leibniz'. Este último se inscribe dentro del PICT-2017-0506 (ANPCyT).

Ich bin du, wenn ich ich bin.  
*Lob der Ferne*, Paul Celan

Como es sabido, Jorge Luis Borges (1899–1986) se sintió fuertemente atraído por la filosofía. Pese a ello, no fue un filósofo en el sentido habitual del término. No lo fue porque su literatura no constituyó un ‘pretexto’ para tomar partido por ciertas ideas o convicciones filosóficas, ni tampoco buscó dar fundamento racional a cierta comprensión del mundo. No obstante, lo fue a su manera y en un modo quizá más elevado, no sólo porque su comprensión de la filosofía ha superado con creces la de tantos filósofos de profesión, sino también, y sobre todo, porque se ha dejado inspirar por los grandes interrogantes y problemas que definen propiamente a la filosofía.<sup>1</sup>

Su obra fue en esencia una obra de la imaginación, es decir, destinada a expresar nociones de diversa índole mediante imágenes.<sup>2</sup> Esto incluye versos, personajes y tramas ficticias, pero también una plétora de símbolos, entendidos como imágenes que sugieren o aluden algo que escapa al uso corriente del lenguaje humano.<sup>3</sup> Si la riqueza abrumadora de su obra no sabría explicarse sin un caudal inmenso de temas metafísicos, Borges defendió, no obstante, una concepción de la metafísica singularmente provocativa, cuya formulación más famosa se encuentra en el cuento « Tlön, Uqbar, Orbis Tertius »:

El hecho de que toda filosofía sea de antemano un juego dialéctico, una *Philosophie des Als Ob*, ha contribuido a multiplicarlas. Abundan los sistemas increíbles, pero de arquitectura agradable o de tipo sensacional. Los metafísicos de Tlön no buscan la

---

<sup>1</sup> Para las relaciones entre Borges y la filosofía, véanse por ejemplo: DIDIER T. JAÉN, *Borges' Esoteric Library: Metaphysics to Metafiction*, University Press of America, Lanham 1992; MARCIN KAZMIERCZAK, « La metafísica idealista en los relatos de Jorge Luis Borges », tesis doctoral, Universidad Autónoma de Barcelona, 2001, disponible online en: <<https://www.tesisenred.net/handle/10803/4860#page=1>> (consultado el 30 de diciembre de 2020); LISA BLOCK DE BEHAR, *The Passion of an Endless Quotation*, trans. by WILLIAM EGGINTON, State University of New York Press, New York 2003; JUAN NUÑO, *La filosofía en Borges*, Reverso Ediciones, Barcelona 2005; MARCELO SASSO, *Borges en clave de Elea*, Teseo Press, Buenos Aires 2015.

<sup>2</sup> En « Nathaniel Hawthorne », Borges distingue entre el escritor que piensa por imágenes, en general los grandes hombres y mujeres de letras, y el que lo hace por abstracciones, cuyas letras, al pasar del ámbito ‘razonador’ al ‘imaginativo’, suelen malograrse. Véase JORGE LUIS BORGES « Nathaniel Hawthorne », *Otras inquisiciones*, en *Obras completas 1923-1972* (O. C.), Emecé, Buenos Aires 1974, p. 673.

<sup>3</sup> Según Borges, los símbolos, si son realmente tales, formulan conexiones íntimas entre las cosas y han existido siempre; los que inventamos, en cambio, son precisamente los que no vale la pena inventar. Borges mismo ha caracterizado alguno de sus cuentos como simbolistas, tal es el caso de « La lotería en Babilonia ». Véase JORGE LUIS BORGES, Prólogo, *Ficciones*, O. C., p. 429.

verdad ni siquiera la verosimilitud: buscan el asombro. Juzgan que *la metafísica es una rama de la literatura fantástica*.<sup>4</sup>

A esta apreciación, *prima facie* invalidante de la filosofía en sus aspiraciones metafísicas, se añaden otras expresiones del mismo tenor, como, por ejemplo, cuando en diálogo con Ernesto Sábato, afirmó que « Dios es la máxima creación de la literatura fantástica. Lo que imaginaron Wells, Kafka o Poe no es nada comparado con lo que imaginó la teología. La idea de un ser perfecto, omnipotente, todopoderoso es realmente fantástica ».<sup>5</sup> Esta patente ironía de Borges, en la que más de uno estaría tentado de ver un simple reflejo de su escepticismo, debería implicar, si en verdad es tal, alguna otra cosa que lo que se ha dicho. Quizá podría verse allí el hecho obvio de que toda metafísica o teología entraña una limitación, derivada de su carácter humano y suplida las más de las veces con la propia imaginación, para conducir a aquello que la rebasa y que paradójicamente se plantea como su legítimo objeto. Pero también podría verse allí otro aspecto de este hecho, a saber que, pese a su parcialidad y limitación, no dejan de aludir o sugerir algo que el lenguaje no alcanza, del mismo modo en que lo hace la literatura y, singularmente, la poesía.<sup>6</sup> Lo primero se liga más estrechamente a eso que se nos rehúye u oculta; lo segundo a lo que se muestra o expone, si bien siempre de forma velada. Ni la literatura, ni la metafísica, ni la teología, escapan a la dialéctica mostración-ocultación, cuyo alcance parecería implicar también la naturaleza de algo más profundo.

La filosofía, al igual que la poesía, apuntaría según Borges a mostrar un *más allá* del lenguaje que, aunque se oculte, no por ello se expone menos en el *más acá* de las diversas filosofías producidas por el hombre. Aunque la ‘realidad’ como tal

---

<sup>4</sup> JORGE LUIS BORGES, « Tlön, Uqbar, Orbis Tertius », *Ficciones*, O. C., p. 436. Nuestro resaltado. Posteriormente dirá en las « Notas » de *Discusión*: « Yo he compilado alguna vez una antología de la literatura fantástica. Admito que esa obra es de las poquísimas que un segundo Noé debería salvar de un segundo diluvio, pero delato la culpable omisión de los insospechados y mayores maestros del género: Parménides, Platón, Juan Escoto Erígena, Alberto Magno, Spinoza, Leibniz, Kant, Francis Bradley. En efecto, ¿qué son los prodigios de Wells o de Edgar Allan Poe – una flor que nos llega del porvenir, un muerto sometido a la hipnosis – confrontados con la invención de Dios, con la teoría laboriosa de un ser que de algún modo es tres y que solitariamente perdura fuera del tiempo? ¿Qué es la piedra bezoar ante la armonía preestablecida, quién es el unicornio ante la Trinidad, quién es Lucio Apuleyo ante los multiplicadores de Buddhas del Gran Vehículo, qué son todas las noches de Shahrazad junto a un argumento de Berkeley? » (JORGE LUIS BORGES, « Notas », *Discusión*, O. C., p. 280–281).

<sup>5</sup> JORGE LUIS BORGES, ERNESTO SABATO, *Diálogos*, Emecé, Buenos Aires 1976, p. 75.

<sup>6</sup> Estos dos aspectos de limitación y acercamiento al objeto son referidos por Borges como sigue: « Es aventurado pensar que una coordinación de palabras (otra cosa no son las filosofías) pueda parecerse mucho al universo. También es aventurado pensar que de esas coordinaciones ilustres, alguna – siquiera de modo infinitesimal – no se parezca un poco más que otras » (JORGE LUIS BORGES, « Avatares de la tortuga », *Discusión*, O.C., p. 258).

se les escape e incluso la dejen ir en su voluntad de auto-justificarse,<sup>7</sup> tales construcciones comportarían, para el escritor, una singular capacidad, la de poder situarnos ante la « inminencia de una revelación ». Este último término es clave en el registro hermenéutico de Borges: la revelación acecha, pero « no se produce », nos dirá, o quizá se produce, pero no entendemos su decir, o lo hacemos, pero no podemos comunicarlo.<sup>8</sup> Así pues, por su afán de multiplicarse en explicaciones omnímodas y por su ocasional virtud de « peinar lo real », los sistemas filosóficos abonan especialmente esta dimensión de espera, y hasta pueden devenir ocasión del hecho epifánico. Las referencias filosóficas de Borges son cuantiosas: Platón, Plotino, Averroes, Spinoza, Leibniz, Hegel, Schopenhauer, pero también, entre muchísimas otras, los remotos babilónicos, los primeros hebreos y hasta los desacreditados gnósticos. Cada una de ellas ameritaría sendos estudios de su ‘realización’ literaria en la obra borgeana. No es éste – ni podría serlo – nuestro propósito aquí. Por el contrario, tan sólo nos limitaremos a uno de los grandes filósofos que, de manera más o menos directa, más o menos oblicua, animó las letras del escritor argentino.

Asiduo lector de la *Enciclopedia británica* en su edición de 1911 – posiblemente, la ocasión de un primer encuentro con el pensamiento leibniziano –, Borges invocará con frecuencia el nombre de Gottfried W. Leibniz (1646–1716) y dará forma literaria a un conjunto de tesis singularmente caras al filósofo, derivadas de su *principio de expresión*, según el cual cualquier cosa del mundo puede entenderse *como si* fuera un espejo viviente de todo lo que existe. Nuestro objeto es, pues, mostrar las estrechas conexiones que pueden establecerse entre las letras de Borges y las de Leibniz en relación con lo que llamaremos una ‘metafísica de los espejos’. Como veremos, la dialéctica mostración-ocultación, que caracterizaría el vínculo entre las *Philosophien des Als Ob* y la onticidad inasimilable al *Als Ob*, estará en el centro de nuestro desarrollo, el cual, lejos de

<sup>7</sup> Esta auto-justificación en la que suelen incurrir los filósofos encontrará también su expresión en « Los avatares de la tortuga »: « Admitamos lo que todos los idealistas admiten: el carácter alucinatorio del mundo [...] *El mayor hechicero* (escribe memorablemente Novalis) *sería el que se hechizara hasta el punto de tomar sus propias fantasmagorías por apariciones autónomas. ¿No sería ése nuestro caso? Yo conjeturo que así es. Nosotros (la indivisa divinidad que opera en nosotros) hemos soñado el mundo. Lo hemos soñado resistente, misterioso, visible, ubicuo en el espacio y firme en el tiempo...* » (BORGES, « Avatares de la tortuga », p. 258, nuestro resaltado).

<sup>8</sup> El pasaje completo versa así: « La música, los estados de felicidad, la mitología, las caras trabajadas por el tiempo, ciertos crepúsculos y ciertos lugares, quieren decirnos algo, o algo dijeron que no hubiéramos debido perder, o están por decir algo; esta inminencia de una revelación que no se produce es, quizá, el hecho estético » (JORGE LUIS BORGES, « La muralla y los libros », *Otras inquisiciones*, O. C., p. 635). También: « Hay una hora de la tarde en que la llanura está por decir algo; nunca lo dice, o tal vez lo dice infinitamente y no lo entendemos, o lo entendemos pero es intraducible como una música » (JORGE LUIS BORGES, « El fin », *Ficciones*, O. C., p. 521).

ser exhaustivo, remitirá a ciertos relatos y poemas de Borges, cuya selección bien podría haber sido otra.

### I. *El Zahir, el Aleph y la expresión universal*

Borges fue particularmente sensible a la idea de un Dios que es en cierto modo cada cosa del mundo; o más bien, cabría decir que tal sentido de lo teológico constituyó una de sus intuiciones fundamentales, si no la más fundamental. Sin embargo, esa íntima convicción no lo llevó a comprometerse con ninguna filosofía o teología particular; nada más lejos de un Borges partidario de cierto sistema de pensamiento. Múltiples razones podrían conjeturarse al respecto. Entre ellas cuentan, sin duda primero, el marcado escepticismo del que el escritor hizo gala,<sup>9</sup> pero también las insalvables diferencias entre el ‘modo de pensar’ filosófico y el literario – del que las modalidades propias del ‘lenguaje intelectual’ y del ‘lenguaje literario’ son tan sólo su expresión más visible –, así como el carácter esencialmente *analítico* de la filosofía, al que se opone singularmente la extraordinaria capacidad  *sintética* de las letras de Borges – quizá en ello resida su principal virtud como escritor y la razón de la exclusión del inasimilable género novelesco. Pero además de estas razones, podría arriesgarse otra más esencial: mientras que las filosofías que conocemos se remontan a un tiempo determinado y suelen ser la obra de un autor con cuyo nombre se las conoce, lo que hay de verdad en todas ellas se confunde, por así decirlo, con el origen de los tiempos.

Por tal razón, si Borges fue en cierto sentido filósofo, metafísico o teólogo, no pudo serlo en un modo escolar, canónico u ortodoxo, sino a la manera en que, según sus propias palabras, « todo hombre culto es un teólogo ». <sup>10</sup> Dicho de otro modo, si su obra tradujo algún aspecto o forma de la Divinidad, no lo hizo como ‘concepción’, ya sea filosófica, cosmogónica o teológica, porque ‘concebir’ es aprehender, captar, conceptuar, en definitiva, apropiarse (*concipio, capio, auffassen, saisir*, etc.). Y si hay algo de lo que Borges parece haber dado sobradas cuentas es del carácter inconcebible, *ergo* conjetural, cuando no insensato, de toda concepción que tome semejante idea por objeto. Por este motivo, creemos, carece de sentido indagar su obra a la busca de una clasificación teológica que la resuelva, por ejemplo, en términos inmanentistas o emanantistas. Por ello mismo también, está fuera de nuestro propósito (y en el fondo de cualquier propósito razonable) determinar si el Dios borgeano responde a una concepción panteísta,<sup>11</sup>

---

<sup>9</sup> Para un análisis del escepticismo filosófico en la literatura de Borges, véase: BERNAT CASTANY PRADO, *Que nada se sabe: el escepticismo en la obra de Jorge Luis Borges*, Universidad de Alicante, Alicante 2012 (Cuadernos de América sin nombre, 31), especialmente el capítulo 3.

<sup>10</sup> JORGE LUIS BORGES, « El enigma de Edward Fitzgerald », *Otras inquisiciones*, O. C., p. 688.

<sup>11</sup> Abundan las referencias a diversas formas de panteísmo en la obra de Borges. Por ejemplo: « El panteísmo ha divulgado un tipo de frases en las que se declara que Dios es diversas cosas contradictorias o (mejor aún) misceláneas. Su prototipo es éste: ‘El rito soy, la ofrenda soy, la

como la de Spinoza<sup>12</sup> o cierta tradición cabalística,<sup>13</sup> o a una concepción emanantista, como la de Plotino<sup>14</sup> o Leibniz.<sup>15</sup> Cualquier respuesta al respecto no

---

libación de manteca soy, el fuego soy' (Bhagavadgita, IX, 16). Anterior, pero ambiguo, es el fragmento 67 de Heráclito: 'Dios es día y noche, invierno y verano, guerra y paz, hartura y hambre.' (...) Attar, persa del siglo XII, canta la dura peregrinación de los pájaros en busca de su rey, el Simurg; muchos perecen en los mares, pero los sobrevivientes descubren que ellos son el Simurg y que el Simurg es cada uno de ellos y todos. Las posibilidades retóricas de esa extensión del principio de identidad parecen infinitas » (JORGE LUIS BORGES, « Nota sobre Walt Whitman », *Discusión*, O. C., p. 251). También: « Esa conjetura feliz afirma que hay un solo sujeto, que ese sujeto indivisible es cada uno de los seres del universo y que éstos son los órganos y máscaras de la divinidad » (BORGES, « Tlön, Uqbar, Orbis Tertius », p. 438). O como último ejemplo: « Mucho antes, el persa Umar Khyyam había escrito que la historia del mundo es una representación que Dios, el numeroso Dios de los panteístas, planea, representa y contempla, para distraer su eternidad » (BORGES, « Nathaniel Hawthorne », p. 670).

<sup>12</sup> Son notorias las recurrentes referencias de Borges a la figura de Spinoza a lo largo de su obra. La fascinación de Borges por Spinoza probablemente pueda compararse, por su ambivalencia, a la que Leibniz mismo sintiera por aquél (para este tema, véase ÚRSULA GOLDENBAUM, « La fascinación de Leibniz por Spinoza », en LETICIA CABAÑAS, OSCAR ESQUISABEL (eds.), *Leibniz frente a Spinoza*, Comares, Granada 2014, p. 31–50). Borges no sólo le dedicó los poemas que se encuentran en *El otro, el mismo* (« Spinoza ») y en *La moneda de hierro* (« Baruch Spinoza »), sino también algunas de sus conferencias (« Baruch Spinoza », conferencia dictada el 22 de febrero de 1981 en la Escuela Freudiana de Buenos Aires; « Spinoza, el Labrador de infinitos », conferencia pronunciada el 1 de abril de 1985 en la Sociedad Hebrea Argentina de Buenos Aires). Además, Spinoza aparece a menudo como una referencia impostergable en sus conversaciones y entrevistas, como es el caso de los célebres diálogos que el escritor mantuvo con Osvaldo Ferrari en sus últimos años de vida o de la entrevista que en 1974 dio a Jorge Ruffinelli en México. Pero quizá lo más curioso de su relación con Spinoza no sea, como suele pensarse, su confesión de no haberlo entendido, pese a haberle consagrado incontables pasajes de su obra, sino el hecho de que, en una irónica autobiografía, Borges se atribuyera como única autoría la composición de una obra titulada *Clave de Baruch Spinoza* que jamás escribió (JORGE LUIS BORGES, « Epílogo », O. C., p. 1143).

<sup>13</sup> Con respecto a las relaciones establecidas por Borges entre la cábala y la filosofía de Spinoza, véanse sus notas a *Die Elemente der Kabbalah* (1913) de Erich Bischoff y a *Storia della filosofia* (1918–1948) de Guido de Ruggiero, en LAURA ROSATO, GERMÁN ÁLVAREZ (eds.), *Borges, libros y lecturas. Catálogo de la colección Jorge Luis Borges en la Biblioteca Nacional*, Biblioteca Nacional, Buenos Aires 2010, p. 56. Entre la vasta literatura que ha estudiado la influencia de las fuentes cabalísticas en la obra de Borges, cabe destacar los siguientes títulos: ALBERT DEVRAN, *Borges et la Kabbale*, Edition Gérard, Bruselas 1967; SAÚL SOSNOWSKI, « Borges y la Cábala: La búsqueda del Verbo », *Nuevos Aires*, 8 (1972), p. 39–48; EDNA AIZENBERG, *The Aleph Weaver: Biblical, Kabbalistic and Judaic Elements in Borges*, Scripta Humanistica, Potomac (Maryland) 1984; JAIME ALAZRAKI, *Borges and the Kabbalah, and Other Essays on His Fiction and Poetry*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 1988; ELLIOT R. WOLFSON, « In the Mirror of the Dream: Borges and the Poetics of Kabbalah », *The Jewish Quarterly Review*, 104/3 (2014), p. 362–379.

<sup>14</sup> La figura y el pensamiento de Plotino han atraído especialmente la atención de Borges. No sólo las *Enéadas* son el eje estructurante de la primera parte de su ensayo « Historia de la eternidad », sino que, más allá de la cuestión del tiempo, Borges remite al « Platón egipcio » en diversos contextos de contenido filosófico, constituyendo una referencia ineludible para la cuestión del panteísmo.

podría no ser aventurada, además de falsear la profunda convicción del escritor de no plegarse a escuela o doctrina particular.

Pese a su escepticismo respecto de toda concepción filosófica particular, Borges creyó en el poder evocador que comparten la poesía y la filosofía por el hecho de que en ellas, de un modo especial, 'algo' se expone y se oculta a la vez. Este rasgo dialéctico, que la inteligencia filosófica de Borges captó como nadie para darle forma literaria, no sólo tiene profundas raíces metafísicas, sino también una larga historia que no es momento de recordar ahora. Tal vez allí, en esa intuición humana fundamental, anide el concepto mismo de 'expresión', del que Leibniz echó mano casi abusivamente y las más de las veces sin preocuparse por explicitar su significado.<sup>16</sup>

Concepto clave por su ubicuidad y por sus vastas consecuencias especulativas, la expresión implica también, aunque no sólo ello, exposición y ocultamiento. Dicho de otro modo, la expresión no es una mera relación especular entre las cosas, el mundo y Dios, sino una conexión más profunda, un nexo ontológico, que supone ante todo exposición, transformación, permanencia y ocultación. Muy sintéticamente, diremos que lo expresado se manifiesta en lo expresante y al hacerlo se hace otro en éste, pero permanece en él, aunque no en cuanto tal, sino bajo cierto aspecto particular que lo expone parcialmente<sup>17</sup> y, por ende, también lo oculta.<sup>18</sup> Si las cosas son un punto de vista particular de Dios, una concentración en perspectiva de todo lo demás,<sup>19</sup> entonces, aunque por leyes de transformación Alguien pueda llegar al punto de vista universal, lo expresado permanece en cierto sentido oculto para lo expresante. En otros términos, la omnisciencia de lo finito, aunque marca de infinitud, es paradójicamente también lo que permanece oculto a su saber en el ámbito de lo oscuro y confuso. Este

---

<sup>15</sup> Esto, como se dijo, refiere a su obra, pero no, claro está, a los sentimientos privados que pueda haber albergado el autor.

<sup>16</sup> Es célebre el hecho de que fue Antoine Arnauld en su carta del 4 de marzo de 1687 quien pidió a Leibniz que le explicara qué entendía por el término 'expresión', lo que dio pie a una elucidación e intento de racionalización de dicho concepto por Leibniz. A II 2, 151. A= GOTTFRIED W. LEIBNIZ, *Sämtliche Schriften und Briefe*, hrsg. v. d. Preußischen (später: Berlin-Brandenburgischen und Göttinger) Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Berlin, Darmstadt (später: Leipzig, zuletzt: Berlin), Akademie-Ausgabe. Desde 1923 y continúa. Se cita por serie, volumen y número de página.

<sup>17</sup> A II 2, 426; A VI 4, 1618; A VI 4, 1624; GP IV, 562. GP= GOTTFRIED W. LEIBNIZ, *Die philosophischen Schriften*, hrsg. v. C. I. Gerhardt, Berlin 1875-1890 (reimpr. Georg Olms Verlag, Hildesheim-New York 1978). Se cita por volumen y número de página.

<sup>18</sup> Si bien no habla de ocultación, véase al respecto: OSCAR ESQUISABEL, «Perspectivism, Expression, and Logic in Leibniz. A Foundational Essay», *Vorträge des X. Internationalen Leibniz-Kongresses*, vol. III, Georg Olms Verlag, Hildesheim-Zürich-New York 2016, p. 73-87.

<sup>19</sup> Para la mónada como 'mundo concentrado', el concepto de 'espejo viviente' y las imágenes usadas por Leibniz para ilustrarlo, véase: HEINRICH SCHEPERS, «Fiktion und Wahrheit», in ID., *Leibniz. Wege zu seiner reifen Metaphysik*, Akademie Verlag, Berlin 2014, p. 262-263.

‘perspectivismo perceptivo’ de toda cosa finita se traduce en Leibniz por un sentimiento o percepción confusa de la totalidad,<sup>20</sup> sentimiento del que quizá no sea aventurado decir que es en el hombre, tal como Borges lo vislumbró, la fuente de donde dimana la « inminencia de una revelación que no se produce », <sup>21</sup> el asomo del fondo que puja desde lo más recóndito del ser por entender o poder traducir lo que las cosas « dicen infinitamente ».

Es sabido que Leibniz pensó que toda cosa del mundo expresa a Dios, ya que en definitiva no es sino un punto de vista asumido por aquél. El símil de la ciudad, tantas veces por él evocado, es una de sus imágenes más elocuentes.<sup>22</sup> Siguiendo el *Discurso de metafísica*, Paul Koehler lo explica como sigue: « porque al contemplar el sistema general de los fenómenos desde todos los aspectos posibles, el resultado de esta visión, en cuanto Dios decide hacer realidad lo que piensa, es una sustancia que expresa el universo según la visión divina ». <sup>23</sup> Este proceso, por así llamarlo, implica tanto *dispersión* como *concentración*; es a la vez dispersión de la unidad en la multiplicidad<sup>24</sup> y concentración de la multiplicidad en cada unidad. Así cada cosa refleja todas las cosas, o es en cierto sentido todas las cosas; y también cada cosa refleja a Dios, o es en cierto sentido – que no implica identidad entre lo finito y lo infinito – Dios mismo bajo aspecto de limitación y de otredad. Leibniz dijo que las cosas « son como imágenes para Dios », <sup>25</sup> Borges denunciará el reverso de tamaña tesis filosófica: acaso la dispersión no implicaría también que una imagen « se pierde para siempre en el caleidoscopio », <sup>26</sup> que ya no volverá a ser lo que era para sí. El escritor argentino agrega: « perdimos esos rasgos, como puede perderse un número mágico, hecho de cifras habituales », <sup>27</sup> e inmediatamente después señala, no sin sus infaltables marcas de escepticismo: pero tal vez alguno de sus rasgos « acecha en cada

<sup>20</sup> A II 2, 118; A II 2, 230-231; A II 2, 426; GP IV, 475; GP VII, 554-555; GP VI, 617.

<sup>21</sup> Véase *supra*, nota 8.

<sup>22</sup> A II 2, 19; A II 2, 91; A VI 4, 1542; GP IV, 554; GP VI, 616; GP VII, 567. Para una formulación temprana de la metáfora, véase: A VI 3, 524. Frente a interpretaciones que se verían tentadas de otorgar realidad a la ciudad más allá de sus observadores, o peor aún de asimilarla panteístamente a Dios, cabe destacar lo que explica Heinrich Schepers, apelando a una analogía con la informática: « la ciudad sólo está simulada, solamente son verdaderos los datos de la computadora que se precisan para generar la simulación. Sólo a través del pasaje de un conjunto de datos a otro sería posible visualizar los cambios; la simulación está, como se dice, animada ». SCHEPERS, « Fiktion und Wahrheit », p. 263. Salvo que se indique lo contrario, todas las citas de textos en lengua extranjera son traducción de la autora.

<sup>23</sup> PAUL KOEHLER, *Der Begriff der Repräsentation bei Leibniz. Ein Beitrag zur Entstehungsgeschichte seines Systems*, Bern 1913, p. 22. Véase también A VI 4, 1549-1550.

<sup>24</sup> A VI 4, 1542; GP VII, 566-567.

<sup>25</sup> A VI 3, 516.

<sup>26</sup> JORGE LUIS BORGES, « Paradiso, XXXI, 108 », *El hacedor*, O. C., p. 800.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*

espejo », « tal vez la cara se borró para que *Dios sea todos* ». <sup>28</sup> Borges parece estar expresando en clave literaria una antigua tesis filosófica, de la que Leibniz a su manera también se hizo eco: algo se transforma y algo permanece en la dispersión, <sup>29</sup> y no sólo eso, sino que lo que permanece es concentración. <sup>30</sup> El poema « Él » es uno de los más elocuentes al respecto:

Los ojos de tu carne ven el brillo  
del insufrible sol, tu carne toca  
polvo disperso o apretada roca;  
Él es la luz, lo negro y lo amarillo.  
Es y los ve. Desde incesantes ojos  
te mira y es los ojos que un reflejo  
indagan y los ojos del espejo,  
las negras hidras y los tigres rojos.  
*No le basta crear. Es cada una  
de las criaturas de Su extraño mundo:*  
las porfiadas raíces del profundo  
cedro y las mutaciones de la luna.  
Me llamaban Caín. Por mí el Eterno  
sabe el sabor del fuego del infierno. <sup>31</sup>

---

<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

<sup>29</sup> Esta idea de permanencia es magistralmente expresada por Borges en « Nathaniel Hawthorne ». En su *Earth's Holocaust*, refiere el argentino, Hawthorne precisa un momento en que los hombres, hartos de acumulaciones inútiles, se resuelven a destruir el pasado. Con ese fin, se reúnen y encienden una altísima hoguera donde harán consumir todos los objetos que han llevado consigo. La parábola comporta un claro sentido filosófico, pero Hawthorne ha sido incapaz de verlo. El punto de la irremisible omisión denunciado por Borges es el siguiente: « si el mundo es el sueño de Alguien, si hay Alguien que ahora está soñándonos y que sueña la historia del universo, como es doctrina de la escuela idealista, la aniquilación de las religiones y de las artes, el incendio general de las bibliotecas, no importa mucho más que la destrucción de los muebles de un sueño. La mente que una vez los soñó volverá a soñarlos; mientras la mente siga soñando, nada se habrá perdido. La convicción de esta verdad, que parece fantástica, hizo que Schopenhauer, en su libro *Parerga und Paralipomena*, comparara la historia a un calidoscopio, en el que cambian las figuras, no los pedacitos de vidrio, a una eterna y confusa tragicomedia en la que cambian los papeles y máscaras, pero no los actores. Esa misma intuición de que el universo es una proyección de nuestra alma y de que la historia universal está en cada hombre, hizo escribir a Emerson el poema que se titula *History* » (BORGES, « Nathaniel Hawthorne », p 679). Cabe agregar que el 'principio de Arlequín' en Leibniz, por llamarlo como lo hace Ortega y Gasset, es por su parte otra manera de referir al calidoscopio de Schopenhauer. Véase GOTTFRIED W. LEIBNIZ, *Nouveaux essais sur l'entendement humain* (Libro III, Cap. 6, § 39), A VI 6, 329.

<sup>30</sup> Esto aparece también en el poema « Beppo » - nombre del gato de Borges en alusión a Lord Byron -: « Así lo afirma,/ sombra también, Plotino en las *Enneadas*./ ¿De qué Adán anterior al paraíso,/ de qué Divinidad indescifrable/ somos los hombres un espejo roto? » (JORGE LUIS BORGES, « Beppo », *La cifra*, en *Obras completas 1975-1985* [O. C.<sup>2</sup>], Emecé, Buenos Aires 1989, p. 297).

<sup>31</sup> JORGE LUIS BORGES, « Él », *El otro, el mismo*, O. C., p. 898. Nuestro resaltado.

Si los ojos de Dios se han multiplicado al infinito en la dispersión, Él es entonces los « ojos de la carne » y los ojos de las cosas, los « incesantes ojos » que indagan otros reflejos y los ojos de cada uno de esos reflejos; Él es, en suma, nos dice Borges, « cada una de las criaturas de su extraño mundo ». Lo es, pero no en cuanto lo mismo, sino en cuanto otro; no al parecer en cuanto mera distinción modal, como lo pretendía Spinoza, sino en cuanto genuina otredad de lo que permanece. No olvidemos que el tema de la alteridad y la mismidad ha sido uno de los tópicos mayores de la literatura borgeana y que incluso ha dado título a todo un volumen (*El otro, el mismo*, 1964). La ‘exigencia metafísica’ de otredad, limitación o, por así decirlo, ‘finitización’, a la que Borges alude en boca de Caín, remite en el fondo a uno de los misterios más insondables para el hombre, el porqué de la creación.<sup>32</sup> La respuesta que el escritor aventura no declina en altura metafísica: « Por mí el Eterno sabe el sabor del fuego del infierno ». En tan sólo un verso, Borges nos abisma en la profundidad metafísica de toda una cosmogonía. Si lo finito en cuanto conectado con lo extenso implica sensación, sabor, deterioro, dolor, falta; Dios en cuanto conectado con lo finito no sabría ser enteramente ajeno a ello.<sup>33</sup> Por el ser finito, pues, el Eterno prueba el sabor de la muerte y del infierno.

Ahora bien, si la expresión leibniziana supone una concentración de la totalidad en un punto nodal llamado ‘sustancia’, entonces ‘todo está en todo’<sup>34</sup> y, por tanto, cada estado de un alma particular encierra todos sus estados precedentes y futuros,<sup>35</sup> así como los del universo entero. « El presente está

<sup>32</sup> Es frecuente en Borges la idea de que las cosas finitas son modos en los que Dios se manifiesta o revela a sí mismo por la alteridad, como por ejemplo en « De alguien a nadie »: « Las cosas particulares son teofanías y detrás está Dios que es el único real, pero que no sabe qué es, porque no es un qué, y es incomprensible a sí mismo y a toda inteligencia » (JORGE LUIS BORGES, « De alguien a nadie, *Otras inquisiciones*, O.C., p. 738).

<sup>33</sup> Véase GP VII, 411.

<sup>34</sup> Este adagio es el nervio del emotivo elogio de Borges a Walt Whitman: « Plotino describe a sus alumnos un cielo inconcebible, en el que ‘todo está en todas partes, cualquier cosa es todas las cosas, el sol es todas las estrellas, y cada estrella es todas las estrellas y el sol’ (*Enneadas*, V, 8, 4) [...] Análogo, pero de voz más elemental, es *Ich bin der Eine und bin Beide*, de Stefan George (*Der Stern des Bundes*). Walt Whitman renovó ese procedimiento. No lo ejerció, como otros, para definir la divinidad o para jugar con las ‘simpatías y diferencias’ de las palabras; quiso identificarse, en una suerte de ternura feroz, con todos los hombres. [...] Walt Whitman, hombre, fue director del *Brooklyn Eagle*, y leyó sus ideas fundamentales en las páginas de Emerson, de Hegel y de Volney; Walt Whitman, personaje poético, las edujo del contacto de América, ilustrado por experiencias imaginarias en las alcobas de New Orleans y en los campos de batalla de Georgia. [...] Whitman deriva de su manejo una relación personal con cada futuro lector. Se confunde con él y dialoga con el otro, con Whitman [...] Así se desdobló en el Whitman eterno, en ese amigo que es un viejo poeta americano de mil ochocientos y tantos y también su leyenda y también cada uno de nosotros y también la felicidad. Vasta y casi inhumana fue la tarea, pero no fue menor la victoria » (BORGES, « Nota sobre Walt Whitman », p. 251-253).

<sup>35</sup> A II 2, 123; A II 2, 171; A VI 4, 1551; A VI 4, 1571.

grávido del porvenir – afirma Leibniz –, el futuro se podría leer en el pasado ».<sup>36</sup> Y añade: « toda alma conoce el infinito, conoce todo, aunque confusamente ».<sup>37</sup> La omnisciencia de todo individuo, cualquiera sea su grado de consciencia, implica que cada uno de sus estados posee los datos suficientes para reconstruir el universo en su totalidad.<sup>38</sup> Así pues, un intelecto infinito podría leer el universo entero en los pétalos de una rosa. Borges, afecto a las posibilidades literarias de esta idea, especialmente por su conexión con el determinismo, la ha explotado no sólo como una poderosa ficción, sino tal vez como una de las ficciones humanas mejor fundadas. Así, en la irónica reseña del libro de M. Davidson, *The Free Will Controversy*, comienza recordando la omisión por parte del autor de la doctrina estoica, según la cual, « formando un todo el universo, cada una de sus partes prefigura (siquiera de un modo secreto) la historia de las otras ».<sup>39</sup> De donde se sigue que si un mortal fuese capaz de « abarcar el encadenamiento general de las causas, sería infalible; pues el que conoce las causas de todos los acontecimientos futuros, prevé necesariamente el porvenir ».<sup>40</sup> Por si esto fuera poco, Borges da un paso más y adjudica al marqués de Laplace<sup>41</sup> el hecho de haber jugado « con la posibilidad de *cifrar en una sola fórmula matemática todos los hechos que componen un instante del mundo*, para luego extraer de esa fórmula todo el porvenir y todo el pasado ».<sup>42</sup> Curiosamente, Borges remite aquí solamente a Laplace, pero la sospecha de una referencia tácita a Leibniz no sabría ser excluida. ¿Acaso la analogía leibniziana entre el despliegue de los estados de la sustancia y una serie infinita no es en esencia el cifrado aludido? ¿Acaso quien pudiese descubrir el término general de la serie no vería también que cada término de esa fórmula contiene todo el porvenir y todo el pasado del mundo?

---

<sup>36</sup> GP VI, 604.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid.

<sup>38</sup> A VI 4, 1618.

<sup>39</sup> JORGE LUIS BORGES, « M. Davidson, *The Free Will Controversy* (Watts, London, 1943) », *Discusión*, O. C., p. 282.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid.

<sup>41</sup> Al respecto, véase PIERRE SIMON LAPLACE, *Essai philosophique sur les probabilités*, Bachelier, Paris 1840, p. 3–4. La pretendida deducción de Laplace se basa en un determinismo onto-epistemológico que debería constatar no sólo en los cuerpos macroscópicos, sino también en las partículas elementales. Al destierro del ‘demonio de Laplace’ contribuirían sin duda los fenómenos cuánticos y el consecuente principio de incertidumbre de Heisenberg. Algunas lecturas recientes sostienen, no obstante, la indemnidad del engendro de Laplace ante el aparente comportamiento no determinista de los corpúsculos, por cuanto la experimentación a nuestro alcance o, mejor dicho, el estado actual de nuestra ciencia cuántica no alcanzaría para invalidar los cálculos de esa inteligencia omnisciente. Véase, por ejemplo, OLIVIER SARTENAER, « Pour mettre fin au mythe de Laplace », *Revue de métaphysique et de morale*, 94/2 (2017), p. 179–200.

<sup>42</sup> BORGES, « M. Davidson, *The Free Will Controversy* », p. 282–283. Nuestro resaltado.

« El Zahir » es otro de los relatos donde Borges ahonda en la idea de la expresión universal, aunque esta vez llevándola hasta sus consecuencias más inauditas. *Zahir* significa en el pensamiento musulmán lo que es exterior, aparente, e incluso exotérico. La filosofía islámica lo opone al término *batin*, reservado para quienes pueden penetrar los misterios. El *Zahir*, en cambio, es cosa del vulgo, de aquéllos que, incapaces de penetrar en el interior de las cosas, no hacen sino contemplar la luz de Dios como se contempla el sol visible en el firmamento. Borges, por su parte, precisa el significado del término como sigue: « en árabe, quiere decir notorio, visible; en tal sentido, es uno de los noventa y nueve nombres de Dios ». <sup>43</sup> Nosotros, filosóficamente, diríamos que ese nombre representa a Dios bajo el atributo de la extensión. Pero Borges opera un giro magistral sobre la creencia islámica, por donde ingresa de golpe la faz inusitada de la doctrina de la expresión: la plebe, nos dice, lo aplica a las cosas cuya imagen inolvidable hace enloquecer a la gente. El *Zahir* es, pues, una superstición en tierras islámicas que refiere al poder que las cosas entrañan por ser imágenes del infinito. Un tigre, una serpiente, una flor, un guijarro pueden devenir el *Zahir* si, por su « terrible virtud de ser inolvidables », <sup>44</sup> nos conducen a « la locura o la santidad ». <sup>45</sup> Para Borges, a la vez narrador y personaje del cuento, el *Zahir* fue una moneda vulgar de 20 centavos del año 1929. Haberla visto, realmente, en todo lo que muestra y oculta el metal, le comportó la terrible obsesión de ya no poder deshacerse de semejante visión: « el tiempo, que atenúa los recuerdos, agrava el del *Zahir* ». <sup>46</sup> El paso de las noches no hizo sino avivar la visión inicial; ahora las caras de la moneda ya no se presentan en figuración sucesiva, sino de manera simultánea, « como si la visión fuese esférica y el *Zahir* campeará en su centro ». <sup>47</sup> Esa moneda del lejano sur, como cualquier otra cosa, lo expresa todo y, si pudiéramos abismarnos en su comprensión, su plenitud en latitud, longitud y altura nos revelaría el mundo y nos revelaría a Dios:

Dijo Tennyson que si pudiéramos comprender una sola flor sabríamos quiénes somos y qué es el mundo. Tal vez quiso decir que no hay hecho, por humilde que sea, que no implique la historia universal y su infinita concatenación de efectos y causas. Tal vez quiso decir que el mundo visible se da entero en cada representación, de igual manera que la voluntad, según Schopenhauer, se da entera en cada sujeto. Los cabalistas entendieron que el hombre es un microcosmo, un simbólico espejo del universo; todo, según Tennyson, lo sería. Todo, hasta el intolerable *Zahir*. <sup>48</sup>

---

<sup>43</sup> JORGE LUIS BORGES, « El Zahir », *El Aleph*, O. C., p. 593.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 594.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 594–595.

« El Zahir – remata Borges – es la sombra de la Rosa y la rasgadura del Velo »<sup>49</sup> o, como lo insinuó el Apóstol, el oscuro espejo de la Rosa y la Rosa que aguarda detrás del espejo. Como de costumbre, Borges elude toda afirmación categórica, pero concluye la pavorosa verdad: « Quizá detrás de la moneda esté Dios ».<sup>50</sup>

Además de dispersión y concentración, la expresión, como nexo ontológico, implica también una *conexión universal* de cada cosa con todas las demás. « El universo – escribió Leibniz – es todo de una pieza, como un océano; el menor movimiento extiende su efecto a cualquier distancia, aunque ese efecto devenga menos sensible en proporción de la distancia ».<sup>51</sup> Del plenismo leibniziano se sigue que « toda la materia está ligada » y que « en el lleno todo movimiento produce algún efecto en los cuerpos distantes », es decir, que « esa comunicación llega a cualquier distancia »<sup>52</sup> y, por tanto, es universal. En esta conexión de toda la materia en el pleno se funda el hecho de que el cuerpo exprese todo el universo y, por el nexo representativo entre cuerpo y alma, que ésta también lo haga al representar el cuerpo que le pertenece.<sup>53</sup> El universo es, pues, para Leibniz un « cierto » todo, no en el sentido de un todo mereológico,<sup>54</sup> ni de una totalidad animada por una « Entelequia dominante »,<sup>55</sup> porque en tal caso el mundo sería como un organismo o animal. Preocupado por evitar las implicancias de un *Anima mundi* y del panteísmo spinoziano,<sup>56</sup> Leibniz vio en el nexo universal, que vincula expresivamente a todos los seres, lo que hace que el mundo se asemeje a un océano. Esta conexión tampoco supo, claro está, ser ajena a Borges, quien hace de ella un leitmotiv a lo largo de su obra.<sup>57</sup> Aunque intercalando sus características

---

<sup>49</sup> Ibid.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid., p. 595.

<sup>51</sup> GP VI, 107.

<sup>52</sup> GP VI, 617.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid.

<sup>54</sup> Véase lo que dice Leibniz en GP VI, 232.

<sup>55</sup> GP VI, 619.

<sup>56</sup> GP VI, 535–536: « Y si se imagina que el Espíritu universal es como un océano compuesto de una infinidad de gotas [...] Puesto que, como el océano es un conjunto de gotas, Dios sería, por así decirlo, el agregado de todas las almas, casi a la manera en que un enjambre de abejas es un agregado de esos pequeños animales... »

<sup>57</sup> Por ejemplo, el poema « Las causas »: « Los ponientes y las generaciones./ Los días y ninguno fue el primero./ La frescura del agua en la garganta/ De Adán. El ordenado Paraíso./ El ojo descifrando la tiniebla./ El amor de los lobos en el alba./ La palabra. El hexámetro. El espejo./ La Torre de Babel y la soberbia./ La luna que miraban los caldeos./ Las arenas innumeradas del Ganges./ Chuang-Tzu y la mariposa que lo sueña./ Las manzanas de oro de las islas./ Los pasos del errante laberinto./ El infinito lienzo de Penélope./ El tiempo circular de los estoicos./ La moneda en la boca del que ha muerto./ El peso de la espada en la balanza./ Cada gota de agua en la clepsidra./ Las águilas, los fastos, las legiones./ César en la mañana de Farsalia./ La sombra de las cruces en la tierra./ El ajedrez y el álgebra del persa./ Los rastros de las largas migraciones./ La conquista de reinos por la espada./ La brújula incesante. El mar abierto./ El eco del reloj en la

locuciones no asertivas, el escritor argentino también se aventura en la idea de que, tal vez, como lo pergeñó Leibniz, todo sea un « premeditado » acuerdo, unión, *conspiratio (sympnoia panta)*.<sup>58</sup> El poema « El bastón de laca » es probablemente una de las más bellas expresiones de ese vínculo que, inexorablemente, nos ataría:

Lo miro. Siento que es una parte de aquel imperio, infinito en el tiempo, que erigió su muralla para construir un recinto mágico.  
Lo miro. Pienso en aquel Chuang Tzu que soñó que era una mariposa y que no sabía al despertar si era un hombre que había soñado ser una mariposa o una mariposa que ahora soñaba ser un hombre.  
Lo miro. Pienso en el artesano que trabajó el bambú y lo dobló para que mi mano derecha pudiera calzar bien en el puño.  
No sé si vive aún o si ha muerto.  
No sé si es taoísta o budista o si interroga el libro de los sesenta y cuatro hexagramas.  
No nos veremos nunca.  
Está perdido entre novecientos treinta millones.  
*Algo, sin embargo, nos ata.*  
*No es imposible que Alguien haya premeditado este vínculo.*  
*No es imposible que el universo necesite este vínculo.*<sup>59</sup>

Ahora bien, hemos visto hasta el momento tres tesis fundamentales involucradas en el concepto de expresión: la cosmogonía implicada en la concentración por dispersión de la Unidad, la consecuente gravidez de pasado y porvenir en cada cosa, así como la conexión universal de todo con todo. Esta breve reflexión no podría concluirse sin presentar, aunque más no sea someramente, una última tesis relativa a la expresión, a saber, la de *Dios, a la vez icnógrafo y escenógrafo*. Es Leibniz quien, sirviéndose del lenguaje arquitectónico de Vitruvio, compara el punto de vista universal con una icnografía,<sup>60</sup> es decir, con la visión de la planta entera de un edificio a partir de un plano que lo muestra cortado horizontalmente a ras del suelo, tal como lo vería un observador colocado

---

memoria./ El rey ajusticiado por el hacha./ El polvo incalculable que fue ejércitos./ La voz del ruiseñor en Dinamarca./ La escrupulosa línea del calígrafo./ El rostro del suicida en el espejo./ El naipe del tahúr. El oro ávido./ Las formas de la nube en el desierto./ Cada arabesco del calidoscopio./ Cada remordimiento y cada lágrima./ Se precisaron todas esas cosas/ Para que nuestras manos se encontraran » (JORGE LUIS BORGES, « Las causas », *Historia de la noche*, en *Obra poética 1923-1977*, Alianza-Emecé, Buenos Aires 1981, p. 552-553).

<sup>58</sup> Couturat, 14-15; A VI 4, 1618; A VI 6, 55; GP VI, 617. Couturat = GOTTFRIED W. LEIBNIZ, *Opuscules et fragments inédits de Leibniz. Extraits de Manuscrits de la Bibliothèque Royale de Hanovre*, édités par Louis Couturat, Félix Alcan éditeur, Paris 1903.

<sup>59</sup> JORGE LUIS BORGES, « El bastón de laca », *La cifra*, O. C.<sup>2</sup>, p. 330. Nuestro resaltado.

<sup>60</sup> Del griego, *ikhnos*, « traza ». Ichnografía pues por analogía con la visión de una huella dejada en tierra por el hombre.

perpendicularmente sobre él. El punto de vista particular lo asocia, en cambio, con la representación en perspectiva del edificio, es decir, con una escenografía.<sup>61</sup> « Una icnografía – afirma Leibniz – tiene infinitas escenografías ». <sup>62</sup> Dicho de modo análogo, los puntos de vista particulares son al punto de vista universal, lo que las escenografías a la icnografía. La analogía echa luz sobre un aspecto central, ya sugerido *supra*, que atañe a la constitución ontológica de toda cosa finita: el individuo es una concentración del mundo,<sup>63</sup> una cierta perspectiva de éste, parcial, según la visión asumida por Dios.<sup>64</sup> Si cada cosa es en cierto modo todas las cosas, o mejor dicho, es el mundo expuesto de modo parcial, y por así decir como anamórficamente ‘deformado’, entonces todo ser es una *concentración perspectivista* de todo lo demás, incluido Dios. Y como tal, se diferencia del punto de vista universal, entendido como *concentración panóptica* del mundo, esto es, del punto de vista definitivo y absoluto: Dios.<sup>65</sup>

Pronto se ve que esta idea constituye por su fecundidad un recurso formidable para la imaginación literaria, un manantial en curso para la realización de sus posibilidades poéticas o narrativas. La metafísica de un Dios visto como concentración de todos los puntos de visión en un único punto omnicomprendivo de todo otro, no sólo deviene ‘fantástica’, sino también ocasión de encuentro para que literatura y metafísica traben, por su parte, una relación especular. Borges parece haberlo comprendido así, pues su famoso cuento « El Aleph » se nos revela como una extraordinaria realización narrativa de esa inconcebible divinidad panóptica que Leibniz habría defendido. No viene al caso mencionar aquí las implicancias del título elegido por Borges para el pensamiento hebreo y los cabalistas en general.<sup>66</sup> Nos conformaremos tan sólo con recordar brevemente la trama que él urdió para conducirnos a su fabulosa visión del Aleph.

El cuento comienza con la muerte de Beatriz Viterbo, amor no correspondido de Borges. Cada año, en la fecha de su cumpleaños, el escritor honraba su memoria visitando la casa donde Beatriz había vivido junto a su primo hermano y

---

<sup>61</sup> Del latín, *scaenographia*, es decir, « corte en perspectiva ».

<sup>62</sup> A VI 4, 1618. Además GP II, 438. Al respecto, véase SCHEPERS, « Fiktion und Wahrheit », p. 263, así como su conferencia « *Iter rationis. Reise der Vernunft in Leibniz' Welt der Monaden* », *Studia Leibnitiana*, 49/1 (2017), p. 12.

<sup>63</sup> GP IV, 542; GP IV, 553; GP VII, 411; A VI 4, 2237.

<sup>64</sup> Véase ESQUISABEL, « Perspectivism, Expression, and Logic in Leibniz », p. 75.

<sup>65</sup> GP VII, 556.

<sup>66</sup> Al respecto, cabe destacar la conferencia de Borges, titulada « La cábala » (26 de julio de 1977, Teatro Coliseo de Buenos Aires), cuya versión revisada fue publicada junto a las demás conferencias del ciclo bajo el título de *Siete noches*. Véase JORGE LUIS BORGES, « La cábala », *Siete noches*, O. C.<sup>2</sup>, p. 267–275. Para un análisis del significado de la letra hebrea Aleph en este cuento de Borges a la luz de la cábala y del Talmud, véase: CLAUDE VIGÉE, « Borges devant la Kaballe juive. De l'écriture de Dieu au silence de l'Aleph », *Revue de littérature comparée*, 320/4 (2006), p. 397–413.

amante, Carlos Argentino Daneri<sup>67</sup>. Las extravagancias de éste último no eran menores, como tampoco lo era la intolerancia que provocaban en Borges. Entre las excentricidades de Daneri, figuraba el hecho de que pergeñaba escribir un poema, « La Tierra », cuyo propósito (o despropósito) no era otro que la tarea de versificar cada hecho contenido en el orbe. Tamaña ocurrencia pareció a Borges de un pedantismo sin precedentes, agravado por el amateurismo poético de Daneri. Temeroso de que éste le pidiese prologar su « pedantesco fárrago », <sup>68</sup>decidió apartarse de su trato. Pasado el tiempo, sin embargo, un día sonó el teléfono de su casa. Borges escuchó entonces la voz del primo de su amada, una « voz llana, impersonal », <sup>69</sup> que trasmitía la urgencia de querer confiarle algo muy íntimo. En efecto, Daneri lo llamaba para comunicarle que sus vecinos albergaban la monstruosa intención de demoler su casa. Su desconsuelo no tenía parangón. El motivo de ello era que « para terminar el poema le era indispensable la casa », <sup>70</sup> indispensable, porque en un ángulo de su sótano había un Aleph. Le explicó entonces que un Aleph es « uno de los puntos del espacio que contiene todos los puntos », <sup>71</sup> y añadió que, tempranamente, le había sido dada la comprensión de que ese sótano alojaba todo un mundo para que, llegado el momento, « el hombre burilara el poema ». <sup>72</sup> Allí se escondía, confesó a Borges, « el lugar donde están, sin confundirse, todos los lugares del orbe, vistos desde todos los ángulos ». <sup>73</sup> Pasmado por lo inconcebible de esta revelación, Borges se precipitó a casa de Daneri. Una vez allí, éste lo incitó, o más bien lo provocó, a probar su sótano, no sin antes convidarlo con una bebida espirituosa y hacerle las debidas recomendaciones del caso, entre las cuales, cierta posición del cuerpo y « cierta acomodación ocular ». <sup>74</sup> Sólo así, le dijo, podría ver el *multum in parvo* de cabalistas y de alquimistas en trance.

Es aquí en realidad cuando comienza *stricto sensu* el relato, o más bien el « inefable centro » <sup>75</sup> del relato borgeano que trasunta su « desesperación de escritor ». « ¿Cómo – se pregunta Borges – transmitir a los otros el infinito Aleph que mi temerosa memoria apenas abarca? » <sup>76</sup> El problema al que se enfrenta es, naturalmente, irresoluble. Ni el más virtuoso filigranista de la escritura podría

---

<sup>67</sup> Véase la interpretación que ofrece Vigée de este personaje a partir del nombre ideado por Borges, especialmente lo que refiere a la composición del apellido Daneri, en VIGÉE, « Borges devant la Kaballe juive », p. 398.

<sup>68</sup> JORGE LUIS BORGES, « El Aleph », *El Aleph*, O. C., p. 621.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 623.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 624.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*

acometerlo, por la sencilla razón de que su trama se compone de letras de algún alfabeto, de cifras, de símbolos, que son numerables. Por ende, el lenguaje no puede sino ocultar en lo que refleja, alude y a duras penas enumera, la experiencia, aterradora, del infinito. Pero dejemos que sea Borges quien concluya nuestro periplo con su visión del Aleph, que quizá haya sido también la del Dios de Leibniz, o su soñado reflejo:

En ese instante gigantesco, he visto millones de actos deleitables o atroces; ninguno me asombró como el hecho de que todos ocuparan el mismo punto, sin superposición y sin transparencia. Lo que vieron mis ojos fue simultáneo: lo que transcribiré, sucesivo, porque el lenguaje lo es. Algo, sin embargo, recogeré.

En la parte inferior del escalón, hacia la derecha, vi una pequeña esfera tornasolada, de casi intolerable fulgor. Al principio la creí giratoria; luego comprendí que ese movimiento era una ilusión producida por los vertiginosos espectáculos que encerraba. *El diámetro del Aleph sería de dos o tres centímetros, pero el espacio cósmico estaba ahí, sin disminución de tamaño. Cada cosa (la luna del espejo, digamos) era infinitas cosas, porque yo claramente la veía desde todos los puntos del universo.* Vi el populoso mar, vi el alba y la tarde, vi las muchedumbres de América, vi una plateada telaraña en el centro de una negra pirámide, vi un laberinto roto (era Londres), vi interminables ojos inmediatos escrutándose en mí como en un espejo, vi todos los espejos del planeta y ninguno me reflejó, (...) vi en un gabinete de Alkmaar un globo terráqueo entre dos espejos que lo multiplican sin fin, (...) vi la reliquia atroz de lo que deliciosamente había sido Beatriz Viterbo, vi la circulación de mi oscura sangre, vi el engranaje del amor y la modificación de la muerte, vi el Aleph, desde todos los puntos, vi en el Aleph la tierra, y en la tierra otra vez el Aleph y en el Aleph la tierra, vi mi cara y mis vísceras, *vi tu cara, y sentí vértigo y lloré, porque mis ojos habían visto ese objeto secreto y conjetural, cuyo nombre usurpan los hombres, pero que ningún hombre ha mirado: el inconcebible universo.*<sup>77</sup>

\*

\* \*

Hemos comenzado este escrito con la ‘definición’ de la metafísica dada por Borges. Su desembozada ironía podría inducirnos precipitadamente a juzgarla como una desafiante declaración ‘anti-tradiconalista’. En efecto, a una larga tradición que ha visto en la metafísica no sólo una ciencia, la de los primeros principios, sino también su primacía por sobre toda otra forma de conocimiento, Borges opuso irreverentemente su concepción de la metafísica como una rama de la literatura fantástica, ergo como un producto de la imaginación humana. Una interpretación literal de sus palabras no iría más allá del plano manifiesto de la invalidación de esa pretendida ciencia, cuyo descrédito quedaría sentado en el

---

<sup>77</sup> Ibid., p. 625–626. Nuestro resaltado.

acto mismo en que las ‘verdades metafísicas’ son rebajadas a una simple creación del hombre. No obstante, una segunda lectura, que se permitiera ir más lejos, podría avanzar hacia el fondo de verdad velado por lo dicho. ¿Acaso no es cierto que cualquier doctrina o filosofía que tome por objeto a Dios, al fundamento de la realidad visible, a lo que se rebela a la conceptualización humana, no es en el fondo una representación parcial que depende más de un acto de fe que de los conceptos que moviliza? ¿Acaso la metafísica, en su reinención constante, no es un relato más próximo a la literatura que a la ciencia?

Borges parece decirnos que todo sistema metafísico se funda a fin de cuentas en creencias que los conceptos buscan justificar, siendo en el fondo incapaz de producir un asentimiento mayor que el atribuible a una narración fantástica o, mejor dicho, siendo igualmente capaz de suscitar sorpresa, inquietud, duda, incompreensión. En ambos casos la fisura está allí, dislocando la auto-justificación del sistema, introduciendo lo inexplicable en el relato. A decir verdad, dicha apreciación borgeana no hace más que destacar un hecho hartamente evidente: el lenguaje se inscribe en un orden humano y, cuando sus producciones tienen que ver con un orden que lo excede, sólo son juzgables por los sentimientos que suscitan en razón de aquello que evocan, aluden, sugieren, sin jamás traerlo enteramente. Para Borges, la metafísica y la poesía son sus mejores ejemplos. Una y otra expresan una realidad que está allí sin dejarse aprehender. O lo que es igual, lo que exteriorizan ambas oculta a la vez una infinidad de cosas, al igual que cualquier existencia del mundo. El concepto leibniziano de *expresión* parece, pues, ocupar el centro de las inquietudes borgeanas. Más aún, como hemos visto, el escritor ha dado forma literaria a las principales tesis metafísicas que comporta el concepto de expresión: dispersión, concentración, conexión universal, puntos de vista individual y universal. Y no sólo ello, sino que además es dable afirmar, sin miedo a error, que no existe pluma que mejor haya plasmado las posibilidades literarias de esta ‘metafísica de los espejos’. Las afinidades entre Borges y Leibniz son asombrosas, la determinación de su ámbito de influencia, no obstante, oscura. Tributario directo de la figura de Leibniz o quizá parte de una inmemorial tradición común, Borges se nos muestra – no fue otro nuestro cometido – unido a Leibniz en secreta *conspiratio*. No es imposible, concluimos, que Alguien haya premeditado este vínculo. No es imposible, una vez más, que el universo necesite este vínculo.



Fig. 1. *El sueño de la mariposa*, Ike no Taiga (1723-1776)

*Bibliografía*

Aizenberg, Edna, *The Aleph Weaver: Biblical, Kabbalistic and Judaic Elements in Borges*, Scripta Humanistica, Potomac (Maryland) 1984.

Alazraki, Jaime, *Borges and the Kabbalah, and Other Essays on His Fiction and Poetry*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 1988.

Block de Behar, Lisa, *The Passion of an Endless Quotation*, trans. William Egginton, State University of New York Press, New York 2003.

Borges, Jorge Luis, *Obras completas 1923–1972*, Emecé, Buenos Aires 1974.

— *Obras completas 1975–1985*, Emecé, Buenos Aires 1989.

— « Notas bibliográficas », in Laura Rosato, Germán Álvarez (eds.), *Borges, libros y lecturas. Catálogo de la colección Jorge Luis Borges en la Biblioteca Nacional*, Biblioteca Nacional, Buenos Aires 2010.

Borges, Jorge Luis, Ernesto Sabato, *Diálogos*, Emecé, Buenos Aires 1976.

Castany Prado, Bernat, *Que nada se sabe: el escepticismo en la obra de Jorge Luis Borges*, Cuadernos de América sin nombre N° 31, Universidad de Alicante 2012.

Devran, Albert, *Borges et la Kabbale*, Edition Gérardium, Bruselas 1967.

Esquisabel, Oscar, « Perspectivism, Expression, and Logic in Leibniz. A Foundational Essay », *Vorträge des X. Internationalen Leibniz-Kongresses* (Band III), Georg Olms Verlag, Hildesheim–Zürich–New York 2016, p. 73–87.

Goldenbaum, Ursula, « La fascinación de Leibniz por Spinoza », in Leticia Cabañas, Oscar Esquisabel (eds.), *Leibniz frente a Spinoza*, Comares, Granada 2014, p. 31–50.

Jaén, Didier T., *Borges' Esoteric Library: Metaphysics to Metafiction*, University Press of America, Lanham 1992.

Kazmierczak, Marcin, « La metafísica idealista en los relatos de Jorge Luis Borges », tesis doctoral, Universidad Autónoma de Barcelona 2001.

Koehler, Paul, *Der Begriff der Repräsentation bei Leibniz. Ein Beitrag zur Entstehungsgeschichte seines Systems*, Dissertation, Rheinische Friedrich-Wilhelms-Universität Bonn, Bern 1913.

Laplace, Pierre Simon, *Essai philosophique sur les probabilités*, Bachelier, Paris 1840.

Leibniz, Gottfried Wilhelm, *Die philosophischen Schriften*, hrsg. v. C. I. Gerhardt, Berlin, 1875–1890 (reimpr. Georg Olms Verlag, Hildesheim–New York, 1978). Se cita por volumen y número de página.

Leibniz, Gottfried Wilhelm, *Opuscules et fragments inédits de Leibniz. Extraits de Manuscrits de la Bibliothèque Royale de Hanovre*, édités par Louis Couturat, Félix Alcan éditeur, Paris 1903. Se cita como Couturat, seguido del número de página.

Leibniz, Gottfried Wilhelm, *Sämtliche Schriften und Briefe*, hrsg. v. d. Preußischen (später: Berlin-Brandenburgischen und Göttinger) Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Berlin, Darmstadt (später: Leipzig, zuletzt: Berlin), Akademie-Ausgabe. Desde 1923 y continúa. Se cita por serie, volumen y número de página.

Nuño, Juan, *La filosofía en Borges*, Reverso Ediciones, Barcelona 2005.

Sartenaer, Olivier, « Pour mettre fin au mythe de Laplace », *Revue de métaphysique et de morale*, 94 (2017/2), p. 179–200.

Sasso, Marcelo, *Borges en clave de Elea*, Teseo Press, Buenos Aires 2015.

Schepers, Heinrich, « *Iter rationis*. Reise der Vernunft in Leibniz' Welt der Monaden », *Studia Leibnitiana*, 49 (2017/1), p. 2–27.

— *Wege zu seiner reifen Metaphysik*, Akademie Verlag, Berlin 2014.

Sosnowski, Saúl, « Borges y la Cábala: La búsqueda del Verbo », *Nuevos Aires*, 8 (1972), p. 39–48.

Vigée, Claude, « Borges devant la Kaballe juive. De l'écriture de Dieu au silence de l'Aleph », *Revue de littérature comparée*, 320 (2006/4), p. 397–413.

Wolfson, Elliot, « In the Mirror of the Dream: Borges and the Poetics of Kabbalah », *The Jewish Quarterly Review*, 104 (2014/3), p. 362–379.



# TOWARDS A NEW METHODOLOGY FOR NATURAL PHILOSOPHY: LATIN AVERROISM REVISITED

PILAR HERRÁIZ OLIVA  
ISTANBUL MEDENIYET UNIVERSITY

## *Abstract*

The reception of Aristotelian philosophy with Averroes's commentaries in the thirteenth-century Latin world promoted a new way of understanding natural philosophy and its method. A very special case among the readers of such commentaries, mostly found at the Faculty of Arts of the University of Paris, are the so-called *averroistae*. What these *averroistae* actually were is still a matter of discussion in current scholarship, whereas there is kind of consensus regarding the main exponents of this philosophical movement, namely Siger of Brabant and Boethius of Dacia. The aim of this paper is to shed light on this topic by providing a re-definition of Averroism in the 13th century. To do this, I will analyse some of the most important works of the aforementioned authors in an attempt to clarify the specificity of their philosophical program.

## *Key Words*

Averroes, Averroism, Siger of Brabant, Boethius of Dacia, Thomas Aquinas.



Averroes's commentaries mediated the reception of Aristotelian philosophy in the thirteenth-century Latin world. These commentaries promoted the emergence of a philosophical movement, Averroism or radical Aristotelianism, whose nature is still problematic in current scholarship, because there is a lack of consensus among scholars regarding what this movement actually was. Besides, the focus of philosophical discussion concerning Averroism has not always been uniform. For a long time, the so-called *double-truth* theory has been seen as the defining feature of this movement. However, scholars now agree that this theory is a later misconception, and the modern philosophical debate has turned to the theses of

Averroes, chiefly the thesis of the unicity of the intellect, as being the main feature of Averroistic thought in the thirteenth century. The lack of agreement concerning the nature of this philosophical movement has made other scholars suggest that the term *Averroism* is no longer accurate and that *radical Aristotelianism* should be the preferred terminology, mostly because the main representatives of this movement aimed to be as faithful to Aristotle as possible. In other words, in order to find an answer to the question *what it is to be an Averroist* in the thirteenth century, scholarship either denies the existence of Averroism as a movement or points towards those who followed Averroes's theses, mainly the thesis of the unicity of the intellect.

Against these views, I will argue that there was a philosophical movement in the thirteenth century that can be called *Averroism*. I will also argue that the question *what is it to be an Averroist* cannot be answered by means of any particular doctrine – not even the unicity thesis –, and that the defining feature of Averroism as a philosophical tendency is to be found in the methodology of the *artistae*, mainly Siger of Brabant and Boethius of Dacia. In addition, I will also argue for the originality of these masters' philosophical projects as one of a kind in the second half of the thirteenth century. My aim is thus to provide a redefinition of this philosophical movement, traditionally formulated in terms of doctrine, by showing how this way of understanding Averroism is problematic. Instead, I will defend that Averroism as a philosophical current is better understood as a methodological movement than as a set of doctrines, meaning that what the so-called Averroists took from Averroes were not doctrinal positions, but a specific methodology for the philosophical enterprise.

In order to argue for this, I will first provide a short introduction to the most important changes in the ways of understanding philosophy that followed the reception of Aristotle's works mediated by Averroes's commentaries. Secondly, I will address the philosophical impact of the reception of Aristotelian philosophy at the University of Paris by focusing on the main readers and subsequent doctrinal reactions to Aristotelian and Averroistic philosophy, as they will serve us to present Latin Averroism in its proper context. Thirdly, I will provide an overview of the historiographical tradition on Averroism and then challenge the idea of Averroism as being a matter of doctrine – defined as the followers of Averroes or as the adherents of the thesis of the unicity of the intellect –, and argue that Averroism was first and foremost a matter of philosophical method. I will do this by analysing the theses of the authors known to be the main representatives of Averroism, i. e., Siger of Brabant and Boethius of Dacia.

## I. *The Background of Averroism*

### I.1 The Reception of Averroes's Philosophy in the Medieval Latin West

The reception of Islamic philosophy in the Latin West was a consequence of the cultural exchange between Muslims and Christians and of the translations from Arabic into Latin. Some translations of works on astronomical instruments and geometry were made in the tenth century at the Monastery of Santa María de Ripoll in Catalonia. Towards the end of the eleventh century, works on medicine and natural philosophy were translated chiefly by Constantine the African (fl. 1065–1085) who is traditionally placed at the *Schola Medica Salernitana* in Salerno, Italy. However, most of the translations into Latin were made between 1125 and 1200, following the Christian conquests of Toledo (1085) and Sicily (1091). The works of Aristotle were at first preceded by the commentaries of Avicenna in the Latin translations, but around the decades of 1220–1230 the commentaries of Averroes gradually replaced those of Avicenna and would finally be the ones used as a guide to understand Aristotle's teachings, to such an extent that in the Medieval Latin West the Cordovan philosopher would be known as the *Commentator*.<sup>1</sup> The most important translator of Averroes's commentaries was Michael Scot, but Herman the German and William of Luna are to be found among the translators as well.<sup>2</sup>

Despite the influence of Neoplatonic thinkers on Averroes's thought, such as al-Fārābī or Ibn Bājja, the purpose of the philosopher of Córdoba was to provide a genuinely Aristotelian explanation of Aristotle's philosophy, and his commentaries were used by theologians and philosophers in order to reach a better understanding of Aristotle's teachings. Nevertheless, the reception of both the works of Aristotle and the commentaries of Averroes in the Latin West was not unproblematic, as it soon became obvious that some Aristotelian doctrines were in conflict with Christian faith: the first ban against Aristotelian philosophy occurred already in 1210, even before the transmission of Averroes's commentaries. However, to qualify the relations between philosophy and theology as a purely antagonistic one would lead to a very simplistic account of the reception of Aristotle's natural philosophy, for in fact the first to study the newly rediscovered works were to be found among theologians.

---

<sup>1</sup> There were translations from Greek into Latin as well in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, but since I focus here on the Latin reception of Averroes's philosophy, and there is a huge amount of translations, I will not enter this topic. A list of the different translations of Aristotle's works and the translators can be found in BERNARD G. DOD, « Aristoteles Latinus », in NORMAN KRETZMANN, ANTHONY KENNY, JAN PINBORG (eds.) *The Cambridge History of Later Medieval Philosophy*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 2008, p. 45–79.

<sup>2</sup> See DAG NIKOLAUS HASSE, *Latin Averroes Translations of the First Half of the Thirteenth Century*, Olms, Hildesheim 2010.

The aforementioned ban dating from 1210 serves us as a witness that Aristotelian philosophy was being read before that time, although the references are scarce within this decade. Around 1200, Daniel of Morley (d. c. 1210) quoted Aristotle's *Physica*, *Metaphysica* and *De sensu et sensato* in his *Liber de naturis inferiorum et superiorum*, but he did so by means of the translation of Avicenna's commentary on *De caelo et mundo*.<sup>3</sup> Roger Bacon stated that the first to teach the *De Sophisticis Elenchis* was Saint Edmund of Canterbury (d. 1240).<sup>4</sup> Alexander Neckham (d. 1217), also a theologian, recommended the study of *Metaphysica*, *De generatione et corruptione* and *De anima*.<sup>5</sup> William of Auvergne, William of Auxerre and Robert Grosseteste are also among the many theologians who read, studied and quoted the works of Aristotle at a relatively early stage. Among them, it is said that Grosseteste was one of the first scholars to read Averroes's commentaries.<sup>6</sup>

This is only a sample to show that presenting the aftermath of the reception of Aristotelian philosophy purely in terms of confrontation with theology does not constitute an adequate picture of the actual course of events. However, the reception of Aristotelian philosophy transformed the ways in which this discipline was conceived, and it soon became clearer that it was necessary to delimitate its scope as a field of knowledge, mainly as far as theology was concerned. This need to either separate philosophy from theology or rather understand philosophy rather as a sub-field of theology would crystallise in three main doctrinal positions among the scholars of the Latin West. The first position was more conservative towards Aristotelian and Averroistic philosophy; the second one was more open and could be called *moderate*; the third one was what we might call a more *radical* position. These different philosophical positions can be better understood by means of their characterisations of the relations between philosophy and theology. First, I will briefly summarise the positions I have addressed as *conservative* and *moderate* and then present the *radical* one in more detail.

## I.2 Doctrinal positions towards Aristotelian philosophy

**I.2.1.** The more conservative position was the one of the Franciscans, and we could say that Bonaventure was one of its main exponents.<sup>7</sup> It should be said that

---

<sup>3</sup> EDWARD GRANT, *A History of Natural Philosophy. From the Ancient World to the Nineteenth Century*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 2007, p. 147.

<sup>4</sup> DOD, « Aristoteles Latinus », p. 70.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 70.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. DAVIES LUSCOMBE, « Crossing Philosophical Boundaries c. 1150–c. 1250 », in SPENCER E. YOUNG (ed.), *Crossing Boundaries at Medieval Universities*, Brill, Leiden–Boston 2011 (Education and Society in the Middle Ages and Renaissance, 36), p. 20.

<sup>7</sup> John Peckham also played a very important role in this regard, but since Bonaventure alone constitutes a great example of the Franciscan attitude towards Aristotelian philosophy, I will

Bonaventure integrated elements from Aristotelian philosophy, but still conceived as a subordinate sphere of knowledge. For Bonaventure, the only truth was the one established by revelation and if philosophy was useful at all, it was so in order to serve as an instrument for theology. Philosophy could not be an independent field of knowledge for the *Doctor Seraphicus*, since true knowledge could only be attained by means of illumination. Around 1260–1265 a more radical tendency became stronger in the intellectual milieu of the University of Paris. In 1267, and in response to its development, Bonaventure delivered a series of sermons in which he was clearly attacking this tendency – the so-called Averroists –, and Averroes as well. In these sermons, Bonaventure criticised the theses of the unicity of the intellect and of the eternity of the world. As a paradigmatic example, we will use Saint Bonaventure’s *Collationes de Decem Praeceptis* (*Collations on the Ten Commandments*), although the *Doctor Seraphicus* also criticised some of the Aristotelian views, including the possibility of attaining full happiness within this life in other works.<sup>8</sup> In the aforementioned sermons, he says:

The errors in the philosophers come from the temerarious presumption of the philosophical investigation, such as to posit that the world is eternal and that the intellect is one for all [human beings]. To state that the world is eternal is to pervert the entire Sacred Scripture and to assert that the Son of God was not incarnate. To posit that it is true that there is only one intellect for all is to say that there is neither truth in faith, nor a salvation of the souls, nor observance of the commandments. And this is to assert that the worst man will be saved, and the best man will be condemned. Accordingly, to assert these proceeds from the temerarious presumption of the philosophical investigation.<sup>9</sup>

If there is one intellect for all, and the intellect is a part of the soul, it follows that there is no room for personal immortality or for any punishments or rewards in

---

focus on his criticism instead. A good introduction to Peckham’s thought can be found in GIRARD J. ETZKORN, « John Peckham », in JORGE J. E. GRACIA, TIMOTHY B. NOONE (eds.), *A Companion to Philosophy in the Middle Ages*, Blackwell, Malden (MA) 2002 (Blackwell Companions to Philosophy, 24), p. 384–387.

<sup>8</sup> BONAVENTURA, *Collationes in Hexaameron*, coll. VII, 2, in *Opera Omnia*, t. V: *Opuscula Varia*, Typ. Coll. S. Bonaventurae, Quaracchi 1891, p. 365.

<sup>9</sup> BONAVENTURA, *Collationes de Decem Praeceptis*, coll. II, 25, in *Opera Omnia*, t. V, p. 514: «Ex improbo ausu investigationis philosophica procedunt errores in philosophis, sicut est ponere mundum aeternum, et quod unus intellectus sit in omnibus. Ponere enim mundum aeternum, hoc est pervertere totam sacram Scripturam et dicere, quod Filius Dei non sit incarnatus. Ponere vero, quod unus intellectus sit in omnibus, hoc est dicere, quod non sit veritas fidei nec salus animarum nec observantia mandatorum; et hoc est dicere, quod pessimus homo salvatur, et optimus damnatur. Hoc igitur ponere provenit ex improbo ausu investigationis philosophicae ». Unless stated otherwise, all of the translations used in this article are mine.

the afterlife, which makes of these philosophical teachings something false and heretical.

**I.2.2.** Albert the Great and Thomas Aquinas, on the other hand, are traditionally considered to belong in the second, or moderate, position towards Aristotle and his Commentator. They distinguished the truth of faith from the certainty of demonstration, which could not invalidate the truth established by the Christian Law. Their Aristotelianism incorporated Platonic elements, mostly Avicennian thought.<sup>10</sup> However, their attitude towards Aristotelian philosophy differs in some respects, so they should be analysed independently. For the purpose of this brief account, I will focus on some of their more relevant attitudes towards Averroes and Averroistic philosophy.

Albert the Great's best-known contribution to the controversy that followed the reception of Aristotle's works with Averroes's commentaries is his *De unitate intellectus contra Averroem* (*On the Unicity of the Intellect against Averroes*). This work, dating from 1256, serves as a testimony of the increasing influence of Averroes at the Parisian University. In this treatise, he addresses this issue from a philosophical point of view, since he makes it explicit that this is a philosophical work and that he will proceed by way of arguments to get a demonstration when approaching this subject.<sup>11</sup> However, although Albert wrote this treatise against Averroes, in his *De anima* (1260-61), the *Doctor Universalis* admits that his own position concerning the conjunction of body and soul dissents « in little » from the one held by Averroes.<sup>12</sup>

Thomas Aquinas was the first to write directly against the Averroists in his short treatise *De unitate intellectus contra Averroistas* (*On the Unicity of the Intellect against the Averroists*) in 1270.<sup>13</sup> In this treatise, he accused Averroes of perverting

---

<sup>10</sup> To include all the sources used by Albert the Great, master of Thomas Aquinas, is beyond the scope of this article. As an example, John Marenbon mentions that his intention was « to master and unify the complex, heterogeneous mass of material, genuine Aristotelian, pseudo-Aristotelian-Neoplatonic, Alfarabian, Avicennian and Averroistic »; cf. JOHN MARENBON (ed.), *Medieval Philosophy*, Routledge, London 2010 (repr.) (Routledge History of Philosophy, 3), p. 232.

<sup>11</sup> ALBERTUS MAGNUS, *De unitate intellectus contra Averroem*, c. 1, in *Opera Omnia*, vol. V, ed. Jammy, Lyon 1651, p. 218: « Oportet nos [...] per rationes et syllogismos videre quid sentiendum sit et tenendum. Et ideo quaecunque dicit lex nostra, non omnino praeterimus tantum ea accipientes quae per syllogismum accipiunt demonstrationem ».

<sup>12</sup> ALBERTUS MAGNUS, *De anima*, III, tr. III, c. 11, in *Opera Omnia*, vol. III, ed. Jammy, Lyon 1651, p. 166: « Nos autem in paucis dissentimus ab Averroee, qui inducit istam quaestionem in commento super librum de anima ». The dating of the *De Anima* can be found in JÖRG A TELLKAMP, *San Alberto Magno. Sobre el Alma*, Eunsa, Pamplona 2012, p. 20. Except for Alain de Libera, who says that this work dates from 1254-1257, there is consensus in this regard (cf. *Ibid.*, fn. 9).

<sup>13</sup> Hasse points out that the expression « contra averroistas » became popular in the fourteenth century, but it should also be said that Aquinas uses *averroistae* already in the first chapter, and

Aristotle's philosophy and, aside from the problems that the unicity thesis entails for personal immortality, Aquinas's main criticism was that, if we are to support the idea of one single intellect for all men, we cannot properly say *this singular man understands*. Nevertheless, Aquinas did not only write against the Averroists, but also *contra murmurantes*, against those who murmur, the theologians who make a poor argumentation allegedly to defend Christian faith. And there is more to this, since in the *De aeternitate mundi* Aquinas says that the idea of a world created by God as having always existed is not contrary to reason, but we hold that the world had a beginning by faith. As we see, Aquinas entered into this controversy from more than one front, *contra Averroistas* and *contra murmurantes*, and this makes of his a unique position. So unique, that some suggest that Aquinas was in fact an Averroist at the later stages of his thought.<sup>14</sup>

As for the relations between philosophy and theology, Albert the Great and Thomas Aquinas stood for different positions, since according to Aquinas the revealed truth cannot be attained by means of our natural capacities, but philosophy, which provides us with a type of knowledge that is attainable through our natural capacities, is very useful for faith. Philosophy is an excellent tool for demonstrating the *praeambula fidei*, the rational premises on which faith depends in order to be rational – such as the existence of God –, and it is also useful to refute objections to faith. In any case, reason and revelation are ultimately divine gifts and they cannot be in real conflict. They both lead us to the truth, but their methods differ and, in this way, Aquinas gives philosophy a more elevated status than that of a mere handmaid or *ancilla theologiae*.

**1.2.3.** The third of the main positions towards the philosophy of Averroes and Aristotle is that of the so-called Averroists or radical Aristotelians, who consider philosophy as an autonomous field of knowledge, independent from theology, but yet admit that if there is any conflict, truth is on the side of faith. We can, along with van Steenberghen, place the beginnings of this movement in the years going from 1260 to 1265.<sup>15</sup> The most problematic theses of the Averroist authors have to

---

in the prologue he says that among many there is an error concerning the intellect whose origin is attributed to Averroes. Thus, the focus of his criticism is established at the beginning of the treatise. See DAG NIKOLAUS HASSE, « *Averroica secta: Notes on the Formation of Averroist Movements in Fourteenth-Century Bologna and Renaissance Italy* », in JEAN-BAPTISTE BRENET (ed.), *Averroès et les averroïsmes juif et latin*, Brepols, Turnhout 2007 (Textes et études du Moyen Age, 40), p. 309.

<sup>14</sup> See MIGUEL ASÍN PALACIOS, « El averroísmo teológico de Santo Tomás de Aquino », in Id., *Huellas del Islam*, Espasa-Calpe, Madrid 1941, and ALFONSO GARCÍA MARQUÉS, « ¿Hay tres Tomás de Aquino? », in HERRERO MONSERRAT et al. (eds.), *Escribir en las almas. Estudios en honor de Rafael Alvira*, Eunsa, Pamplona 2014, p. 277–291.

<sup>15</sup> FERNAND VAN STEENBERGHEN, *Aristotle in the West. The Origins of Latin Aristotelianism*, Nauwelaerts, Louvain 1955, p. 198–199.

do with the nature of the intellect, and thus with that of the soul; with the defence of the possibility of arguing philosophically about the eternity of the world; and with the affirmation that happiness is attainable within this life. The Averroists were to be found among the Parisian masters of arts, who gradually started to conceive their task as a possibility to comment on and teach the now available texts, as well as the theses they contained, regardless of their concordance or discordance with Christian faith. To this, they alleged that the method and the object of philosophy as a discipline were different from those of theology. Traditionally, Siger of Brabant and Boethius of Dacia are taken to be the main representatives of Parisian or Latin Averroism, and they will be presented in greater detail here.

The first documentary evidence of Siger of Brabant dates from 27 August 1266. This document shows the existence of the four *nationes* of the University of Paris: Norman, English, French, and lastly Picard, in which Siger of Brabant was placed.<sup>16</sup> In this context, Siger of Brabant is acknowledged as a master of arts and the document also mentions Simon of Brabant. They both were accused of trying to tear the missals off the hands of the members of the French nation so that they could not recite and sing the liturgy for the master William of Auxerre.<sup>17</sup> It is also said that Siger of Brabant was accused of attempting to kidnap a French master.<sup>18</sup> Nowadays, Siger is considered to be innocent of these charges against him.<sup>19</sup> On 23 November 1276, Siger of Brabant, together with other two masters – Goswin of la Chapelle and Bernier of Nivelles –, was summoned by the French inquisitor, Simon du Val. The accusation, preserved in a manual for inquisitors, was that they were under suspicion of heresy and vehemence in their error.<sup>20</sup> For the purpose of this brief account of Siger's life, it is also relevant that he remained at the Faculty of

---

<sup>16</sup> HEINRICH DENIFLE, ÉMILE CHATELAIN (eds.), *Chartularium Universitatis Parisiensis* (= CUP), vol. I, Delalain, Paris 1889, nr. 409, p. 449–458.

<sup>17</sup> CUP, vol. I, nr. 409, p. 451: « Sygerus et Simon de Brabant, presente et ratum habente ipsa Picardorum nacione quosdam nacionis magistros Gallicane, ne in vigiliis quondam magistri Guillelmi Autisiodorensis, ratione quarum magistri totius Universitatis convenerant in ecclesia fratrum Predicatorum Parisius, sicut alii legerent et cantarent inipedire et propter hoc libros de illorum manibus trahere attemptaverunt et in eorum aliquos clericali milicie ascriptos, ibidem manus injecerunt temere violentas in ejusdeni nacionis Gallicane injuriam et contemptum ».

<sup>18</sup> CUP, vol. I, nr. 409, p. 450: « Quodque magister Sygerus de nacione Picardorum, [quia] super hujusmodi ejusdem Guillelmi captione ipsum suspectum dicebant, ad ipsorum archidiaconorum arbitrium se purgaret. »

<sup>19</sup> FRANÇOIS-XAVIER PUTALLAZ, RUEDI IMBACH, *Profession: philosophe. Siger de Brabant*, Cerf, Paris 1997, p. 24.

<sup>20</sup> « Crimine heresis probabiliter et vehementer suspectos », cf. PUTALLAZ, IMBACH, *Profession: Philosophe*, p. 46–48. Vehemence in error is what constitutes heresy, because the non-pertinacious error could be corrected through penitence. See FRANCISCO LEÓN FLORIDO, FERNANDO RODAMILANS RAMOS, *Las herejías académicas en la Edad Media. Lista de errores en las universidades de París y Oxford (1210–1347)*, Síndéresis, Madrid 2015, p. 15.

Arts until the end of his career, without restricting this period to the two years of the *regentia necessaria*, which was a very common thing to do among the masters of arts in this time.<sup>21</sup>

As for Boethius of Dacia, the information about his life is scarce. The dates of his birth and death are unknown to us. We know that he was a Dane who was in Paris after 1262, that he was a master of arts in the decade of the 1270s, and that he was not summoned by the Inquisition.<sup>22</sup> All of his works were written before 1277, which for Bernardo Bazán suggests that his career as a master of arts had come to an end before that date, whereas Sten Ebbesen takes this to mean that the condemnation put an end to Boethius's writing.<sup>23</sup> One of the codices containing the propositions condemned in 1277 includes the name of Boethius after the list, addressing him as one of the main assertors of these theses, and another one mentions Siger and Boethius both as heretics.<sup>24</sup>

These two masters defended the autonomy of philosophy in regard to theology and the possibility of explaining reality by means of natural causes. In this line of thought, they valued philosophy not as a mean to an end, but as an end itself. For them, the philosopher had a twofold task which was to discover the truth and to determine the opinions of the ancient philosophers without turning them into incontestable authorities. The most immediate consequence of this way of proceeding was that they adduced that their conclusions followed from philosophical demonstrations, and then they were philosophically necessary conclusions, but not *the Truth* in case of conflict with Christian wisdom. Examples of this way of proceeding can be found in Siger of Brabant's *De anima intellectiva*, where he states that « in this we are trying to find the opinions of the philosophers rather than the truth, since we proceed philosophically ».<sup>25</sup> This can also be found in Boethius of Dacia. At the beginning of the *De aeternitate mundi*, he presents the purpose of his treatise:

---

<sup>21</sup> STEN EBBESEN, « The Paris Arts Faculty: Siger of Brabant, Boethius of Dacia, Radulphus Brito », in John Marenbon (ed.), *Medieval Philosophy*, Routledge, London 2004 (Routledge History of Philosophy, 3), p. 273.

<sup>22</sup> BERNARDO C. BAZÁN, « Boethius of Dacia », in JORGE J. E. GRACIA, TIMOTHY B. NOONE (eds.), *A Companion to Philosophy in the Middle Ages*, Blackwell, Malden (MA) 2002 (Blackwell Companions to Philosophy, 24), p. 227; and STEN EBBESEN, « Boethius of Dacia: Science is a Serious Game », in Id., *Topics in Latin Philosophy from the 12th-14th Centuries*, vol. II, Ashgate, Aldershot 2009, p. 153.

<sup>23</sup> BAZÁN, « Boethius of Dacia », p. 227; EBBESEN, « The Paris Arts Faculty », p. 272.

<sup>24</sup> MS Paris, BNF, lat. 16533, fol. 60 (*CUP* vol. I, nr. 100, p. 558): « Principalis assertor istorum articulorum fuit quidam clericus Boetus appellatus »; and MS Paris, BNF, lat. 4391, fol. 68 (*CUP*, vol. I, p. 556): « contra Segerum et Boetium hereticos ».

<sup>25</sup> SIGERUS DE BRABANTIA, *De anima intellectiva*, c. 7, in *Quaestiones in tertium De anima, De anima intellectiva, De aeternitate mundi*, ed. BERNARDO C. BAZÁN, Publications universitaires de Louvain, Louvain-La-Neuve 1972 (Philosophes Médiévaux, 13), p. 101, ll. 5–9.

So that the opinion of the philosophers may be saved, inasmuch as their argument can conclude – for their position contradicts Christian faith in nothing, except among those who lack understanding –: in fact, the opinion of the philosophers is based on demonstrations and on certain possible arguments in those things whereof they speak, but faith in many instances rests on miracles and not on arguments. Indeed, that which is held by means of what is concluded by arguments is not faith, but science.<sup>26</sup>

To recapitulate, so far we have an overview of the transmission of Aristotelian philosophy and an outline of the most relevant doctrinal positions which emerged after the rediscovery of Aristotle in the mid-thirteenth century. Since the aim of this article is to provide a better understanding of Latin Averroism as a methodological current, I proceed by summarising the traditional views on Averroism as a matter of doctrine – as the followers of Averroes –, and I will then challenge this idea by arguing that Latin Averroism should instead be understood as a matter of philosophical method, as a way of understanding the role of philosophy in the corpus of the sciences.

## II. *Latin Averroism Revisited*<sup>27</sup>

### II.1 The Historiographical Tradition on Latin Averroism

Traditionally, Parisian Averroism has been understood as a philosophical movement whose members held theses more or less derived from Averroes which were problematic for Christian orthodoxy. We can place the beginnings of this movement around 1260–1265, at the University of Paris, although there is no consensus among scholars in this regard.<sup>28</sup> This movement has also been referred to as Latin Averroism, where *Latin* refers to the cultural milieu in which this

---

<sup>26</sup> BOETHIUS DE DACIA, *De aeternitate mundi*, in *Topica-Opuscula*, pars II: *De aeternitate mundi, De summo bono, De somniis*, ed. NIELS J. GREEN-PEDERSEN, Gad, Copenhagen 1976 (Corpus philosophorum danicorum medii aevi, 6.2), p. 335–336, ll. 15–22: « Ut etiam sententia philosophorum salvetur, quantum ratio eorum concludere potest, - nam eorum sententia in nullo contradicit christianae fidei nisi apud non intelligentes: sententia enim philosophorum innititur demonstrationibus et certis rationibus possibilibus in rebus de quibus loquuntur, fides autem in multis, innititur miraculis et non rationibus: quod enim tenetur propter hoc quod per rationes conclusum est, non est fides sed scientia ».

<sup>27</sup> An initial and certainly much less developed version of some parts of this section was already published in PILAR HERRÁIZ-OLIVA, « Nuevas consideraciones en torno a la noción de averroísmo », *Enrahonar. An International Journal of Theoretical and Practical Reason*, Supplement Issue (2018), p. 35–44.

<sup>28</sup> See, for instance, Kuksewicz, who places Averroism in the first half of the thirteenth century; cf. ZDZISLAW KUKSEWICZ, « L'influence d'Averroès sur des universités en Europe centrale. L'expansion de l'averroïsme latin », in JEAN JOLIVET (ed.), *Multiple Averroès: Actes du Colloque international organisé à l'occasion du 850<sup>e</sup> anniversaire de la naissance d'Averroès, Paris 20–23 septembre 1976*, Les Belles Lettres, Paris 1978, p. 275–281.

tendency arose and also to a specific reception of Aristotelianism.<sup>29</sup> As mentioned previously, it is a commonplace to ascribe three main theses to Averroism: (1) the eternity of the world; (2) the unicity of the intellect; and (3) the assertion that happiness is attainable within this life by means of a philosophical way of living. To this, Bazán and van Steenberghe say that if being an Averroist or a radical Aristotelian means something, it is to support the idea of the unicity of the intellect.<sup>30</sup> Dag Nikolaus Hasse also points towards doctrine, « a set of theories », as the defining feature of Latin Averroism, although he says that the historically legitimate use of Averroism is that in which this term is understood as referring to the « partisan of or expert on Averroes ». <sup>31</sup> As it has been said, Siger of Brabant and Boethius of Dacia are usually taken to be the chief exponents of this philosophical movement.

In modern scholarship, a great variety of terms has been applied in attempts to describe clearly what this movement actually was. According to Omar Argerami, *Latin Averroism* as a terminology was introduced by Ernest Renan in his work *Averroès et l'averroïsme*.<sup>32</sup> For James A. Weisheipl, among others, it was Pierre Mandonnet, in his work from 1899, *Siger de Brabant et l'averroïsme latin au XIIIe siècle*, who introduced this term.<sup>33</sup> Others appeal to the use of the term *averroistae* by Raimundus Lullus, who accused some philosophers of following the theses condemned in 1277 by calling them *averroistae*.<sup>34</sup> There is no consensus in this regard.

---

<sup>29</sup> Averroes's commentaries were also translated into Hebrew, and, despite the similarities, their reception does not have exactly the same features. An introduction to this issue can be found in OLIVER LEAMAN, « Jewish Averroism », in SEYYED HOSSEIN NASR, OLIVER LEAMAN (eds.), *History of Islamic Philosophy*, Routledge, London 2003 (Routledge History of World Philosophies, 1), p. 769–782.

<sup>30</sup> FERNAND VAN STEENBERGHE, *The Philosophical Movement in the Thirteenth Century*, Nelson, Edinburgh 1955, p. 82–84, and BERNARDO C. BAZÁN, « Radical Aristotelianism in the Faculty of Arts », in LUDGER HONNEFELDER et al. (eds.), *Albertus Magnus und die Anfänge der Aristoteles-Rezeption im lateinischen Mittelalter: Von Richardus Rufus bis zu Franciscus de Mayronis. Albertus Magnus and the Beginnings of the Medieval Reception of Aristotle in the Latin West: From Richardus Rufus to Franciscus de Mayronis*, Aschendorff Verlag, Münster 2005 (Subsidia Albertina, 1), p. 602.

<sup>31</sup> DAG NIKOLAUS HASSE, *Success and Suppression. Arabic Sciences and Philosophy in the Renaissance*, Cambridge (MA), Harvard University Press 2016, p. 189–191.

<sup>32</sup> OMAR ARGERAMI, « La cuestión *De aeternitate mundi* », in *Sapientia*, 27 (1972), p. 314.

<sup>33</sup> JAMES A. WEISHEIPL, *Friar Thomas D'Aquino: His Life, Thought, and Work*, Garden city, Doubleday (NY) 1974, p. 272.

<sup>34</sup> For the uses of *averroistae* in Raimundus Lullus, see MIGUEL LLUCH BAIXAULI, « Claves de la antropología y la ética de Ramón Llull en sus *Sermones sobre el Decálogo* », in JOSÉ M<sup>o</sup> SOTO RÁBANOS (ed.), *Pensamiento Medieval Hispano. Homenaje a Horacio Santiago-Otero*, vol. II, CSIC, Madrid 1998, p. 1113–1115.

Some scholars also refer to a *first Averroism* and a *second Averroism*, the latter being the one of Siger of Brabant and Boethius of Dacia.<sup>35</sup> This has to do with the ways in which Averroes's theses were understood, most importantly the thesis of the unicity of the intellect. To this, Bernardo Bazán shows that the notion *first Averroism* deals with a way of understanding the *De anima* which antedates the reception of Averroes's commentaries, and therefore this terminology is inadequate, since the thesis does not come from Averroes himself. Needless to say, if there was no first Averroism, there is no reason to talk about a second Averroism.<sup>36</sup>

Other scholars deny the existence of Averroism as such and suggest the term *radical Aristotelianism* instead. Van Steenberghen and Ruedi Imbach are good examples of this position and many scholars prefer this terminology, that is, *radical Aristotelianism*.<sup>37</sup> There is yet one more term also coined by van Steenberghen, namely *heterodox Aristotelianism*.<sup>38</sup> The problem is that this form of Aristotelianism is *heterodox* in relation to Christian faith and because there are Neoplatonic elements in Averroes's philosophy. The appeal to Christian faith puts philosophy and faith at the same level, as if they had the same status as disciplines or areas of knowledge, and this terminology is thus inadequate. Finally, David Piché, Alain de Libera and Luca Bianchi consider Siger of Brabant and Boethius of Dacia as a new type of intellectuals emerging from the reception of the Greco-Arabic legacy and adopting new epistemological paradigms.<sup>39</sup> I will argue along these lines, but I will go further, since I will defend that being an Averroist or not depends entirely on the methodology applied to philosophical problems, so I will address this methodological issue in the following.

---

<sup>35</sup> On *first* and *second* Averroism, see RENE-ANTOINE GAUTHIER, « Notes sur Siger de Brabant », in *Revue des sciences philosophiques et théologiques*: pt. I, 67 (1983), p. 201–232; and pt. II, 68 (1984), p. 3–49; See also BERNARDO C. BAZÁN, « On 'First Averroism' and its Doctrinal Background », in RUTH LINK-SALINGER (ed.), *On Scholars, Savants and Their Texts. Studies in Philosophy and Religious Thought. Essays on Honor of Arthur Hyman*, Peter Lang, New York 1989, p. 9–22.

<sup>36</sup> BERNARDO C. BAZÁN, « Was There Ever a 'First Averroism'? », in JAN A. AERTSEN, ANDREAS SPEER (eds.), *Geistesleben im 13. Jahrhundert*, de Gruyter, Berlin–New York 2000 (*Miscellanea Mediaevalia*, 27), p. 31–32.

<sup>37</sup> RUEDI IMBACH, « L'averroïsme latin du XIIIe siècle », in RUEDI IMBACH, ALFONSO MAIERÙ (eds.), *Gli studi di filosofia medievale fra Otto e Novecento: Contributo a un bilancio storiografico, Atti del convegno internazionale Roma, 21–23 settembre 1989*, Edizioni di storia e letteratura, Roma 1991 (*Storia e letteratura*, 179), p. 191–208. See also VAN STEENBERGHEN, *The Philosophical Movement in the Thirteenth Century*, p. 86–92.

<sup>38</sup> VAN STEENBERGHEN, *Aristotle in the West*, p. 98.

<sup>39</sup> See DAVID PICHE, CLAUDE LAFLEUR (eds.), *La condamnation parisienne de 1277*, Vrin, Paris 1999 (*Sic et non*), p. 12. An exhaustive analysis of the historiographical debate concerning the idea of Latin Averroism can be found in ANA MARÍA C. MINECAN, « Introducción al debate historiográfico en torno a la noción de 'averroísmo latino' », *Anales del Seminario de Historia de la Filosofía*, 27 (2010), p. 77.

## II.2 The Historiographical Tradition Challenged

According to van Steenberghe, we should prefer *radical Aristotelianism* to *Latin Averroism* because after the first half of the thirteenth century many scholars quoted Averroes and used his positions to some extent and, in this way, authors as Aquinas and Albert the Great should also be labelled as *Averroists*. This Aristotelianism is *radical* because it deepens its roots into Aristotelian philosophy and because it is not moderate. Bernardo Bazán has questioned whether radical *Aristotelianism* is in fact a problematic term.<sup>40</sup> Firstly, because the willingness to explain or to understand Aristotle faithfully does not constitute any kind of radicalism; secondly, if we understand *radical* as those who embraced Aristotle's philosophy as the true philosophy, *radical* could also be applied to theologians, such as Thomas Aquinas; thirdly, because the mere ideal of philosophy as an autonomous discipline does not entail a radicalism either, since we would still have to include Aquinas, Peter Hispanus and Albert the Great; and lastly, because the so-called *double-truth* theory is non-existent.<sup>41</sup> To this, Bazán adds: « The focus of their attention shifted, then, from the mere exegesis of Aristotle's texts to the analysis between Averroes' interpretation and its philosophical difficulties. More than *radical* Aristotelians, these masters can be called 'Averroists' ».<sup>42</sup>

After considering these things, can we call them *Averroists*? I stand on the side of Bazán in this regard. Mainly because we can point towards contemporary authors using the label *averroistae* in this time. Aquinas is the best-known example. We encounter even more references of authors using *averroistae* in this period, such as the one made by Roger Bacon in his *Compendium Studii theologiae*, from 1292, – where he also uses *averroistae* –, in addition to those of Raimundus Lullus, who uses *averroista* as well as *averroista christianus*.<sup>43</sup> Perhaps these authors perceived that the new controversial issues discussed in the thirteenth century originated in Averroes's interpretation of Aristotle's philosophy. The arguments of Bazán, in addition to the usage of *averroista* by several authors, lead me to think that we

---

<sup>40</sup> BAZÁN, « Radical Aristotelianism in the Faculty of Arts », p. 587–590.

<sup>41</sup> For further reading on *double truth* see PILAR HERRÁIZ OLIVA, « Fundamentación y especialización de los saberes: actualidad filosófica del legado medieval » in ILDEFONSO MURILLO (ed.), *Actualidad de la tradición filosófica*, Ediciones Diálogo Filosófico, Colmenar Viejo (Madrid) 2010, p. 569–574.

<sup>42</sup> BAZÁN, « Radical Aristotelianism in the Faculty of Arts », p. 624. As for the main features of this *radical* Aristotelianism, Bazán points towards the unicity of the intellect, but the eternity of the world, the idea of happiness attained through philosophy as the most perfect state and intellectual determinism are also pointed out as relevant features of Averroism.

<sup>43</sup> HASSE, « *Averroica secta* », p. 310. Hasse is the one pointing out towards Roger Bacon's reference. It should be noted that his arguments in this regard go for little external evidence concerning the existence of Averroism in the Middle Ages, showing that from 1500 onwards there are many more references. It should be also said that Hasse focuses his analysis mainly on the unicity thesis (ibid., p. 317).

should prefer the terminology of the people who lived within this period, before appealing to rather contemporary terminologies which ultimately express the same ideas and turn this philosophical movement into something even more problematic.

On the other hand, for those who question the originality of the philosophical projects led by Siger of Brabant and Boethius of Dacia, the answer can also be found in the manuscripts of the condemnations of 1277.<sup>44</sup> Except for Siger of Brabant and Boethius of Dacia, no other authors are mentioned by name in the syllabus of the Parisian condemnations, whose introductory text refers to « some students of arts in Paris ». <sup>45</sup> Yet one more medieval source points to the projects of Siger of Brabant and Boethius of Dacia as different from the rest. This source is the *Declaratio Raymundi per modum dialogi edita contra aliquorum philosophorum et eorum sequacium opiniones* from 1298, but collected in a catalogue of the works of Raimundus Lullus dating from 1311 as *Liber contra errores Boetii et Sigerii*.<sup>46</sup> Since this is the case, here I also appeal to the medieval sources, in which the thought of Siger and Boethius was understood as the main target, rather than to modern judgements on the Middle Ages.

But there is yet one more problematic issue found in the historiographical tradition, which is the presentation of the Averroists as those who followed Averroes's theses, mainly the thesis of the unicity of the intellect. This characterisation of Averroism can be found even in those who say that we should prefer the term *radical Aristotelianism*. This is problematic for several reasons. Firstly, because the main thesis that that allegedly makes of an author an Averroist, that is, the unicity thesis, cannot be found in Boethius of Dacia, and Boethius is, nonetheless, known to be one of the main representatives of Parisian Averroism. We should also consider the fact that Siger is genuinely attempting at explaining the teachings of Aristotle in his *Quaestiones in tertium De anima* and in the *De anima intellectiva*. In his commentary on the *Liber de causis* (1275–1276), Siger himself states that the unicity of the intellect is heresy and that it is not a rational position to sustain philosophically.<sup>47</sup> Secondly, neither Boethius nor Siger held the thesis of the eternity of the world, which is also traditionally ascribed to

---

<sup>44</sup> As it is questioned by IMBACH in « L'averroïsme latin du XIIIe siècle », p. 207–208.

<sup>45</sup> CUP, vol. I, p. 543.

<sup>46</sup> MS Paris, BNF, lat. 15450, fol. 80.

<sup>47</sup> SIGERUS DE BRABANTIA, *In Lib. de causis*, q. 27, *solutio*, ed. ANTONIO MARLASCA, Éditions de l'Institut Supérieur de Philosophie, Louvain-La-Neuve, Paris 1972 (Philosophes Médiévaux, 12), p. 112, ll. 146–151: « Sed ista positio in fide nostra est haeretica, et irrationalis etiam sic apparet. Intellectu enim existente forma corporis, sicut vult Aristoteles universaliter de anima, satis planum est qualiter oportet intellectum numerari et multiplicari multiplicatione humanorum corporum; sed qualitercumque hoc quis ponat, apparet intellectum non posse unum esse numero hominum omnium ».

Averroism, as seen from their own words if we examine their works closely.<sup>48</sup> Thirdly, because a more exhaustive treatment of the ethical ideal in terms of a philosophical way of living can only be found in Boethius of Dacia, but not in Siger of Brabant, the Averroist par excellence.

These reasons lead me to think that the question *what is it to be an Averroist* in the thirteenth century cannot be answered by recourse to the different theses followed by these authors, as I hope to have shown. On the contrary, and against traditional views, to be an Averroist is not a matter of doctrine, but of method. This philosophical method has its own features, which are different from those we find in other thinkers such as Aquinas, and it has been misunderstood as *double-truth* and largely attributed to these authors. Even though there is consensus among scholars in this regard, I will also touch on it in what follows.

### II.3 The Method: Philosophy as an Independent Field

Previously, even though succinctly, I touched on the different philosophical standpoints held by the main representatives of Averroism. In this section I will rather aim for the similarities and at how they were problematic, since those entailed the accusation of the double-truth theory for these authors. *Double-truth* meaning that they held doctrines which were contrary to faith by saying that something could be true according to philosophy but false according to faith, « as if there were two contradictory truths ».<sup>49</sup> Nowadays, scholarship unanimously denies that such *double-truth* is imputable to them, but this is a misconception of the method used by these authors.

As we have seen, Siger of Brabant and Boethius of Dacia did not hold exactly the same theses and did not present them in the same way. What they have in common is the defence of the autonomy of philosophy in the whole corpus of sciences as a discipline by its own right, with its own way of proceeding and, most importantly, independent from theology. In these authors we find the assumption

---

<sup>48</sup> See, for instance, SIGERUS DE BRABANTIA, *Quaestiones in Physicam*, II, q. 20, in *Écrits de Logique, de Morale et de Physique*, ed. BERNARDO C. BAZÁN, Publications universitaires de Louvain, Louvain 1974 (Philosophes Médiévaux, 14), p. 181, ll. 58–66: « Nevertheless, I believe that everything that has been created is new, and that it is not necessary that all which is made has a principle from which it becomes [what it is]. [...] Either it should be said that it is not necessary that created things have [a principle] from which they come to be, or even better, that the capacity of the most powerful agent suffices for this ». For BOETHIUS DE DACIA, see *Quaestiones super libros Physicorum*, I, q. 31, ed. GÉZA SAJÓ, Gad, Copenhagen 1984 (Corpus philosophorum danicorum medii aevi, 5/2), p. 275, ll. 191–193: « Dico tamen quod motus primus potest esse novus. et huius non potest dari ratio, quia miraculorum non est dare rationem, quia si sic, non esset miraculum », i.e., « I nevertheless say that the first movement can be new, and no argument can be given for this, because about miracles no argument ought to be given, since, if this were the case, they would not be miracles ».

<sup>49</sup> CUP, vol. I, nr. 473, p. 543.

that natural, observable causes are the only way to deal with natural reality, a demarcation of the limits of philosophy as a discipline, and a clear distinction between concepts pertaining to philosophy and those which are not philosophical. This attempt to show that philosophy and theology are independent and separated disciplines brings about the idea that, if we are to delimit the boundaries of philosophy and theology, the first step is to separate the philosophical discourse from the theological one. This, in my opinion, is what has been misunderstood as *double-truth*. However, if we look closely, we see that they accepted the teachings of faith as the truth, while providing an explanation of which concepts we are allowed to use as philosophers. A good example of this is found in their treatment of the eternity of the world, where *generation* was seen as a concept that philosophers could use, whereas *creation* was more problematic.<sup>50</sup>

Another example of this methodology that constitutes the main feature of Averroism is the differentiation between the natural, philosophical discourse, and the theological one, *loquendo naturaliter* (*speaking naturally*) and *loquendo secundum theologos et secundum veritatem* (*speaking in agreement with the theologians and with the truth*). This distinction can be already found in a guide for students dating from 1230's and it was indeed followed by the Averroists.<sup>51</sup> The separation of the two types of discourse entails a distinction between the truth that can be achieved by means of philosophy – which consists of natural propositions or propositions that are true according to natural principles –, and the truth that is known by revelation, which is 'the truth'. As we have already seen, the Averroists accepted the teachings of Christian faith as true, and when they entered into conflict with the teachings of philosophy they sought for another explanation, since according to the method provided by Boethius of Dacia, one cannot deny such propositions unless one wants to deny the principles of that other field or area of knowledge, which theology is.<sup>52</sup> In addition, for the Averroist authors the truths of theology and those of philosophy could not contradict one another, since for that to occur they would have to deal with the same issues in exactly the same way, which is what would be required in order to be such a thing as a double-truth, as stated in

---

<sup>50</sup> For a more detailed account of this subject see PILAR HERRÁIZ-OLIVA, *Dos tratados averroístas sobre la eternidad del mundo: Siger de Brabante y Boecio de Dacia*, Eunsa, Pamplona (forthcoming).

<sup>51</sup> See CHARLES H. LOHR, « The Ancient Philosophical Legacy and its Transmission to the Middle Ages », in JORGE J. E. GRACIA, TIMOTHY B. NOONE (eds.), *A Companion to Philosophy in the Middle Ages*, Blackwell, Malden (MA) 2002 (Blackwell Companions to Philosophy, 24), p. 16–17.

<sup>52</sup> BOETHIUS DE DACIA, *De aeternitate mundi*, ed. GREEN-PEDERSEN, p. 351, ll. 427–431: « Even though the natural philosopher cannot establish these truths or even know them since the principles of his science do not extend to such difficult and hidden workings of divine wisdom, still he should not deny these truths » (Engl. transl. by JOHN F. WIPPEL, Pontifical institute of mediaeval studies, Toronto 1987 [Medieval Sources in Translation, 30], p. 51).

the syllabus of the Condemnations of 1277.<sup>53</sup> Instead, for them philosophy was limited to that which can be concluded and demonstrated by means of arguments and its discourse was therefore limited to natural, observable causes.

Both authors provide us with several examples of this way of proceeding. For instance, in Boethius of Dacia's *De aeternitate mundi*, he postulates the scope of the different sciences, their methods and proper subjects as disciplines. The scope of the philosophical task is depicted as follows:

There can be no question which may be disputed by rational arguments which the philosopher should not dispute and determine concerning where its truth lies, insofar as this can be grasped by human reason. And the reason for this is that all the arguments by which such is disputed are taken from things. Otherwise they would be figments of the mind.<sup>54</sup>

And in *De anima intellectiva* Siger of Brabant states:

Here we seek only for the opinion of the philosophers, and especially [that] of Aristotle, even if the Philosopher has by chance thought differently from the truth which is held and from wisdom, which are achieved by means of revelation, which cannot be concluded by way of natural reason. Yet nothing [be said] to us now concerning the miracles of God, since about natural things we discuss in a natural way.<sup>55</sup>

This distinction between the ways of proceeding in addition to the one between the conclusions of philosophy, on the one hand, and the teachings of faith, on the other, has been misunderstood as *double-truth*. In fact, it is an attempt to separate and delimitate the scope, the object and the principles of the different fields of knowledge, and mainly the limits between philosophy and theology as distinct fields. Philosophy is perceived as a full-time exclusive task for the philosopher and the different fields of knowledge as introduced by each perspective. In this way,

---

<sup>53</sup> CUP, vol. I, p. 543: « Dicunt enim ea esse vera secundum philosophiam, sed non secundum fidem catholicam, quasi sint due contrarie veritates ».

<sup>54</sup> BOETHIUS DE DACIA, *De aeternitate mundi*, ed. GREEN-PEDERSEN, p. 347, ll. 314–320: « Nulla quaestio potest esse, quae disputabilis est per rationes, quam philosophus non debeat disputare et determinare, quomodo se habeat veritas in illa, quantum per rationem humanam comprehendi potest. Et huius declaratio est, quia omnes rationes per quas disputatur ex rebus acceptae sunt ». (transl. WIPPEL, p. 46–47).

<sup>55</sup> SIGERUS DE BRABANTIA, *De anima intellectiva*, c. 3, p. 83–84, ll. 44–49: « Quaerimus enim hic solum intentionem philosophorum et praecipue Aristotelis, etsi forte Philosophus senserit aliter quam veritas se habeat et sapientia, quae per revelationem de anima sint tradita, quae per rationes naturales concludi non possunt. Sed nihil ad nos nunc de Dei miraculis, cum de naturalibus naturaliter disseramus ».

each new perspective (*subiectum formale*) introduces a new particularity and thus a new science or field of knowledge (*subiectum materiale*).

Now, are philosophy and theology related at all? Sometimes they deal with the same issues and even by using the same concepts. Siger of Brabant distinguishes between « that theology which is a part of philosophy », in his own words, and compares it to revealed or biblical theology in his *Quaestiones in Metaphysicam*.<sup>56</sup> Among other things, philosophical theology and revealed theology differ in how they consider the different issues – revelation or rational investigation –. Another difference between philosophical and revealed theology is that the principles of demonstration – used by philosophical theology – are known by means of the senses, experimentation and memory, whereas the principles of revealed theology are known to us by divine revelation, and that is why revealed theology does not proceed by demonstration, which is a distinctive feature of philosophy.<sup>57</sup>

This methodological issue has been usually addressed as a matter of conflict between the faculty of theology and the faculty of arts; or between philosophy and theology, clashing after the rediscovery of Aristotelian philosophy. In my opinion, the methodological problem shows that, at this time, the limits between philosophy and theology were not as clear as we tend to think, and the continuous effort made by the Averroists in order to explain the limits and scope of philosophy, and how it was independent from theology, should be seen as evidence for this. Boethius and Siger, while trying to show that philosophy and theology have different methods, scopes and principles, had as a background the attempt to make of them separate, independent fields of knowledge. The problem is that their appeal to the philosophical discourse (*loquendo naturaliter*) as methodologically different from the theological one (*loquendo secundum veritatem*) entailed that the truths attainable by means of philosophy (*veritas secundum quid*) were different from the truth provided by faith (*veritas simpliciter*). To solve this, Boethius of Dacia and Siger of Brabant analysed which concepts could be used by the philosophers in their arguments, and distinguished the propositions founded on natural causes from those whose explanation was supernatural and thus did not pertain to philosophy. However, even though the Averroists' main effort was to make of these two fields distinctly separated areas, philosophy and theology as disciplines shared in fact themes and concepts. How they were related is to be found in the philosophy of Thomas Aquinas. By explaining the distinctive features of his approach, we will also shed light on the originality of the philosophical projects of Siger of Brabant and Boethius of Dacia.

---

<sup>56</sup> SIGERUS DE BRABANTIA, *Quaestiones in Metaphysicam*, VI, q.1, c. 1, ed. WILLIAM DUNPHY, Éditions de l'Institut Supérieur de Philosophie, Louvain-La-Neuve 1981 (Philosophes Médiévaux, 24), p. 359, ll. 4–6: « Qualiter differat scientia theologia [...] quae est pars philosophiae et scientia theologia quae non est pars philosophiae sed est sacra scriptura ».

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 359–361.

#### II.4 The Thomistic Solution

Boethius and Siger are called *radical Aristotelians* since they were believed to have made a *radical*, a faithful interpretation of Aristotle's philosophy. But how is it that Aquinas, for instance, was not a radical or an Averroist, since he does the same in many cases? For example, in *Summa Theologiae* Aquinas says:

The different means through which knowledge is obtained introduce the different sciences. The astronomer and the natural philosopher demonstrate the same conclusion – namely, that the Earth is round – but the astronomer by means of mathematics, that is, abstracting from matter; the natural philosopher [demonstrates] by considering that which is related to matter. Hence, nothing forbids that, for these things which are discussed within the philosophical disciplines as knowable in light of natural reason, that other science discusses them as knowable in light of divine revelation. Whence, theology which pertains to sacred doctrine differs in kind from that theology which is a part of philosophy.<sup>58</sup>

As we see, this is not very different from what Siger of Brabant did in *Quaestiones in Metaphysicam*. In addition, some of Aquinas's theses were also condemned in 1277 and on the day of the third anniversary of his death, but the Doctor Angelicus was nonetheless the one solving the methodological problems of Averroism, in which philosophy and theology were completely independent fields. This is the difference that marks Boethius and Siger as Averroists, but not Aquinas, since Aquinas would be the one reconciling philosophy and theology, despite the accusations of *radicalism*.

Aquinas provides a different characterisation of the relations between philosophy and theology and of how philosophy is related to Christian faith. Furthermore, Aquinas does not recognise himself among the philosophers.<sup>59</sup> He talks about the Arabs as philosophers, but about himself as a theologian, and he also uses frequently « we », the believers, to distinguish himself from the philosophers.<sup>60</sup> For Aquinas, philosophy and theology were not independent, but

---

<sup>58</sup> THOMAS DE AQUINO, *Summa Theologiae* I<sup>a</sup>, q. 1, a. 1, ad 2, in *Opera omnia iussu impensaque Leonis XIII P. M. edita* (= ed. Leonina), t. IV, Typ. Pol. S. C. de Propaganda Fide, Roma 1888, p. 7: « Diversa ratio cognoscibilis diversitatem scientiarum inducit. Eandem enim conclusionem demonstrat astrologus et naturalis, puta quod terra est rotunda, sed astrologus per medium mathematicum, idest a materia abstractum; naturalis autem per medium circa materiam consideratum. Unde nihil prohibet de eisdem rebus, de quibus philosophicae disciplinae tractant secundum quod sunt cognoscibilia lumine naturalis rationis, et aliam scientiam tractare secundum quod cognoscuntur lumine divinae revelationis. Unde theologia quae ad sacram doctrinam pertinet, differt secundum genus ab illa theologia quae pars philosophiae ponitur ».

<sup>59</sup> THOMAS DE AQUINO, *Summa Theologiae* II<sup>a</sup> II<sup>ae</sup>, q. 19, a. 7 co., ed. Leonina, t. VIII, p. 144: « Cum autem sapientia sit cognitio divinatorum, [...] aliter consideratur a nobis et aliter a philosophis ».

<sup>60</sup> See MARK D. JORDAN, « Theology and Philosophy », in *The Cambridge Companion to Aquinas*, NORMAN KRETZMANN, ELEONORE STUMP (eds.), Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 2006, p. 232–251.

supplementary approaches to the truth, since the truth is one, but the ways in which we attain it are two: that is, he held the thesis of Averroes in this regard. Furthermore, philosophy is a tool for theology – as we have seen when showing the main doctrinal positions – in order to reach a better understanding of revelation: philosophy and theology are related as part and whole and complement one another. In this way, philosophy and theology are not different fields of knowledge, but different modes of knowledge. According to Aquinas, there are questions pertaining only to philosophy; questions which are strictly theological and there are questions shared by both disciplines, since we can even try to find God through creation by means of natural reason (*ST II<sup>a</sup> II<sup>ae</sup>*, q. 2, a. 3). This is how the *Doctor Angelicus* solves the problem of how philosophy and theology share principles or how they are related. For the Averroists, except for philosophical theology – which is in fact a part of philosophy –, these two disciplines did not share any principles at all.

That the method played a very important role was also shown in the Condemnations of 1277, which included 219 theses. Some contradicted one another, and thus it was impossible for one person to hold all of them. Some of the condemned propositions were compatible with Catholic faith. The beginning of the syllabus which points at two contrary truths, and the diversity of the condemned theses show, in my opinion, that the problem was of a methodological kind. And this problem was that the limits of philosophy and theology as disciplines were still vague at this stage. This also shows in the accusation of *philosophantes* to theologians and of *theologizantes* to philosophers, as a kind of warning so that they limited their task to their own field.<sup>61</sup> The condemnations of theses of Aquinas in 1277, or the condemnations themselves, would be too much for this article, but Aquinas's closeness to the Arab philosophers and to the Averroists was not overlooked in that context, just as we, nowadays, still struggle to show the differences between Aquinas and the Averroists in terms of faithfulness to the teachings of Aristotle.

### III. Conclusions

In this overview of Averroism, I hope to have shown that neither the thesis of the unicity of the intellect nor any other particular doctrine can be the focus to study this movement. This, not only because the philosophers traditionally labelled as *Averroists* did not defend systematically and unanimously each and every thesis that has been seen as emblematic of the Averroist movement, but most importantly because the thesis which is seen as the defining thesis of Averroism is not in fact embraced by any of them. In addition, neither in Siger of Brabant nor

---

<sup>61</sup> For the terms *philosophi theologizantes* and *theologi philosophantes*, see PICHÉ, LAFLEUR (eds.), *La condamnation parisienne de 1277*, p. 155–156 and p. 175.

in Boethius of Dacia we find an exhaustive, systematic engagement with the positions held by Averroes himself, not even when it comes to the thesis of the unicity of the intellect or the eternity of the world.

By analysing the works of these authors, I have tried to demonstrate in which way the methodology delineated by Siger of Brabant and Boethius of Dacia should be understood as the crucial feature of Averroism and how it differs from a mere treatment of philosophy as an autonomous discipline. The autonomy of philosophy is a very important feature of Averroism, but I hope to have shown that these authors did in fact go further and aimed for a radical separation of philosophy and theology as disciplines. The main representatives of Averroism perceived the philosopher's task as the search for the truth and for the teachings of the ancient philosophers without turning their opinions into something indisputable. In the final analysis, this way of conceiving the task of the philosopher can be traced back to Averroes's commentaries, which promoted a reading of Aristotle's works that brought along a new philosophical reflection separated from theology which, at the same time, struggled to move away from theology. This way of understanding philosophy as a completely independent field had a new type of philosopher as a result, the philosopher who could observe the natural world and its phenomena as relations of cause and effect; the philosopher as an autonomous subject for knowledge, aware of the scope and limits of philosophy in the whole corpus of the sciences. This new way of doing and conceiving philosophy is what we should refer to in order to answer the question *what it is to be an Averroist* in the thirteenth century.

*Bibliography*

Manuscripts

MS. Paris BN lat. 16533, fol. 60.

MS. Paris BN lat. 4391, fol. 68.

Texts and Studies

Albertus Magnus, *De anima*, in *Opera Omnia*, vol. III, ed. Jammy, Lyon 1651, a, p. 1–188.

— *De unitate intellectus contra Averroem*, in *Opera Omnia*, vol. V, ed. Jammy, Lyon 1651, p. 218–238.

Argerami, Omar, « La cuestión De aeternitate mundi », in *Sapientia*, 27 (1972), p. 313–334.

Asín Palacios, Miguel, « El averroísmo teológico de Santo Tomás de Aquino », in Id., *Huellas del Islam*, Espasa-Calpe, Madrid 1941.

Bazán, Bernardo C., « Boethius of Dacia », in Jorge J. E. Gracia, Timothy B. Noone (eds.), *A Companion to Philosophy in the Middle Ages*, Blackwell, Malden (MA) 2002 (Blackwell Companions to Philosophy, 24), p. 227–232.

— « Radical Aristotelianism in the Faculty of Arts », in Ludger Honnefelder et al. (eds.), *Albertus Magnus und die Anfänge der Aristoteles-Rezeption im lateinischen Mittelalter: Von Richardus Rufus bis zu Franciscus de Mayronis. Albertus Magnus and the Beginnings of the Medieval Reception of Aristotle in the Latin West: From Richardus Rufus to Franciscus de Mayronis*, Aschendorff Verlag, Münster 2005 (Subsidia Albertina, 1), p. 585–629.

— « On ‘First Averroism’ and its Doctrinal Background », in Ruth Link-Salinger (ed.), *On Scholars, Savants and Their Texts. Studies in Philosophy and Religious Thought. Essays on Honor of Arthur Hyman*, Peter Lang, New York 1989, p. 9–22.

— « Was There Ever a ‘First Averroism’? », in Jan A. Aertsen, Andreas Speer (eds.), *Geistesleben im 13. Jahrhundert*, de Gruyter, Berlin–New York 2000 (Miscellanea Mediaevalia, 27), p. 31–53.

Boethius de Dacia, *Topica-Opuscula*, pars II: *De aeternitate mundi, De summo bono, De somniis*, ed. Niels J. Green-Pedersen, Gad, Copenhagen 1976 (Corpus philosophorum danicorum medii aevi, 6/2).

— *On the Supreme Good; On the Eternity of the World; On Dreams*, transl. John F. Wippel, Pontifical institute of mediaeval studies, Toronto 1987 (Medieval Sources in Translation, 30).

— *Quaestiones super libros Physicorum*, ed. Géza Sajó, Gad, Copenhagen 1984 (Corpus philosophorum danicorum medii aevi, 5/2).

Bonaventura, *Collationes de Decem Praeceptis*, in *Opera Omnia*, t. V, *Opuscula Varia*, Typ. Coll. S. Bonaventurae, Quaracchi 1891, p. 505–531.

— *Collationes in Hexaameron*, in *Opera Omnia*, t. V, *Opuscula Varia*, Typ. Coll. S. Bonaventurae, Quaracchi 1891, p. 327–454.

Denifle, Heinrich, Émile Chatelain (eds.), *Chartularium Universitatis Parisiensis (CUP)*, vol. I, Delalain, Paris 1889.

Dod, Bernard G., « Aristoteles Latinus », in Norman Kretzmann, Anthony Kenny, Jan Pinborg (eds.), *The Cambridge History of Later Medieval Philosophy*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 2008, p. 45–79.

Ebbesen, Sten, « Boethius of Dacia: Science is a Serious Game », in Id., *Topics in Latin Philosophy from the 12th–14th Centuries*, vol. II, Ashgate, Aldershot 2009, p. 153–162.

— « The Paris Arts Faculty: Siger of Brabant, Boethius of Dacia, Radulphus Brito », in John Marenbon (ed.), *Medieval Philosophy*, Routledge, London 2004 (Routledge History of Philosophy, 3), p. 269–290.

Etzkorn, Girard J., « John Pecham », in Jorge J. E. Gracia, Timothy B. Noone (eds.), *A Companion to Philosophy in the Middle Ages*, Blackwell, Malden (MA) 2002 (Blackwell Companions to Philosophy, 24), p. 484–387.

García Marqués, Alfonso, « ¿Hay tres Tomás de Aquino? » in Herrero Monserrat et al. (eds.), *Escribir en las almas. Estudios en honor de Rafael Alvira*, Eunsa, Pamplona 2014.

Gauthier, René-Antoine, « Notes sur Siger de Brabant », in *Revue des sciences philosophiques et théologiques* : pt. I, 67 (1983), p. 201–232; and pt. II, 68 (1984), p. 3–49.

Grant, Edward, *A History of Natural Philosophy. From the Ancient World to the Nineteenth Century*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 2007.

Hasse, Dag Nikolaus, *Success and Suppression. Arabic Sciences and Philosophy in the Renaissance*, Cambridge (MA), Harvard University Press 2016.

— « *Averroica secta*: Notes on the Formation of Averroist Movements in Fourteenth-Century Bologna and Renaissance Italy », in Jean-Baptiste Brenet (ed.), *Averroès et*

*les averroïsmes juif et latin*, Brepols, Turnhout 2007 (Textes et études du Moyen Age, 40), p. 307–331.

— *Latin Averroes Translations of the First Half of the Thirteenth Century*, Olms, Hildesheim 2010.

Herráiz-Oliva, Pilar, « Nuevas consideraciones en torno a la noción de averroísmo », *Enrahonar. An International Journal of Theoretical and Practical Reason*, Supplement Issue (2018), p. 35–44.

— *Dos tratados averroístas sobre la eternidad del mundo: Siger de Brabante y Boecio de Dacia*, Eunsa, Pamplona (forthcoming).

Imbach, Ruedi, « L'averroïsme latin du XIIIe siècle », in Ruedi Imbach, Alfonso Maierù (eds.), *Gli studi di filosofia medievale fra Otto e Novecento: Contributo a un bilancio storiografico, Atti del convegno internazionale Roma, 21–23 settembre 1989, Edizioni di storia e letteratura*, Roma 1991 (Storia e letteratura, 179), p. 191–208.

Jordan, Mark D., « Theology and Philosophy », in Norman Kretzmann, Eleonore Stump (eds.), *The Cambridge Companion to Aquinas*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 2006, p. 232–251.

Kuksewicz, Zdzislaw, « L'influence d'Averroès sur des universités en Europe centrale. L'expansion de l'averroïsme latin », in Jean Jolivet (ed.), *Multiple Averroès: Actes du Colloque international organisé à l'occasion du 850<sup>e</sup> anniversaire de la naissance d'Averroès, Paris 20–23 septembre 1976*, Les Belles Lettres, Paris 1978, p. 275–281.

Leaman, Oliver, « Jewish Averroism », in Seyyed Hossein Nasr, Oliver Leaman (eds.), *History of Islamic Philosophy*, Routledge, London 2003 (Routledge History of World Philosophies, 1), p. 769–782.

León Florido, Francisco, Fernando Rodamilans Ramos, *Las herejías académicas en la Edad Media. Lista de errores en las universidades de París y Oxford (1210–1347)*, Sindéresis, Madrid 2015.

Lluch Baixauli, Miguel, « Claves de la antropología y la ética de Ramón Llull en sus *Sermones sobre el Decálogo* », in José M<sup>a</sup> Soto Rábanos (ed.), *Pensamiento Medieval Hispano. Homenaje a Horacio Santiago-Otero*, 2 vols., CSIC, Madrid 1998, vol. II, p. 1097–1116.

Lohr, Charles H., « The Ancient Philosophical Legacy and its Transmission to the Middle Ages », in Jorge J. E. Gracia, Timothy B. Noone (eds.), *A Companion to Philosophy in the Middle Ages*, Blackwell, Malden (MA) 2002 (Blackwell Companions to Philosophy, 24), p. 15–22.

Luscombe, Davies, « Crossing Philosophical Boundaries c. 1150–c. 1250 », in Spencer E. Young (ed.), *Crossing Boundaries at Medieval Universities*, Brill, Leiden–

Boston 2011 (Education and Society in the Middle Ages and Renaissance, 36), p. 9–27.

Marenbon, John (ed.), *Medieval Philosophy*, Routledge, London 2010 (repr.) (Routledge History of Philosophy, 3).

Minecan, Ana María C., « Introducción al debate historiográfico en torno a la noción de ‘averroísmo latino’ », *Anales del Seminario de Historia de la Filosofía*, 27 (2010), p. 63–85.

Piché, David, Claude Lafleur (eds.), *La condamnation parisienne de 1277*, Vrin, Paris 1999 (Sic et non).

Putallaz, François-Xavier, Ruedi Imbach, *Profession: philosophe. Siger de Brabant*, Cerf, Paris 1997.

Sigerus de Brabantia, *Quaestiones in Metaphysicam*, ed. William Dunphy, Éditions de l’Institut Supérieur de Philosophie, Louvain-La-Neuve 1981 (Philosophes Médiévaux, 24).

— *Quaestiones in tertium De anima, De anima intellectiva, De aeternitate mundi*, ed. Bernardo C. Bazán, Publications universitaires de Louvain, Louvain-La-Neuve 1972 (Philosophes Médiévaux, 13).

— *Quaestiones super Librum de causis*, ed. Antonio Marlasca, Éditions de l’Institut Supérieur de Philosophie, Louvain-La-Neuve, Paris 1972 (Philosophes Médiévaux, 12).

— *Quaestiones in Physicam* in *Écrits de Logique, de Morale et de Physique*, ed. Bernardo C. Bazán, Publications universitaires de Louvain, Louvain 1974 (Philosophes Médiévaux, 14).

Tellkamp, Jörg A., *San Alberto Magno. Sobre el Alma*, Eunsa, Pamplona 2012.

Thomas de Aquino, *Summa Theologiae*, in *Opera omnia iussu impensaue Leonis XIII P. M. edita*, t. IV–XII, Typ. Pol. S. C. de Propaganda Fide, Roma 1888–1906.

Van Steenberghen, Fernand, *Aristotle in the West. The Origins of Latin Aristotelianism*, Nauwelaerts, Louvain 1955.

— *The Philosophical Movement in the Thirteenth Century*, Nelson, Edinburgh 1955.

Weisheipl, James A., *Friar Thomas D’Aquino: His Life, Thought, and Work*, Garden city, Doubleday (NY) 1974.



# IN MEMORIAM



IN MEMORIAM  
PETER DRONKE  
(30.V.1934–19.IV.2020)\*

CHARLES BURNETT  
THE WARBURG INSTITUTE, LONDON



Peter Dronke, who died on 19 April, 2020, was truly a man of pan-European culture. He was born in Germany (in 1934), educated in New Zealand (1939–1954), and Oxford (1954–1957, 1958–1961), spent an enriching year in Rome (1957–1958), and finally settled in Cambridge (1961), whilst spending his summers in Brittany. Through his wife, Ursula's, interests he had a sympathy for Iceland and Nordic literature. And through academic contacts, who became close friends, he was a frequent visitor to most European countries, as well as North America. His first book *Medieval Latin and the Rise of European Love-Lyric* (1965–1966, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. 1968) begins with a survey of love poetry ('the courtly experience') from several early medieval European cultures, but including Arabic and Persian poetry. Peter always quoted texts in the original languages, several of which (German, French, Italian and Spanish) he spoke fluently. His upbringing within an immigrant family living

---

\* Among the several accounts of Peter Dronke's life and works, the following are most revealing: JAN ZIOLKOWSKI, « In Memoriam Peter Dronke (1934–2020) », *Journal of Medieval Latin*, 30 (2020), p. xxiii–xxxv; MARINA WARNER, « Peter Dronke Obituary: Scholar of Medieval Latin who Shone Light on Hildegard of Bingen and Other Female Writers of the Middle Ages », *The Guardian (UK)*, 14 May, 2020; *Sequentia*, Dronke Nachruf: <[http://www.sequentia.org/images/Dronke\\_Nachruf.pdf](http://www.sequentia.org/images/Dronke_Nachruf.pdf)> (accessed 7 December 2020). See also JOHN MARENBNON, « Peter Dronke and Medieval Latin at Cambridge », in JOHN MARENBNON (ed.), *Poetry & Philosophy in the Middle Ages. A Festschrift for Peter Dronke*, Brill, Leiden–Boston 2001 (Mittellateinische Studien und Texte, 29), p. 1–5 (on the occasion of Peter's retirement; this includes a bibliography of works mainly relevant to the theme of the Festschrift). I have derived some details from these generous tributes.

in Auckland, New Zealand, precluded him from being typically British, but his allegiances were to Europe and more widely, to the Mediterranean. When any aspect of this culture was threatened, he reacted – for example, when the National Library in Skopje was destroyed in 1963, Ursula and he were generous in their donations. A pan-Mediterranean culture consisted of a mosaic of languages, whose mutual contacts, through translation and adaptation, fascinated Peter. But at the heart of these languages was Latin, from which and into which the literature of other languages was translated, but which, in itself, provided a rich source of original and engaging literature.

Medieval Latin has always been a Cinderella subject – at most, subservient to other subjects (e.g. as a necessity for historians and theologians studying the Middle Ages). Only in certain German universities was its literature regarded worthy of a Seminar of its own. In Cambridge it lay hidden in the ‘Department of Other Languages’ alongside Catalan, Modern Greek and Danish. Peter was responsible for establishing its greatness in the British Isles. His appointment to a lectureship in Cambridge was itself a bold initiative on the part of the university. In the course of his tenure, he was elevated to a Readership, and eventually to a personal chair (1989–2001); he made the subject popular with undergraduate students, and attracted a series of research students, several of whom spread his interest in other universities throughout the world. In his undergraduate teaching he would recite poetry in several languages off by heart, and demonstrate (by means of a model made by his daughter Cressida) how the 3-D sphere of the cosmos was created from the rotation of a 2-D semicircle. Once one embarked on independent research one was invited to his house in Parker Street (between Emmanuel College and the bus station), to discuss papers given by one’s peers. The atmosphere was both convivial and invigorating, but slightly unnerving for the paper-giver, who knew that, if Peter’s reaction was ‘very interesting’, this was not an expression of praise.

Peter counteracted the prevalent association of Latin with the church in the Middle Ages, and the tendency for ‘medieval Latinists’ to be clerics (especially in France). He showed that Latin greatly exceeded the boundaries of theological literature, and that medieval churchmen (and women) were interested in much more than purely ecclesiastical matters. In drawing up a list of participants in a conference on the abbess, Hildegard of Bingen, he wrote (confidentially) « I’m sure one could keep the purely pious people to an absolute minimum ». He was more attracted to extraordinary individuals within the clerical environment – Peter Abelard for the honesty in which he expressed his feelings, and Hildegard for the vividness of her imagination. Peter Lombard, Thomas Aquinas, Alexander of Hales, Duns Scotus and the rest, are not so conspicuous in his writings.

The ability of human beings to express the full range of emotions and their most profound thoughts in beautiful ways, was the focus of Peter’s concern. Thus he was

attracted to love poetry, poetic expressions of philosophical truths, the writings of women, and the expressive intimacy of letters, to all of which he devoted books (from his early work, *The Medieval Love Lyric*, through his *Women Writers of the Middle Ages*, his *Verse with Prose from Petronius to Dante: The Art and Scope of the Mixed Form* and his *Lecturae Dantis*, to his final works on the most poetic of philosophers, Johannes Scotus Eriugena – cf. the title of his essay: « *Theologia veluti quaedam poetria*. Quelques observations sur la fonction des images poétiques chez Jean Scot », in *Jean Scot Érigène et l'histoire de la philosophie*, Paris 1977), and (unfinished) the *Problemata* of Peter Abelard, which were his epistolary answers to Heloise's intimate concerns. He was intent on producing elegant translations of his own, which were faithful precisely because of their elegance, and he was dismissive of the literal translation, which was alright for a crib, but not worthy to be placed opposite the original of a fine example of medieval literature. I quote from a letter he wrote, which, incidentally, is a typical example of his habit of understatement:

[The translation] may always have a slightly outlandish air to it: even when correct, it's an English that doesn't respond to the nuances of [the original author's] thought. [...] [When] an *editio maior* is published, it would be very nice to have a 'crib' of this kind [...] to help a wider range of students with the text – but it isn't quite of a level of English to stand opposite the text in the new Cambridge series [...] for this series it is the sheer command of nuances that will count most.

The 'New Cambridge series' is the series which Peter set up with Cambridge University Press, which he called 'Cambridge Medieval Classics', indicating by the title that there *are* classics in the Middle Ages, written in Latin and Greek, and stating in the description of the series that these classics should be made more accessible, through « versions in lively modern English ». The chosen texts, Peter writes in the preface to the individual books, « are representative of key literary traditions [...] which offer penetrating insights into the culture of medieval Europe. Medieval politics, society, humour, and religion are represented ». This could well be a description of his own works.

His love of language shone through his lectures (e.g. the *Lectura Dantis* that he gave almost every year in Cambridge), from which it was transferred to his books and individual articles (e.g. « L'amor che move il sole e l'altre stelle », *Studi medievali*, 3/6 (1965) – to pick one article among the many that are collected in his *The Medieval Poet and His World* (1984), *Latin and Vernacular Poets of the Middle Ages* (1991), *Sources of Inspiration: Studies in Literary Transformations, 400–1500* (1997), and *Forms and Imaginings from Antiquity to the Fifteenth Century* (2007).

One may say that Peter was very sensitive to the musicality of poetry. Many of the Latin (and other) poems that he studied were undoubtedly sung and/or accompanied by music. In his *The Medieval Lyric* (1968) he had written that « the melodies are an essential complement to the texts; ideally, where the music

survives, it would always be printed together with the words before the discussion of any lyric begins », and, as an appendix to the book he included several examples of the musical accompaniments. He collaborated with the foremost interpreters of medieval music – *Sequentia* – in preparing texts and translations (from 1981 to 2017), and program notes for the LPs that they produced, especially on Hildegard of Bingen, whose *Ordo Virtutum* Peter edited; their last collaboration was concerning the musical settings of the metres of Boethius's *De consolazione Philosophiae*, whose study happened to be the last work that Peter published (a new edition of the whole work). For the conference he organised at the Warburg Institute on Hildegard of Bingen in 1995, he invited Barbara Thornton of *Sequentia* to give a recital. He was always attending concerts both in Cambridge, and in London, and on one occasion, when I was performing in Verdi's *I due Foscari* he told me that this was the twenty-fourth opera of Verdi that he had listened to.

He was also sensitive to visual imagery: writing about the use of colour-imagery (especially in Hildegard), the imagery of trees, and of Paradise. At home his 'card-catalogue' was not a catalogue of his books, but a collection of images on cards: of paintings, sculptures and buildings, and Ursula and he frequently visited art exhibitions.

He was always generous in his praises (e.g. of the Warburg Institute where he was « a long-standing, happy and frequent guest »: Preface to *Hildegard of Bingen*, London 1998), but did not hesitate to criticize other scholars if they failed to meet his standards (of one scholar he wrote: « I have always doubted [x's] capacity for thinking seriously ») and he was particularly hard on any copy-editor who dared to alter the position of one comma. The unprepossessing blue door (once graced by a hanging basket) to 6 Parker Street, Cambridge, was always opened to guests; and one could imagine being in Florence or some other European city as one sat on the first floor balcony enjoying a drink and warm conversation.

Several themes ran throughout his life: Peter Abelard and Heloise, Hildegard of Bingen, Dante, Plato's *Timaeus*, imagination and imagery. But common to much of his writing was the transfer of ideas and the processes of their subtle changes in the course of transfer: how Classical themes were transferred into Medieval literature (including the twelfth-century commentaries on Classical works by Virgil, Macrobius, and Martianus Capella), or how Medieval (Latin) traditions were taken up by Dante (e.g. in *Dante and Medieval Latin Traditions*, Cambridge 1986), not to mention the role of Norse and Celtic (*Growth of Literature: the Sea and the God of the Sea*, with Ursula, Cambridge 1998), and Germanic culture (e.g. *Barbara et antiquissima carmina I. Le caractère de la poésie germanique héroïque II. Waltharius-Gaiferos*, Barcelona 1977, with Ursula). For his *A History of Twelfth-Century Western Philosophy* (Cambridge 1988) he commissioned a chapter on « The Arabic inheritance » from Jean Jolivet. He traced the influence of Arabic Aristotelianism on the intellect in *Medieval Latin and the Rise of European Love-Lyric*, and discerned

Arabic influences in Bernard Silvestris's *Cosmographia* (Leiden 1978). It would not be inappropriate to transfer to Peter Dronke the epithet applied to Idithun *saliens in montibus, transiliens colles* (Song of Songs, 2, v. 8), to which he devoted several pages in his *Imagination in the Late Pagan and Early Christian World* (Florence 2003, p. 44–45). « Jumping over mountains, and leaping over hills » he explored the whole gamut of medieval Latin literature, and made his final bound to heaven in the Spring of 2020.



IN MEMORIAM  
FRANCO CORDERO  
(6.VIII.1928–8.V.2020)

ANGELO D'ORSI  
UNIVERSITY OF TORINO



Franco Cordero, scomparso a Roma, l'8 maggio 2020, era nato il 6 agosto 1928, a Cuneo, e non aveva mai nascosta la sua origine provinciale, anzi proprio di quella provincia, la maggiore d'Italia, chiamata (e lui amava ripeterlo) «Provincia Granda», o semplicemente «la Granda» fu fiero senza cadere mai nel provincialismo. In quel territorio vasto e generoso, socialmente e culturalmente depresso, ma genitore di grandi figure (da Luigi Einaudi a Beppe Fenoglio), egli aveva compiuto i primi studi.

Una lunga vita, la sua. E quanto produttiva. È questo il primo dato che colpisce nella biografia di quest'uomo che si può dire, banalmente, ha vissuto più vite in una. E non sta semplicemente nella ampiezza di quel che ha prodotto, ma nella sua varietà; e se volessimo organizzare il percorso di Franco Cordero potremmo individuare quattro distinti terreni di lavoro: quello giuridico, quello teologico, quello storiografico e infine quello letterario. Non ho indicato l'ambito filosofico in quanto si è trattato, a mio giudizio, piuttosto di un filo conduttore lungo il quale Cordero ha proceduto nei decenni. Si occupasse di diritto, di questioni religiose, o di ricostruzioni storiche o, infine, si esprimesse nella scrittura creativa, egli ha lavorato sempre *en philosophe*.

Era questo il tratto caratteristico dell'eloquio di Cordero, fascinoso e complesso, ricco di parentesi, che erano in realtà altrettante aperture su testi classici, squarci improvvisi e impreveduti su tradizioni di pensiero, dall'antico al moderno, in cui l'ascoltatore o il lettore si trovavano immersi, in un succedersi di citazioni in cui si rischiava di annegare, e per sopravvivere era indispensabile cogliere quelle aperture, che erano inviti alla conoscenza, o all'approfondimento. Il plurilinguismo di Cordero, che si allargava dalle lingue antiche (mostrando

quanto potessero essere vive le cosiddette 'lingue morte') a quelle contemporanee, ti costringeva a un continuo esercizio, faticoso, ma stimolante. Tutto, ogni parola, anche quelle che potevano apparire superflue ai fini del discorso, erano invece necessarie allo scopo della ricostruzione della complessità del reale, e quindi fondamentali per cogliere le infinite sfumature dell'essere, che era, nel pensiero e nella pratica discorsiva di questo scrittore-filosofo, il fondo dell'esistere.

Tutto ciò era possibile grazie all'incredibile mole di erudizione, che era depositata nella mente di Franco Cordero, una mente, come si sarà capito, che spaziava, con una totale scioltezza, dal diritto alla storia, dalla letteratura alle scienze religiose, dalla filologia alla favolistica. Impossibile ricapitolare quante letture, in quante lingue, avesse accumulato Cordero, quante nozioni avesse apprese, quante discipline avesse frequentato, quante lezioni avesse impartito, quante dotte conferenze avesse tenuto, lui professore di Procedura penale – dicono il più grande sulla scena – sempre da maestro, docente a Torino, Urbino, Milano, Trieste, Roma, alla Sapienza, dove concluse la sua carriera.

Parlare di erudizione, tuttavia può essere fuorviante: Cordero era tutt'altro che il classico 'pozzo di scienza', l'erudito che sa tutto di tutto, e assume come propria ottica il discettare negli infiniti campi del suo sapere, estraneo alla vita sociale, al dibattito pubblico, alla dimensione civile; questo ci indurrebbe a vedere nell'erudizione l'opposto della cultura, ma in realtà con Cordero possiamo arrivare una mirabile fusione della erudizione, intesa come accumulazione di conoscenze, con la cultura, intesa come costruzione di responsabilità, acquisizione della consapevolezza della dimensione collettiva, sociale dell'intelletto umano.

Nel flusso incessante di sapere, anche nei momenti più aulici dell'argomentazione affiorava una ironia sottile, un sarcasmo gramscianamente appassionato, che si esprimeva in una forma lessicale raffinatissima, che mescolava arcaismi e neologismi, talora di sua invenzione. E la sua opera è un miracolo di 'traducibilità', intesa ancora in senso gramsciano, di comunicazione tra campi del sapere, di connessione e reciproca implementazione di ambiti. Nessuno come lui ha saputo coniugare discipline distanti quali gli studi religiosi e quelli giuridici, nessuno ha avuto la capacità di studiare le leggi con chiavi linguistiche e filosofiche, o analizzare i testi teologici con lenti storiografiche e giuridiche. Sta in questo la grandezza, cioè, appunto, l'unicità di questo studioso: basti al riguardo fare menzione del trattato *Procedura penale* (1966, variamente riedito), libro di straordinaria maestria tecnica e di capacità analitica, in cui l'autore coniugava un insigne magistero giuridico con la sua già evocata erudizione, la quale, accanto all'attenzione alla filologia, già allora lo avvicinava ai territori propri del lavoro storiografico. Quella peraltro era opera didattica, che ebbe successo tra gli addetti alla materia, che però persone colte potevano

apprezzare come meritava. A un pubblico via via più vario e vasto furono rivolti numerosi altri titoli, quali *Gli osservanti. Fenomenologia delle norme* (Giuffrè 1967, riedito da Aragno nel 2008), o *Criminalia. Nascita dei sistemi penali* (Laterza, 1985) e la monumentale biografia di Savonarola (sottotitolo: *Vita calamitosa. 1454-1492*, Laterza, in 4 volumi), sul finire degli anni Ottanta (ripubblicato da Bollati Boringhieri, 2009). Un'opera che non può essere definita se non un capolavoro storiografico, fonte incredibile di informazioni per chi voglia conoscere la vita pubblica fiorentina, ma anche dei costumi, della sensibilità collettiva, del clima umano, alla fine del Medioevo. E ovviamente non si può dimenticare Studioso, commentatore, narratore, Cordero incarnava anche, ma vorrei dire prima di tutto, l'intransigenza morale e intellettuale, l'uomo che non cercava lo scontro ma non si tirava indietro sulle questioni di principio, capace di rilanciare fino allo stremo. Fu così che venne espulso dalla Università Cattolica di Milano, dopo la pubblicazione del libro *Gli osservanti. Fenomenologia delle norme* e l'aspra critica contenuta in quel testo alle gerarchie vaticane.

Erano i tardi anni Sessanta, e nella Chiesa si stava affermando un lento, ma robusto movimento anticonciliare: Cordero si batteva, anche, per una Chiesa capace di rinnovarsi, da teologo, preparatissimo ma radicale, attento alla persistenza e soprattutto all'autenticità del messaggio religioso. In tal senso il suo commento alla *Lettera ai Romani* di Paolo di Tarso (nel libro *L'Epistola ai Romani. Antropologia del cristianesimo paolino*, Einaudi 1972), è uno studio teologico, fedelissimo sul piano storico-filologico, ma originale, per qualcuno al limite dell'eresia, nella sua temeraria analisi della *Lettera*, realizzando, in definitiva, un testo politico, nel senso più alto.

Nel lungo periodo dominato, in Italia, da Silvio Berlusconi – periodo tremendo sul piano spirituale – Cordero diede il meglio come notista politica, riservando al 'cavaliere' (come veniva chiamato correntemente, onore che poi gli venne revocato, dopo la condanna definitiva) l'appellativo di 'caimano', che poi gli rimase appiccicato. E Cordero seguì passo passo il Berlusconi-caimano nelle quotidiane grottesche *performances* politiche e morali, quasi braccandolo, in punta di diritto, di etica pubblica, di buon gusto. I lunghi, dotti articoli su « La Repubblica », ritratto dolentissimo dell'Italia, trovarono posto poi in volumi quali *Le strane regole del Signor B* e *Nere lune d'Italia* (Garzanti, 2003-2004), che serviranno da guida agli storici futuri.

In fondo Cordero con quegli scritti sferzanti faceva intendere, a chi aveva orecchie per intendere, che Berlusconi, con la sua stessa personalità, era lo specchio iperrealistico d'Italia. Di qui l'idea di un originalissimo controcanto al discorso di Giacomo Leopardi *Sopra lo stato presente dei costumi degli italiani* del 1824: si era nel 2011, e Cordero nel suo lunghissimo commento (*Pensieri d'un italiano d'oggi*, in copertina, ma nel testo è *Gli ultimi due secoli della malata*, Bollati Boringhieri, 2011) con amara attitudine confermava le sconfortate diagnosi del

Recanatese sulla 'scostumatezza' del popolo italiano. O si scorra, sulla scia, *Morbo italico* (edito da Laterza nel 2013), una lettura avvilente e insieme riconfortante, se vi erano italiani come Franco Cordero. Del suo e nostro tempo, Cordero ha saputo cogliere, con finezza di analisi e lungimiranza di giudizio, alcune tendenze, con una specifica attenzione ai fenomeni degenerativi della vita pubblica e alla manomissione di taluni elementi portanti della complessa architettura dei sistemi costituzionali; ma va sottolineata altresì la sua capacità di ricostruire, attraverso l'individuazione di una serie di indizi, dietro l'abnorme quotidiano, movimenti di lungo periodo, che rivelano vere e proprie patologie del potere.

Negli ultimi anni Cordero aveva scritto meno sui giornali, ma non aveva certo smesso di lavorare, in particolare a un romanzo, *La tredicesima cattedra*, uscito postumo presso l'editore La nave di Teseo. L'autore non lo poté sfogliare, ma noi potremo consolarci della sua scomparsa prendendolo tra le mani, avviando l'usuale, istruttivo quanto impegnativo confronto dialettico con Franco Cordero e quello che oggi devo, purtroppo, chiamare 'l'ultimo suo libro'.

IN MEMORIAM  
MIGUEL CRUZ HERNÁNDEZ  
(15.I.1920–25.V.2020)

RAFAEL RAMÓN GUERRERO  
COMPLUTENSE UNIVERSITY OF MADRID



Las difíciles y pavorosas circunstancias por las que España y otros países del mundo atravesaban en el mes de marzo hicieron que pasase casi inadvertida la muerte de uno de nuestros más grandes estudiosos de la filosofía en el mundo islámico, D. Miguel Cruz Hernández. Fue el día 25 de marzo, dos meses y diez días después de haber cumplido los cien años, pues había nacido en Málaga el 15 de enero de 1920. Bien pronto sus padres maestros se trasladaron a Granada, donde realizó sus estudios universitarios y donde descubrió la filosofía y los estudios árabes. La suya ha sido una vida centenaria dedicada toda ella a la lectura y al estudio. Digo a la lectura, porque como confesaba el propio D. Miguel, desde muy niño se le despertó « el vicio de la lectura cuando iba a cumplir los seis años ». Desde entonces y hasta prácticamente el día de su muerte, D. Miguel vivió en los libros y para los libros, pero también para la actividad social y política, como lo muestra su participación en diversas tareas dedicadas por una parte a la sociedad desde muy temprano en su vida (miembro de la Federación Universitaria Escolar y miembro de las Juventudes Socialistas Unificadas), habiendo desempeñado notables cargos políticos (Alcalde de Salamanca, 1959–1962, Gobernador Civil de Albacete, 1962–1968), y, por otra, a la universidad, en la que desempeñó su labor docente desde los veinticuatro años de edad, cuando en 1944 comenzó a impartir clases de filosofía en la Facultad de Filosofía y Letras de la Universidad de Granada, en la que se había licenciado en filología semítica en junio de 1943.

La publicación *Anthropos. Revista de documentación científica de la cultura*, (86/87) 1988, estuvo dedicada expresamente a *M. Cruz Hernández. Pensamiento Islámico. Investigación de su tradición y actualidad*, donde, además de artículos publicados por algunos de sus alumnos glosando sus virtudes y sus aportaciones, D. Miguel nos

ofrecía una autobiografía, « Autopercepción intelectual de un proceso histórico. *Itinerarium vitae in philosophiam* », en la que pasa revista a su itinerario intelectual, comenzando con las siguientes palabras: « Mi gusto por la filosofía nació en los duros años de la Guerra Civil (1936–1939) ». Un gusto que se inició con la lectura de las obras de Kant *Lo bello y lo sublime* y *La paz perpetua*. Desde entonces, a Kant lo « puse en el altar de mi particular filosofía ». Pero fueron sus maestros en la Facultad de Filosofía y Letras de Granada, José Cortés Grau y Enrique Gómez Arboleya, quienes definitivamente le orientaron hacia el saber filosófico, trabajando en el pensamiento de Franz Brentano, a quien consagró lo que debería haber sido su tesis doctoral. Pero rechazada por la Universidad de Madrid, única que concedía en aquellos momentos el título de doctor, con la peregrina razón de que su licenciatura era en filología semítica, hubo de proponer un nuevo tema de investigación para la tesis, recayendo su estudio en el filósofo musulmán Avicena y en su metafísica, porque con él aunaba su especialización en lenguas semíticas y su interés por la filosofía. El estudio de Brentano le había llevado a una inicial publicación *Contribución al estudio de la intencionalidad en la filosofía árabe*, aparecido en el *Boletín de la Universidad de Granada*, en el año 1945. Al año siguiente, en este mismo *Boletín*, daba a la luz un artículo sobre la filosofía de Martin Heidegger, fruto de sus lecturas del filósofo alemán. En diciembre de 1946, por fin, leía su tesis doctoral en la Universidad madrileña, a la que en 1947 se le concedió el premio extraordinario. La tesis, con el título *La Metafísica de Avicena*, fue publicada por la Universidad de Granada en 1949 y los textos avicenianos que había traducido en ella aparecieron, anotados, bajo el epígrafe *Avicena « Sobre Metafísica »*. *Antología*, en Madrid, Ed. Revista de Occidente, 1950.

Hay que reseñar ahora que, como él mismo narra, su interés por el pensamiento islámico nació cuando su profesora de árabe, D<sup>a</sup> Joaquina Eguaras Ibáñez, la tan admirada y querida profesora que nos enseñó las letras árabes a muchos de nosotros en la Escuela de Estudios Árabes y en su despacho del Museo Arqueológico de Granada, del que era directora, le orientó hacia una beca vacante en la Escuela de Estudios Árabes, creada a instancias de D. Emilio García Gómez, catedrático de árabe en la Universidad granadina desde el año 1930.

Tras diversos viajes y estancias en el extranjero, D. Miguel obtuvo la cátedra de Filosofía en la Universidad de Salamanca en 1950, ciudad en la que « pronto fui un salmantino más » y en donde durante más de veinticinco años desempeñó su « labor docente y de investigación en las Facultades de Filosofía y Letras y de Medicina y en la Universidad Pontificia », enseñando filosofía, historia de la filosofía y psicología, así como cursos sobre pensamiento islámico. Recorrer la vida de D. Miguel es tener que diversificarse necesariamente en múltiples direcciones: desde el arabismo y la islamología a la filosofía, a la medicina y a la psicología, sin olvidar su paso por el Instituto Hispano-Árabe de Cultura, del que fue nombrado subdirector en 1954, siendo director D. Emilio García Gómez. En

1976 se trasladó a la Universidad Autónoma de Madrid, donde continuó su docencia en el Departamento de Estudios Árabes e Islámicos, impartiendo la disciplina de Pensamiento Islámico, incluso después de jubilarse, ya como Catedrático Emérito.

A lo largo de su vida Cruz Hernández ha investigado y publicado sobre aquellas materias que tuvo que impartir. Así, además de numerosos artículos sobre Suárez, Brentano, Heidegger, Unamuno, García Morente, Kant y Newton, San Anselmo, etc., publicó también como libros unas *Lecciones de Psicología* en 1960, reimpresas varias veces, y *El pensamiento de Ramon Llull*, en 1977, por el que entró a formar parte como *Magister* de la *Maioricensis Schola Lullistica* establecida en Palma de Mallorca.

Pero, como ya he dicho, uno de los más fructíferos campos en los que ha trabajado y en los que nos ha iluminado con su saber ha sido el de la filosofía en el Islam: desde su primer trabajo hasta sus últimos estudios, la vida de Cruz Hernández ha sido la de una consagración continua a la historia de la filosofía árabe, dando a conocer multitud de aspectos y facetas de esta filosofía, abarcando prácticamente la totalidad de este campo de trabajo y de estudio. Ya he señalado sus estudios sobre la metafísica de Avicena. A este autor le consagró diversos trabajos a lo largo de los años, incluso con notables traducciones de sus textos como su versión de la *Qasîda fî-l-nafs (Qasîda sobre el alma)* (1951) o los *Tres escritos esotéricos* (1998), donde vierte al español la *Risâla de Hayy b. Yaqzân*, la *Risâla del pájaro*, de nuevo la *Qasîda del alma*, y dos Apéndices: un resumen de la *Qissa* de la *Risâla de Salâmân y Absâl*, según el texto de al-Tûsî y dos capítulos de la segunda parte del *Kitâb al-Ishârat wa-l-Tanbihât (Libro de las indicaciones y advertencias)*.

Su obra más importante, y aquella por la que debe ser considerado un verdadero maestro de quienes se dedican a la historia de la filosofía en el mundo islámico, está formada por las diversas *Historias* consagradas a esta filosofía. Primero, su *Historia de la Filosofía Española. Filosofía Hispano-musulmana*, que fue premio Bonilla San Martín y que apareció, en dos volúmenes, en 1957. Después, su obra *La filosofía árabe*, publicada en la Editorial Revista de Occidente en 1963. Dieciocho años después aparecía su gran *Historia del pensamiento en el mundo islámico*, fruto de su madurez y resultado de una larga meditación sobre este pensamiento, de la que hay traducción italiana y francesa, revisada y publicada de nuevo en la década de los noventa. En fin, su *Historia del pensamiento en al-Andalus*, publicada en Granada en 1985 para la Biblioteca de cultura andaluza, en la que adapta para un público más amplio los contenidos principales de la filosofía andalusí expuestos en su obra anterior. Son obras de conjunto que ningún otro arabista que haya estudiado la filosofía en el Islam se ha atrevido a hacer. No son meras recopilaciones de lo investigado por otros, sino que su autor se ha servido de las fuentes directamente, ofreciendo el fruto de sus propias investigaciones. Realiza en ellas una ambientación histórica de los autores

estudiados, describiendo a la par la propia cultura musulmana de la época en que ellos vivieron. Muestra una gran competencia en el conocimiento de los distintos aspectos que configuran esa cultura: teológico, jurídico, místico, etc. Para situar en su preciso lugar el movimiento de la Falsafa, estudia los orígenes del pensamiento islámico y las distintas corrientes aparecidas a lo largo de su historia. Destaca la influencia ejercida por la filosofía griegas en especial el neoplatonismo y el aristotelismo, y sitúa en su contexto real las grandes manifestaciones de la Falsafa oriental: la obra de al-Kindí, el pensamiento de al-Fârâbî, la gran sistematización de Avicena y la reacción teológica de Algazel. Y, en fin, su tratamiento de la filosofía andalusí es el más completo de cuantas Historias de la Filosofía en el Islam se han escrito hasta el día de hoy. Recoge las diversas tendencias de pensamiento del Islam andalusí; estudia en su marco histórico las características de los grandes nombres de la filosofía en al-Andalus, desde Ibn Masarra hasta Ibn al-Sîd de Badajoz y Abû Salt de Denia, pasando por Ibn Hazm de Córdoba. Dedicó notables capítulos a Avempace y a Ibn Tufayl, reconociendo que fueron ellos los que dieron la impronta definitiva a la filosofía andalusí. De Averroes analiza todos los aspectos de su doctrina y su significación histórica. Aun cuando reconoce que con Averroes podía terminar cumplidamente la historia de la filosofía en el Islam, considera también algunos otros desarrollos del pensamiento islámico con autores como Ibn ‘Arabî de Murcia o Ibn al-Jatîb, el visir granadino. También estudia la evolución y el proceso histórico de las corrientes esotéricas en Oriente, la gnosofía shî‘î, la meditación histórica y política de Ibn Jaldûn y lo completa con una amplia visión del pensamiento islámico hasta nuestros días. También hay que destacar en esta obra el tratamiento que D. Miguel ofrece del pensamiento judío, en especial del sefardí y de la síntesis teológica-filosófica de Maimónides, autor al que ha prestado atención en otras publicaciones y Congresos, precisamente porque estos filósofos judíos desarrollaron su quehacer filosófico dentro del mundo islámico y tomando como fuentes, además de sus libros sagrados, la tarea realizada por la filosofía árabe.

Otra línea de investigación y estudio es el que quizá fuera su proyecto más querido, la filosofía y el pensamiento de Averroes, el filósofo cordobés del que hasta hoy no existe un estudio tan completo como el que le tributó en 1986, publicado en Córdoba y titulado *Abû l-Walîd ibn Rushd (Averroes). Vida, obra, pensamiento, influencia*, reeditado en 1997. Recoge en él, con la minuciosidad propia de un gran científico, todas las novedades y aportaciones con que Averroes contribuyó a engrandecer el pensamiento de Aristóteles, desarrollándolo en la línea que él creía la más verdadera. Pero D. Miguel no se limita sólo al estudio de su filosofía, sino que se ocupa también del Averroes médico y del Averroes jurista. Aparte de sus numerosos trabajos sobre Averroes y sobre la recepción del averroísmo por los latinos – única continuación que tuvo la filosofía del cordobés –, también le debemos la versión castellana de la traducción

hebrea, perdido el texto árabe original, de la *Exposición a la República*, que apareció en 1986 y de la que ya circulan varias ediciones.

D. Miguel fue también miembro de la *Société Internationale pour l'Étude de la Philosophie Médiévale*, Sociedad fundada en Lovaina en 1958 que nació con la finalidad de promover el estudio del pensamiento filosófico en la Edad Media y la colaboración entre las instituciones y los investigadores que se ocupan de este pensamiento. Habiendo la Sociedad encargado a España que organizara el V Congreso Internacional, D. Miguel fue nombrado Presidente del Congreso y, junto con los Profesores Salvador Gómez Nogales y José Antonio García-Junceda, emprendió la enorme tarea de preparar toda la impedimenta necesaria para la celebración de este Congreso que, con el título *Encuentro de culturas en la filosofía medieval*, tuvo lugar en Madrid, Córdoba y Granada, entre los días 5 al 12 de septiembre de 1972. Más tarde, y de nuevo gracias a las gestiones de D. Miguel, a la sazón Director General de Cultura Popular y Presidente del Instituto Nacional del Libro Español (1974–1977), se pudieron publicar las Actas de Congreso en dos volúmenes (Madrid, Editora Nacional, 1979).

Muchas otras actividades se podrían señalar en el haber de D. Miguel Cruz Hernández, desde su ocupación universitaria hasta su participación en Congresos y reuniones científicas y académicas nacionales e internacionales, además de su pertenencia a otras sociedades u organismos científicos. Maestro extraordinario de quien hemos aprendido mucho de lo que sabemos, hombre entregado a su quehacer intelectual con una profunda dedicación y amor, persona modesta y sencilla, afable y amena, sabedor de multitud de anécdotas de la historia de España; quienes le hemos tratado y viajado con él, lo recordaremos siempre. Que descanse en paz y que podamos reunirnos con él allá donde esté.



IN MEMORIAM  
FEDERICO CORRIENTE  
(14.XI.1940–16.VI.2020)\*

JUAN PEDRO MONFERRER-SALA  
UNIVERSITY OF CÓRDOBA



*These blue days and this childhood sun ...* This is the last verse written by Antonio Machado, found by his brother José in the pocket of the poet's threadbare coat when he arrived in Collioure in freezing February 1939. Professor Federico Corriente passed away some months ago and this brought to my memory this lonely, unfinished verse, as the last works that Professor Corriente had been working on have remained.

When I first met Professor Corriente, it was a freezing day. It happened in Granada, a cold February day, with a blue sky that cast its light on the pavement of Gran Vía. There he was, humming I do not know which aria, with a few sheets in his hand, standing next to the doorway of a building. He did not allow me to get to where he was, but coming forward he came to meet me, he shook my hand and said with that jovial tone that characterized his always interesting conversations. How are you? – he said – I was looking forward to meeting you. A kind of electric shock ran through all my bones. Why should someone of intellectual stature like him need to know me? I felt a strange feeling invading me, most likely by his imposing presence. Yes, that was it.

But Federico – as he wanted that we call him by his first name, once camaraderie had been established (how he liked this term!) – was like that. He gave everything for his friends, he gave himself away thoroughly, one would say that he went out of his way for that state of full camaraderie that he liked so

---

\* This text, with slight changes, is the English version of the Spanish original published the day after Federico Corriente's death on the website of Casa Árabe <<https://www.casaarabe.es/noticias-arabes/show/fallece-el-arabista-federico-corriente>> (last accessed 11 March 2020).

much. That is why he always fled from the idea of forming a 'school', but rather replaced it with a group of friends, of comrades. And that is what he has done during all these years. But not only for that, but also for as many colleagues or students as were interested in this or that subject of Arabic or Semitic studies, whether it was a linguistic, philological, historical or literary matter, he was always ready, with his vast wisdom, to impart knowledge and teaching, both inside and outside of Spain. Because Federico was, he still is, a Master, a great Master. What would have become of many of us, some directly, others indirectly, without his teachings, without his enormous personality, which encompassed everything wherever he was?

He was, and he still is, a great Master, like those masters who know themselves to be a link in a chain that should not be cut off. Like those masters who know their role well and dedicate themselves with courage to fulfilling the task that life has entrusted to them: to pass on their knowledge in the best possible way so that those who come after them do the same, thus honoring the well-known Latin sentence *Corona magistri discipulus est*. And it is not an easy matter to fulfill, but Federico knew that this was his role and he gave himself to it with all his strength, with all his intelligence, which was certainly impressive, with a prodigious memory and innate abilities, surely inherited from his parents, teachers, who did a formidable job in his early years. And all this in a disinterested way, without expecting anything in return, without wishing to have 'his school'. « Spain and I are like that », a famous sentence he used to say to describe his selfless interest. He was, he still is, certainly unique.

Federico has given us an immense legacy, both in teaching and research. His potential was already glimpsed in his PhD Thesis – as unusual in our country as formidable – defended on June 23, 1967, with which he not only left an imprint of the enormous budding researcher potential that he already exhibited, but he also showed that he was a thousand light-years from the academic reality around him. His stay at Dropsie University (Philadelphia), a determining factor in his academic education, as he liked to remember, was essential for his later activity as a linguist. After the American period and his return to Spain, he undertook a decisive task for Arabic studies in our country, as he graciously provided dictionaries, grammars and lexical glossaries by frequency index with which to face, with methodological accuracy, the learning and teaching of the Arabic language. We all owe him so much for this effort – as it consumed part of his energy in some key years of his research activity – that it is difficult to determine if we have duly thanked him for all this. However, he was aware of the need for these materials in the Spanish language and did not hesitate one iota to undertake this endeavor, certainly in an exemplary and fruitful way, like everything he did throughout his fruitful life.

And despite this titanic work to which we all owe so much, in no way did he neglect his research. Quite the contrary, an overwhelming bibliography, a collection of highly rigorous studies and great scientific value describe his intense and rich academic career. A pioneer of linguistic studies on the Arabic language in Spain, and also of comparative Semitics, he has endowed Arabic studies with works that are difficult to overcome in the field of lexicography and of course on the Andalusí dialect. But not only this, since we have, among others, his enormous task dedicated to translations and studies of literary texts, from the earliest times, the *Mu'allaqāt*, to modern texts (Tawfīq al-Ḥakīm), passing through Andalusí strophic poetry (*ḥaraǧāt*, *muwaššahāt*, *azǧāl*), as well as work in other fields such as editing and translation of sources, among which the *Muqtabis* of Ibn Ḥayyān should even be mentioned. All of this was duly recognized with his appointment as a member of both the Academy of the Arabic Language in Cairo, and the Royal Academy of the Spanish Language.

Prof. Federico Corriente has started his last journey after enjoying fruitful years with his wife Asun, companion and confidant of so many experiences... Prof. Corriente began his journey in the difficult post-war days, when the month of November of the year 1940 was fourteen. And he left us when spring was still smiling, on June 16, 2020, a blue day, like those of his childhood spent in Granada, Valencia and Tenerife... He left with a smile, with his seraphic smile. Because Federico was, he still is, unique, irreplaceable, unrepeatable. It will take time to find, if it ever comes, someone like him. The void that he leaves, the emptiness we feel is immense, like someone who loses his father and feels alone and helpless. That is how we feel, but in some way we are also happy, because he has bequeathed us a knowledge that we have an obligation to preserve and, to the extent that each of us can, increase it, as he liked to say, thereby honoring his memory and his teaching.

Rest in peace Professor Federico Corriente.



IN MEMORIAM  
MARC FUMAROLI  
(10. VI. 1932–24. VI. 2020)

JEAN BALSAMO  
UNIVERSITY OF REIMS CHAMPAGNE-ARDENNE



Le grand historien de la littérature, Marc Fumaroli, de l'Académie française, s'est éteint le 24 juin dernier, à Paris. Il avait poursuivi jusque dans ses derniers jours une activité savante que la vieillesse n'avait pas interrompue, non plus que la longue et douloureuse maladie qui allait l'emporter.

Né à Marseille, le 10 juin 1932, dans une famille d'origine corse, Marc Fumaroli passa son enfance au Maroc, alors sous protectorat français. Il termina à la Sorbonne ses études supérieures, qu'il avait commencées à Aix-en-Provence. Reçu à l'agrégation de lettres en 1958, il fit son service militaire comme professeur à Saint-Cyr, avant de servir lui-même en qualité d'officier dans le Constantinois pendant la guerre d'Algérie. À son retour, après avoir été pensionnaire de la Fondation Thiers en 1963, il fut nommé assistant puis chargé d'enseignement à la faculté des lettres de Lille (1966–1976). En juin 1976, il soutint à la Sorbonne sa thèse pour le doctorat d'État, préparée sous la direction de René Pintard, l'historien du libertinage érudit. En 1976, il fut élu maître de conférences à l'Université Paris-IV Sorbonne, puis professeur en 1978. En 1986, sa carrière professorale fut couronnée par sa nomination au Collège de France, où il occupa la chaire « Rhétorique et société en Europe (XVI<sup>e</sup>–XVII<sup>e</sup> siècles) », créée pour lui. En 1995, il fut élu à l'Académie française. Enfin, le 30 janvier 1998, il fut reçu à l'Académie des inscriptions et belles-lettres. Membre étranger de l'*Accademia dei Lincei* (Rome, depuis 1997) et de plusieurs institutions étrangères, ancien président de la Société des Amis du Louvre (1996–2016), il avait reçu le prix Balzan en 2002 pour l'ensemble de son œuvre et un projet de recherche consacré à la République des lettres. Grand officier dans l'ordre national de la Légion d'Honneur, dans lequel il avait été nommé chevalier dès 1993, Marc Fumaroli était titulaire de nombreuses décorations françaises et étrangères. Il reçut les

honneurs civils et militaires lors de ses obsèques, célébrées le 1<sup>er</sup> juillet dernier, à Paris, en l'église Saint-Germain-des-Prés.

Si le *Figaro* célébrait en Marc Fumaroli « le grand esprit français », défenseur de la langue française et des études classiques, d'autres ne lui pardonnaient ni ce qu'ils dénonçaient comme son « élitisme », ni la sévère critique des impostures à laquelle il s'était consacré depuis un quart de siècle et qui heurtait tous les conformismes culturels de la modernité. En sa personne, la presse française et étrangère croyait rendre hommage, — un hommage parfois réticent —, à un « intellectuel ». La plupart des commentateurs s'étaient arrêtés aux arguments polémiques de *l'État culturel*, publié en 1992, un ouvrage qui connut un grand succès et qui fut immédiatement traduit en plusieurs langues, dont le japonais. Ils négligeaient le contexte du livre, rédigé sous la présidence de François Mitterrand et visant la démesure des chantiers présidentiels (l'opéra Bastille, la BnF, la pyramide du Louvre). Ils ignoraient aussi les approfondissements érudits apportés par l'auteur dix-sept ans plus tard dans *Paris-New York et retour* (2009). Cet ambitieux ouvrage consacré au statut des arts visuels dans la culture moderne, conçu avec la rigueur, la disposition et la documentation d'une thèse, mais rédigé avec la liberté d'écriture d'une relation de voyage, prenait sens en relation à *L'Âge de l'éloquence* (1980), dont il était à la fois le pendant et le prolongement, ressortissant à une même méthode historique et à une même mémoire.

En réalité, Marc Fumaroli, même s'il avait longtemps participé à la rédaction de la revue *Commentaire*, et s'il ne refusait pas d'écrire pour des magazines, n'était pas, *stricto sensu*, un 'intellectuel', à la manière d'un Zola, d'un Sartre, ni même d'un Foucault. En tout cas, chaque fois qu'il s'était engagé publiquement (pour la défense de la langue française, la survie de l'enseignement des langues anciennes, la définition de la culture), c'était dans son domaine de compétence, dont il respectait strictement les limites, sans témoigner d'aucune préférence partisane. Sa personnalité publique était l'aboutissement d'une généalogie spirituelle plus longue et plus respectable que celle de l'intellectuel. Il était un *lettré*, peut-être le dernier grand lettré français, l'héritier d'une tradition séculaire vouée aux belles-lettres, dont il avait accumulé les trésors de beauté et d'humanité, mais aussi l'historien de cette même tradition lettrée, dont, avec une minutie de bénédictin, il récapitula les titres et les dignités au moment où elle était en voie de disparition. Et à la différence de ses prédécesseurs, un Chateaubriand, auquel il consacra un ouvrage magistral, les Goncourt, Valéry, ou même Jean d'Ormesson, dont il préfaça l'édition des romans pour la Bibliothèque de la Pléiade, Marc Fumaroli était avant tout un savant et un professeur.

Dans les hommages récents rendus à Marc Fumaroli, la part reconnue au professeur a été la plus discrète, moins sans doute en raison de la perte de prestige social de cette qualité, que du passage du temps, qui aura fait oublier la

figure du professeur, sinon pour ceux qui avaient pu suivre ses premiers séminaires et ceux qui, moins nombreux encore, avaient eu le privilège de compter parmi ses élèves, en particulier les quelques doctorants de la Sorbonne dont il avait dirigé les thèses. Peu d'autres professeurs en France avaient assuré alors une direction aussi attentive et régulière, avaient consacré à leurs doctorants autant d'attention que Marc Fumaroli, en de longues séances de travail qui se prolongeaient en conversations savantes. Sa carrière a été une carrière académique, avant d'être celle d'un académicien; c'est dans ses fonctions de professeur qu'il a donné le plus profond de lui-même, c'est de cette fonction qu'il a tiré son magistère. La chaire au Collège de France elle-même était le prolongement de l'enseignement universitaire, suivant une même éthique de la parole juste, dans une même conception de la transmission du savoir et de son partage, sous les formes complémentaires et non antagonistes de la solennité du cours magistral et de la convivialité du séminaire. Pendant de longues années, en parallèle à ses activités françaises, Marc Fumaroli enseigna à l'étranger, en particulier en qualité de *professor at large* à l'Université de Chicago (1997–2006). La qualité de ses cours, mais aussi sa disponibilité, la liberté de sa conversation, sa civilité française enchantaient ses étudiants et, tout académicien qu'il était, il se pliait tout naturellement aux obligations pédagogiques qui incombaient à un professeur. Il ne se sentait nulle part ailleurs plus à l'aise et plus actif que sur ce campus, entre ses cours, qui scandaient ses semaines comme autant d'événements soigneusement préparés, et la bibliothèque dont il revenait chaque soir chargé des livres qui allaient occuper ses nuits.

Le magistère et l'autorité du professeur prenaient appui sur l'activité du savant. Celle-ci fut poursuivie pendant plus d'un demi-siècle et élargie de façon systématique, selon une méthode rigoureuse; ses résultats, mis à l'épreuve de la voix et de la discussion à travers les cours et les conférences qu'il donnait, furent sans cesse repris, corrigés, précisés. Ils firent la matière de publications variées qui constituèrent, pour certaines, de véritables pierres milliaires du savoir, et qui, en dépit de l'extraordinaire érudition mise en œuvre et exposée en une langue hautaine et souvent allusive, surent toucher des lecteurs bien plus nombreux que les seuls spécialistes des lettres: outre *L'Âge de l'éloquence* (1980) et *Paris-New York et retour* (2009), on mentionnera *Le Poète et le roi. Jean de La Fontaine en son siècle* (1997), *Chateaubriand. Poésie et terreur* (2003), *Exercices de lecture. De Rabelais à Paul Valéry* (2006), *La République des lettres* (2015).

Le terme *savant*, tel qu'il acceptait pour lui et pour décrire l'activité lettrée qu'il étudiait en un mouvement réflexif, était porteur d'un *ethos* particulier, qu'éclairaient l'italien *studioso* et l'anglais *scholar*. Parlant de ses propres recherches, Marc Fumaroli, théoricien du 'loisir', lettré ou savant, dont il fit une des clés d'interprétation de la création littéraire de la Renaissance au XIX<sup>e</sup> siècle, écartait une trop vulgaire référence à des 'travaux', pour les présenter

modestement comme de simples exercices d'histoire et de critique littéraires, en rappelant qu'ils étaient avant tout le résultat de ses joies de lecteur. Son domaine, dans lequel il avait compétence, et dont il ne cessait de défendre la légitimité, était la littérature, non pas réduite à l'indigente conception contemporaine bornée à la fiction romanesque ou théâtrale, mais comprise dans son extension la plus compréhensive et dans son histoire; son ambition était l'intelligence, la compréhension la plus profonde et la plus large de la littérature, et partant, à travers elle, l'intelligence de l'homme, dont elle reste un moyen de connaissance et de formation privilégié: *literae humaniores*.

Auteur d'une monumentale thèse d'État traitant des « *res literariae* à l'âge classique », de premières études portant sur le théâtre de Corneille et d'une monographie consacrée à La Fontaine, Marc Fumaroli reste souvent considéré comme un 'spécialiste' du XVII<sup>e</sup> siècle et de l'âge classique, ainsi que de la rhétorique. L'intitulé même de la chaire qu'il a occupée au Collège de France pouvait contribuer à enfermer sa notoriété dans un cadre chronologique et disciplinaire aussi restrictif, même s'il élargissait l'étude de la rhétorique en l'associant à celle de la 'société'. En réalité, il ne s'est jamais senti tenu aux limites de telles spécialités, qui ne sont que des catégories académiques et non pas des disciplines, dans le cadre universitaire français, où l'on enseigne encore généralement la littérature par périodes, et où l'étude du XVII<sup>e</sup> siècle a longtemps occupé une place centrale dans l'historiographie littéraire, en bénéficiant par réfraction du prestige accordé à son objet, confondu avec le 'Grand Siècle'. Il se consacra longtemps à l'étude de cette époque, en conciliant un goût personnel et le choix d'un sujet de thèse, qui le conduisit à passer du théâtre à l'éloquence, dans le cadre d'une carrière et de ses codes, allant jusqu'à diriger la revue *XVII<sup>e</sup> siècle*. Mais sous cette docilité apparente, il sut renouveler en profondeur à la fois l'interprétation des œuvres et celle de ce siècle lui-même dans son ensemble, un siècle protéiforme, dont il aimait le génie 'satyrique' et la liberté créatrice plus que le despotisme de Richelieu et de Louis XIV. Il réévalua tout le système esthétique, moral et politique, bâti par la tradition critique. La conception d'un âge de l'éloquence et de sa diversité des styles, lui permit en particulier de résoudre la contradiction entre classicisme et 'baroque' et d'écarter définitivement cette notion anhistorique pour comprendre les réalités esthétiques françaises. De même qu'il s'affranchit de tout conformisme dans l'appréciation d'un siècle qu'il ne jugeait grand que là où sa grandeur était discrète, Marc Fumaroli ne cessa de franchir des limites de sa spécialité. Il le fit ni en généraliste, auteur d'ouvrages de synthèse, ni en dilettante, à l'occasion de quelques excursions dans des champs voisins de celle-ci, en amont, l'Antiquité tardive et le XVI<sup>e</sup> siècle, en aval, l'époque des Lumières et le XIX<sup>e</sup> siècle, ou encore plus nettement excentrés, la Rome post-tridentine, à la connaissance desquels il offrit des contributions majeures consacrées à Boèce, à la culture de cour sous

Henri III, à Montaigne, à Caylus, à Chateaubriand ou aux Goncourt. Il le fit selon une conception ambitieuse et compréhensive qu'il avait de sa spécialité, et en vertu même de la méthode qu'il avait mise en œuvre, des résultats qu'elle avait permis et des prolongements que ceux-ci demandaient. Son domaine d'investigation et de compétence était l'ensemble de l'espace littéraire, et il s'élargissait tout naturellement pour lui aux formes symboliques et aux arts visuels.

La méthode mise en œuvre par Marc Fumaroli dans ses recherches était celle de l'*histoire littéraire*, héritée de Gustave Lanson, qui lui avait donné son acception la plus dynamique. Cette méthode plus riche que le simple *historical criticism*, attentive aux formes et aux figures, s'était figée, en France, dans les années 1950-1980, pour se disperser en petits travaux d'érudition et d'édition de textes, ou se compromettre dans la facilité du discours biographique. Toutefois, en dépit de son état de faiblesse, elle n'avait pas été remplacée par d'autres méthodes plus pertinentes pour traiter son objet. La « nouvelle critique », soucieuse d'établir une théorie de la littérature, s'occupait à régir la création contemporaine dans un projet idéologique marqué, plus qu'elle ne cherchait à éclairer les œuvres du passé, pour la compréhension desquelles elle ne disposait pas des notions et des outils adaptés. L'on n'est plus en mesure d'apprécier justement aujourd'hui combien la méthode de Marc Fumaroli et le discours savant qu'elle fondait apparaissaient novateurs dans le contexte français des années 1980, combien ils étaient stimulants et sans doute iconoclastes. C'est Marc Fumaroli, avec discrétion et urbanité, qui renversa de l'intérieur les conformismes critiques, plus que les épigones d'un indéfinissable structuralisme, c'est lui qui incarnait la véritable *nouvelle critique* aux yeux des jeunes chercheurs qui voulaient faire œuvre sérieuse, et c'est sa méthode qui s'est imposée. L'enrichissement qu'il lui donna reposait sur d'immenses lectures, celles des œuvres et de la critique, méthodiquement conduites, orientées par une curiosité sans limites et une grande ouverture d'esprit. Marc Fumaroli joua un rôle de passeur qui demande à être rappelé. Il fut un des rares universitaires français, dans son domaine, à s'intéresser à ce qui se faisait dans les autres disciplines et à l'étranger, en portant une grande attention aux recherches qui s'élaboraient en Angleterre, aux USA et en Italie. Il contribua en particulier à la diffusion de l'œuvre de Frances Yates, dont il s'étonnait, dans l'hommage posthume (1981) qu'il lui rendit, que les travaux qu'elle avait consacrés à la culture de la cour des Valois fussent alors si peu connus en France. C'est aussi à son initiative que l'on finit par traduire l'étude de Michael Screech, *Montaigne et la Mélancolie* (1992), qui renouvelait la compréhension des *Essais* en les rattachant à une notion d'origine médicale, décisive dans la génialité littéraire de la Renaissance. Cette notion intéressait tout particulièrement Marc Fumaroli. Dès 1984, il lui avait consacré une fine étude publiée dans *Le Débat*, dans laquelle il en faisait une des clés pour interpréter à

rebours le classicisme français et ses œuvres comme effort lucide contre la maladie de l'âme. La mélancolie, fil conducteur de ses recherches, fut aussi, de son propre aveu, l'arrière-plan personnel de sa propre activité lettrée.

En étudiant en historien l'ensemble des écrits consacrés à l'art de la parole, à la Renaissance et dans la première moitié du XVII<sup>e</sup> siècle, ce grand savant ne se bornait pas à mettre au jour les techniques oubliées de la rhétorique. Il ne cherchait pas à les étudier pour elles-mêmes, comme un savoir oublié, vestige d'un univers disparu ; il ne cherchait pas non plus à les actualiser pour les adapter à un usage pragmatique, en rhétoricien ou en 'spécialiste' de stylistique. En passant outre le clivage des langues, en reconstituant les formes de l'enseignement de la rhétorique et les enjeux des débats oratoires entre parlementaires gallicans et jésuites et leurs formes vulgarisées dans la conversation civile, il donna à comprendre le système dans lequel les œuvres littéraires elles-mêmes, filles de leur temps autant que de leur auteur immédiat, avaient été conçues, comprises et valorisées : il redécouvrait un système critique qui constituait lui-même une culture. Il sut ainsi élargir son objet, à la mesure de la pertinence de l'outil qu'il avait affuté, jusqu'à récrire l'histoire de la littérature, dans son extension et sa longue durée, celle de la mémoire qui nourrit les œuvres et dont elles sont le réceptacle. Mise en application, à l'origine, pour répondre à l'exigence de lire les pièces de Corneille selon leurs propres termes, la même méthode lui permit aussi de comprendre les enjeux politiques des choix linguistiques sous Henri III et Henri IV, de faire apprécier le génie de Chateaubriand, de définir l'irréductible spécificité de « l'esprit français » tel qu'il s'est exprimé à travers l'art de la conversation, de mettre en évidence les institutions qui ont favorisé la création littéraire et l'activité lettrée, les réseaux de la république des lettres, le Collège de France et l'Académie, dont il se fit l'historien. Sur ces mêmes objets, sa méthode servit avec une pertinence toute particulière dans la grande entreprise historiographique menée par Pierre Nora, pour identifier les plus importants des « lieux de mémoire » français. En un élargissement qui a constitué l'ambition la plus élevée du projet critique de Marc Fumaroli, cette méthode lui permit de décrypter l'ensemble des formes symboliques d'une société et d'une époque données pour en comprendre les enjeux, la France, principalement, certes, à l'époque de la Fronde comme sous l'Empire, mais aussi justement que la France, la Rome des Barberini ou les États-Unis contemporains.

Élargissement et approfondissement: la dynamique du projet savant mis en œuvre par Marc Fumaroli à travers une méthode spécifique trouva ses résultats les plus originaux et les plus remarquables dans le domaine de l'histoire de l'art. Lecteur et interprète des grandes œuvres littéraires, l'auteur de *L'Âge de l'éloquence* s'est révélé, sans contradiction, comme un lecteur et un admirable interprète d'images. À un goût personnel, inscrit dans la lointaine enfance,

cultivé par la pratique des musées et des galeries, affiné par la conversation des conservateurs et des collectionneurs, s'est ajoutée une compétence savante, marquée par la leçon iconographique du Warburg Institute, et encouragée par le maître français de la discipline, André Chastel. Il offrit au volume des *Mélanges* (1987) réuni pour celui-ci, une admirable analyse du tableau de Guido Reni *Hippomène et Atalante*. Préparée dès 1982 par la belle préface au catalogue de l'exposition *La peinture française du XVII<sup>e</sup> siècle dans les collections américaines*, cette rencontre de l'histoire de la littérature et de l'histoire de l'art, ou plus exactement cette mise à l'épreuve des arts visuels par la méthode de l'histoire littéraire, trouva sa confirmation à l'occasion de deux expositions au musée du Louvre, toutes deux consacrées à deux tableaux de Poussin, dont Marc Fumaroli fut le commissaire et dont il rédigea les longues études qui accompagnaient les catalogues : *L'Inspiration du poète* (1989) et *Sainte Françoise romaine* (2001). La première retraçait la réception moderne du tableau en même temps qu'elle suivait un « lieu » de la culture européenne, l'allégorie du Parnasse, dans sa prégnance réflexive ; la seconde dévoilait les implications de la difficile iconographie d'un autre tableau, un tableau « de dévotion », en relation à la personnalité de son commanditaire, le cardinal Ottoboni, et aux circonstances qui en avaient justifié la commande, par un subtil cheminement comparatif, permettant d'aller au cœur de la démarche artistique de Poussin « peintre d'images saintes » et de saisir la capacité de sa peinture à dire en silence, avec les moyens les plus modestes et les plus intériorisés, ce qui la dépasse en termes spirituels.

En 2008, Marc Fumaroli reçut en hommage un volume de *Mélanges* publié sous le titre *République des Lettres – République des Arts* qui, reprenant une notion qu'il avait mise en œuvre, rappelait les deux grands domaines qu'il avait étudiés. Le volume réunissait trente-trois études, toutes marquées par sa leçon, dans la mise en œuvre d'une méthode ou le sujet qu'elles traitaient, en relation aux domaines qu'il avait défrichés et en développant ses suggestions sur les institutions et les méthodes du savoir, le patrimoine symbolique, les styles et catégories esthétiques, les fonctions de la parole. Ces contributions n'étaient pas l'expression collective d'une école. Au cœur même de l'institution académique dont il était un des représentants les plus éminents, au cœur de l'étroit réseau d'amitiés et de civilité qu'il sut nouer en France et à l'étranger, en dépit des élèves qu'il avait formés et avec lesquels il continuait d'entretenir une conversation savante, il avait trop d'ironie pour se prendre pour le chef d'une école. Ce volume rappelait simplement comment sa leçon s'était diffusée et avait été assimilée, combien elle avait été féconde. Il n'était plus aucun domaine des lettres françaises, sinon de la culture européenne, où ne fussent pas opérantes les notions qu'il avait précisées, comme autant d'"outils" pour les comprendre et comprendre leur évolution dans le temps.



IN MEMORIAM  
NORMAN GOLB  
(15.I.1928–29.XII.2020)\*

MICHAEL G. WECHSLER  
MOODY BIBLE INSTITUTE, CHICAGO



Norman Golb, who began his life in a densely-packed immigrant neighborhood in Chicago and rose to become one of the world's leading Hebrew manuscript and Semitics scholars, has passed away. Golb was born in Albany Park in 1928. His parents, from the Ukraine, met after their families had settled in that northwest Chicago neighborhood along with thousands of other Jewish immigrants. A part-time actor in the Yiddish theater, Golb's father Joseph sustained his family during the Depression by working as a barber, and later for the City of Chicago's water department. Golb's mother Rose, née Bilow, was a homemaker and part-time sales clerk at the old Fair department store.

Not born into prosperous circumstances, Golb did not attend an elite university away from home. He first studied at Wright Junior College, now (Wilbur) Wright College, and thereafter at Roosevelt College (now University), receiving his B.A. in English literature. Golb received his first advanced training in Hebrew, Aramaic, and

---

\* This memorial essay consists primarily of edited excerpts drawn from the obituary of Norman Golb published on the Chicago Jewish Funerals website (<<https://chicagojewishfunerals.com/funeral-detail-page/?case=64BBCEC4-A495-4F41-B718-A9D475B3174C>>) and the biographical article by JOEL L. KRAEMER, « Portrait of the Scholar », in JOEL L. KRAEMER, MICHAEL G. WECHSLER (eds.), *Pesher Naḥum: Texts and Studies in Jewish History and Literature from Antiquity through the Middles Ages Presented to Norman (Naḥum) Golb*, The Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, Chicago 2012 (Studies in Ancient Oriental Civilization, 66), p. 1–9.

Arabic texts, as well as Latin and Greek, in the Graduate-Student-at-Large program at the University of Chicago's Oriental Institute (1948-1950). While there, he studied with some of the greatest scholars in their fields, including Ralph Marcus (Professor of Hellenistic Culture), Ignace Jay Gelb (Assyriology), William Andrew Irwin (Biblical Literature), Raymond Bowman (Aramaic inscriptions), and Samuel Isaac Feigin (Bible). Golb did two years of steady work under Gustave E. von Grunebaum in Arabic language and literature. After one year of basic grammar and related content, he worked with von Grunebaum on Arabic geographical texts, Qur'ān commentaries, and Ibn Rushd.

Also during this time, in 1949, Golb married Ruth Magid, who worked for many years as a special education teacher in private practice and Chicago's public schools. They had three children – two sons (Joel and Raphael) and a daughter (Judith). Ruth always gave Norman the support he needed in his academic endeavors as a patient listener and wise counselor.

He went on to study archaeology, the history of ancient Palestine, and several of the newly-found Dead Sea Scroll texts at Johns Hopkins University under the great archeologist and Bible scholar William Foxwell Albright. Golb began studying Judaeo-Arabic with Samuel Rosenblatt, with whom he also read Tannaitic texts (Tannaitic Hebrew was a passion of Golb's and one of his regular course offerings throughout his teaching career). He also studied Hebrew and Semitic linguistics with Frank R. Blake. In 1954, at the age of twenty six, he received his Ph.D. degree in Judaic and Semitic Studies with a dissertation on *The Cairo Damascus Covenant and Karaite Literature*.

Dr. Golb went on to Philadelphia for two years (1952-1954) on a Cyrus Adler Post-Doctoral Research Fellowship at Dropsie College. He studied there with Solomon Leon Skoss, with whom he concentrated especially on David ben Abraham al-Fāsī (whose Hebrew-Arabic dictionary, *Kitāb Jāmi' al-alfāz*, Skoss had edited). In addition, he studied Arabic poetry with Meir M. Bravmann, and took a course in elementary Persian with Moshe Perlmann. He audited a few courses with Abraham Newman (Historical Responsa of Sephardim) and Solomon Zeitlin (Talmudic Text-Analysis). At that time Dr. Golb taught elementary Arabic at Dropsie and was an instructor at the Akiba Hebrew Academy (now the Jack M. Barrack Hebrew Academy) in the Hebrew and English departments (1952-1954).

In 1954-1955, Dr. Golb studied under the great Shelomo Dov Goitein (who was visiting Dropsie on a sabbatical before taking up a regular appointment at the University of Pennsylvania in 1957), and Goitein delighted in finding a promising young scholar whom he could train in Genizah documents and Judaeo-Arabic. Goitein made it possible for Dr. Golb to spend two years (1955-1957) in Israel on a Warburg Fellowship for Research in Judaic and Semitic Studies at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem. He even found a convenient place for the Golbs to live in Rehavia, where many of the university's faculty resides.

Dr. Golb took private lessons with Goitein, sitting by his side, poring over Genizah manuscripts. He also attended Arabic courses given by the outstanding Arabist David Hartwig Baneth, along with Hava Lazarus-Yafeh and Shmuel Moreh, and he studied Near Eastern history with the erudite Eli Strauss-Ashtor, who made use of Genizah documents in his research. Dr. Golb also attended a course on the Zohar given by Gershom Scholem, the foremost expert on Jewish mysticism and a powerful presence at the university with a worldwide reputation. On walks in Jerusalem, Dr. Golb discussed Jewish studies with the illustrious scholar, occasionally criticizing the lack of interest in Karaite studies at the Hebrew University and elsewhere.

In 1956–1957, Dr. Golb served as secretary of the Institute of Jewish Studies at the University. His studies while on the Warburg Research Fellowship during the academic years 1955–1957 led to Golb's early publications in Genizah studies, such as his extensive and meticulous article on legal documents from the Genizah. The documents, all from a single manuscript (T-S 18 J 1), were from various towns, a circumstance that naturally brought Golb to explore Egyptian topography, culminating in a valuable two-part study. The legal documents required a discussion of the economic life of the people involved in the legal transactions in Egypt and surrounding countries, and it included a fascinating section on the role of women in economic life.

In 1963, aged thirty-five, Dr. Golb was appointed to a position at the University of Chicago, where he became Professor of Hebrew and Judaeo-Arabic Studies in the Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations and in the Oriental Institute. In 1988, he was made Ludwig Rosenberger Professor in Jewish History and Civilization. The Institute he first visited as a youth of twenty, thrilled to study at the feet of preeminent scholars, became fifteen years later his home, where he expounded his own ideas for the next half century and more.

Dr. Golb's pathbreaking socio-historical and linguistic-literary research was focused on three main areas: the Dead Sea Scrolls and Judaism in late antiquity, the Jews in the Arab world during the Middle Ages (to which field he gave a great boost by initiating the creation of the Society for Judaeo-Arabic Studies, whose inaugural conference he hosted at the University of Chicago in 1984), and medieval European history.

His linguistic and paleographical expertise, as well as his versatility in Jewish history were exceptional, indeed unique. He made numerous discoveries, including the first documentary proof that Khazars converted to Judaism, and the presence of a major Jewish community in medieval Rouen (France).

In 1985, Golb was awarded the Grand Medal of the City of Rouen. In 1987, he was granted an honorary doctorate by the University of Rouen, and was awarded the Medal of the Region of Haute Normandie. In 2006, he was also granted honorary citizenship by the commune of Oppido Lucano (Basilicata, Italy) for his research on Obadiah the Proselyte and related topics. Golb's discoveries also became the basis for the international best-selling novel *The Convert*, by the award-winning Flemish author Stefan Hertmans.

Golb received many research awards, including two Guggenheim Fellowships. He spent long research stays working on the famous Cairo Genizah documents in St. Petersburg and the Cambridge University Library; he was made a life member of Cambridge University's Clare Hall. His scholarship on the Dead Sea Scrolls was pioneering and highly publicized. Golb was one of the last surviving figures in a generation of American Jewish intellectuals who came from working-class roots and ended up enriching world knowledge and academic debate to an extraordinary degree. He and his wife Ruth were also active in city and local Hyde Park affairs for well over a half-century, while maintaining close ties to friends and colleagues in England, France, and Israel.

Dr. Golb is well remembered by his colleagues and students not only for his meticulous and pathbreaking research, but also for his compassion, kindness, and pedagogical enthusiasm. Upon his students in particular he made an indelible impression, not just by his meticulous and exemplary acumen, but also by the sincere care and empathy that he consistently expressed for them. He will ever be an example *par excellence* of both a scholar and a gentleman; an exemplary and rare fusion of friend, colleague, mentor, professor, freethinking scholar, and Doktorvater.

יהי זכרו ברוך

IN MEMORIAM  
HELENA AVELAR DE CARVALHO  
(17.IX.1964–9.III.2021)

CHARLES BURNETT  
THE WARBURG INSTITUTE, LONDON



Helena died unexpectedly on 7 March, 2021, at home in Lisbon. She was expecting the first proofs of her book, *An Astrologer at Work in Late Medieval France: The Notebooks of S. Belle*, which was the culmination of the research that she had been doing on astrology in pre-modern times. She had established herself as a leading authority in the theory and practice of traditional astrology – the kind of astrology whose basic rules and techniques had been established in Ancient Greece, and which passed through various streams in Greek, Sanskrit, Persian, Arabic, Latin and the European vernaculars, as far as the present day. Her earlier work, largely written and conducted in conjunction with her partner, Luís Ribeiro, focused on the practice of contemporary traditional astrology: among these are the *Tratado das Esferas* (English edition: *On the Heavenly Spheres*) which went through various editions from 2007 onwards, and helped to educate a generation of traditional astrologers. But then Helena turned to the academic life and, having completed a degree in history and a master's degree in medieval history in the Nova University in Lisbon, in October 2014 she embarked on PhD work at the Warburg Institute, University of London, under my supervision.

Her master's degree – *Vir Sapiens Dominabitur Astris. Astrological knowledge and practices in the Portuguese Medieval Court (King João I to King Afonso V)* – already showed her ability to tackle the historical questions of the validity of astrology and its role in society. For her thesis she wanted to study in depth a manuscript she had discovered in Lisbon (MS Lisbon, Arquivo Nacional da Torre do Tombo, *Manuscritos da Livraria*, 1711) which contained astrological tables from 1468 to 1480, excerpts from Latin translation of Arabic astrological works and a collection of

forty-six horoscopes, mostly of kings and noblemen from fifteenth-century France, Burgundy and Bourbon. It turned out that another manuscript written by the same hand, and overlapping in its contents, was extant in the Bibliothèque nationale de France (MS Paris, BnF, nouvelles acquisitions latines 398); this manuscript revealed the name of the astrologer: S. Belle. So she examined both manuscripts, and interpreted the contents in detail. The thesis eventually became the book which she did not quite live long enough to see.

Helena was known for her generosity towards her friends, her empathy with animals, her encouragement of other scholars, and her initiative in arranging conferences, workshops and classes. She had plans for several projects – including one on astrological geography, and (with Luís Ribeiro) the Astra project for the study of the history of western astrological doctrines, techniques, and practices from Antiquity to the early modern period; during 2020 over 50 podcasts were published of interviews with historians of astrology and related subjects (<<http://theastraproject.org/adastra/>>). Had she lived she could have accomplished so much! *Nunc ad astra redit*: she returns to her home among the stars.

# REVIEW ARTICLES



# UNCOVERING MOSES BEN SABBATAI: A FOURTEENTH-CENTURY CRITIC OF PHILOSOPHERS AND KABBALISTS\*

ELLEN DE DONCKER  
UC LOUVAIN



In his monograph, *Moïse b. Sabbatai, lecteur juif du Livre des causes et adversaire de la Kabbale, en Italie, vers 1340*, Jean-Pierre Rothschild introduces an important Jewish philosopher and the writings attributed to this medieval scholar.<sup>1</sup> Through his intensive research and earlier studies, Rothschild has single-handedly saved Moses ben Sabbatai from oblivion.<sup>2</sup> Rothschild now carefully presents the thinker, his writings, and his sources, providing the most extensive material for studies on Moses b. Sabbatai. Rothschild's book also constitutes the main source for information on the Hebrew reception of the *Liber de causis*.

Rothschild's careful and extremely well-researched study consists of seven parts. In the introduction (p. 1–44), which contains four subsections, Rothschild first introduces the broad context of Moses b. Sabbatai. He presents the main ideas of the philosophical and Jewish intellectual climate in thirteenth- and fourteenth-century Italy. Special attention is paid to the Jewish reception of the

---

\* This work was supported by the Fonds de la Recherche Scientifique – FNRS.

<sup>1</sup> JEAN-PIERRE ROTHSCHILD, *Moïse b. Sabbatai, lecteur juif du Livre des causes et adversaire de la Kabbale, en Italie, vers 1340*, Brepols, Turnhout 2018 (Philosophy in the Abrahamic Traditions of the Middle Ages, 2).

<sup>2</sup> See, for instance, JEAN-PIERRE ROTHSCHILD, « En quel sens on peut parler de 'mystique philosophique' dans la philosophie juive du moyen âge occidental », in PAUL B. FENTION, ROLAND GOETSCHEL (eds.), *Expérience mystique, écriture mystique et philosophie mystique dans le judaïsme et les religions du Livre*, Brill, Leiden 2000 (Études sur le judaïsme médiéval, 22), p. 113–129. See also JEAN-PIERRE ROTHSCHILD, « Le Livre des causes du latin à l'hébreu: textes, problèmes, réception », in ALEXANDER FIDORA, HARVEY J. HAMES, YOSSEF SCHWARTZ (eds.), *Latin-into-Hebrew: Texts and Studies*, vol. II, Brill, Leiden 2013 (Studies in Jewish History and Culture, 40), p. 47–84 (esp. p. 80–81).

*Liber de causis*, pointing to a 'Jewish philosophical school' consisting of important scholars such as Zeraḥiyāh b. Se'altiēl Ḥēn, Hillel of Verona, Juda of Rome, and perhaps his cousin Emmanuel of Rome. This 'school' shares interests in Neoplatonic themes and Latin scholasticism, and a strong devotion to Maimonides and « une véritable 'foi' en la possibilité de l'union de l'intellect possible (ou humain) avec l'Intellect Agent » (p. 5). The Jewish reception of the *Liber de causis* seems to bridge the two main currents of Jewish thinking in Italy during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, providing a response to both the Kabbalists and the rationalist philosophers. Rothschild introduces Moses b. Sabbatai within this intellectual current, discovering him only through small marginal notes in a manuscript of Juda of Rome. He presents possible, but uncertain, biographical elements and offers the (probable) context and main ideas of the writings that have been attributed to this thinker. At the end of the introduction, Rothschild carefully presents the justifications of his study, paying attention to the specific style of Moses's writings.

In the subsequent three parts, Rothschild proposes a critical translation – together with extremely detailed notes and helpful introductions – of the works attributed to Moses b. Sabbatai. First, the reader finds the Explication of Psalm 119:126 (p. 45–90), prefaced with a general presentation, then an annotated translation, followed by a critical edition of the Hebrew text. Secondly, the *Ša'arēy šedeq* ('Gates of Justice') is offered (p. 91–226), again, with an introductory sketch, an annotated translation, and then a critical edition of the Hebrew text. Thirdly, the *Scripta Minora* are presented (p. 227–252). These minor writings contain four texts: notes to *Sefer ben porat* of Juda of Rome; notes to Juda of Rome's translation of Thomas Aquinas's commentary on the *Liber de Causis*; Moses's poem *Šir 'eden ha-ḥayyim* ('Song of the Eden of the living'); and a note on the degrees of existence. After this extensive study of writings attributed to Moses b. Sabbatai, Rothschild inserts five rich appendices that offer useful tools for the study of the main works of Moses (p. 253–310). The first four appendices present Moses's most important sources (Juda of Rome's Hebrew translation of the *Liber de causis*, the Prologues of Juda of Rome's translation of *Liber de causis*, quotes from Giles of Rome's *De esse et essentia* used by Moses, and a note of Juda of Rome on Thomas Aquinas's commentary of the *Liber de causis*). The fifth appendix offers a glossary made by Rothschild, cataloging the philosophical terms used by Moses. The book ends with a bibliography, followed by indices of passages, names, manuscripts, and philosophical terms.

### I. Moses b. Sabbatai

The biographical details of Moses b. Sabbatai are entirely unknown to us. Some chronological indices, found in writings which can most probably be attributed to Moses, situate our philosopher around the year 1340 (p. 19). Moreover, it is

most likely that Moses was a disciple of Juda of Rome, or at least one of his attentive readers, and thus was part of a ‘cult’ of Maimonidean followers in Rome at that time.<sup>3</sup> Moses depends largely on Juda of Rome for translations from Latin, as well as Juda’s mystical yet intellectual reading of the philosophy of Maimonides. At the same time, Moses shows himself to be a critical disciple (or reader?) of Juda of Rome, mentioning the Agent Intellect only once (unlike Juda), and providing a critical note on Juda’s *Sefer ben porat* (‘Book of the Fruitful Son’, a commentary on Maimonides). The most important writing Moses acquired through the translation from Latin by Juda of Rome is the *Liber de causis*, prominent in Moses’s writings, which stress the omnipresence of divine causality in the created world. Additionally, the *Theoremata de esse et essentia* of Giles of Rome, and Thomas Aquinas’s commentary on the *Liber de causis*, seem to have reached Moses through Juda’s translation. Beyond these writings, Moses’s other sources are Aristotle, Maimonides, and the Hebrew Bible together with the Talmud. This combination of sources creates an interesting mix between Neoplatonic thought, the Aristotelian prevalence of actuality over potentiality, and Jewish mystical and philosophical ideas.

Rothschild seems to focus primarily on the influence of Juda of Rome’s writings on Moses’s thinking, since Moses acquired most of his sources through the translations of Juda of Rome, of which the *Liber de causis* seems to be the most important. Rothschild comments:

Moïse ben Sabbataï semble avoir cru trouver dans le *Livre des causes* sinon une démonstration, du moins une autorité philosophique en faveur de la thèse de la création *a parte ante*. [...] Le *Livre des causes* serait donc pour lui le témoin décisif de la ‘philosophie véritable’.<sup>4</sup>

Whereas Maimonides holds that neither the creation *ex nihilo*, nor the eternity of the world can be demonstrated, Moses seems to find in the *Liber de causis* the ‘true philosophy’ which does not only provide philosophical arguments in favor of an eternal creation *a parte ante*, but also arguments against currents of Jewish mysticism, philosophy, and rationalism. Rothschild names two other sources of Moses’s thinking beyond Latin philosophy: traditional religious sources and the

---

<sup>3</sup> Rothschild refers to Giuseppe Sermoneta, who provides a sketch of a Jewish philosophical ‘school’ in Rome at the end of the thirteenth century which joins Neoplatonic themes to Latin scholasticism, and is rooted in a strong adherence to Maimonides. Sermoneta determines their main characteristic to be faith in the union of the human intellect with the Agent Intellect (« la fede nella possibilità d’unione tra intelletto possibile e Intelletto Agente era divenuto il credo – per così dire – ‘ufficiale’ die quella piccolo scuola di filosofie ebrei »). See GIUSEPPE SERMONETA, « La dottrina dell’intelletto e la ‘fede filosofica’ di Jehudah e Immanuel Romano », in *Studi medievali*, 6/2 (1965), p. 3–78, at p. 72.

<sup>4</sup> ROTHSCHILD, *Moïse b. Sabbatai*, p. 31.

Kabbalah. It is most probable that the Kabbalistic doctrines were not unknown to Moses, as certain aspects of his writing are reminiscent of Menahem of Recanati, just as the title *Ša'arēy sēdeq* ('Gates of Justice') could implicitly refer to Kabbalistic writings under the same title. Discussing Moses's traditional religious sources, Rothschild rightly accentuates Moses's knowledge of the Hebrew Bible, as well as aspects of Jewish liturgy. Rothschild attributes lesser importance to the Talmud in Moses's thinking, stating:

Quant au savoir talmudique mis en œuvre, il est extrêmement léger et limité au traité michnique des *Pirqēy Avot* (Chapitres des Pères [ou: des Principes]) et à quelques *aggadot*, anecdotes morales ou maximes lapidaires, parmi les plus célèbres. Moïse b. Sabbataï ne s'aventure qu'une fois à expliquer un passage talmudique, et il s'y montre assez peu compétent; il avoue d'ailleurs son peu d'estime pour la valeur spéculative du Talmud.<sup>5</sup>

I believe Moses was perhaps more acquainted with the Talmud than his writings portray at first sight. Moses believes that the Talmud, both in the *halakhōt* (legislative parts) as the *aggadōt* (narrative parts), does not lead to true wisdom. Nonetheless, it should be said that for Moses, Talmud as well as Scripture, could form a shared understanding with his adversaries, the Kabbalists. Therefore, Moses's Talmudic excursion in his explanation of the Psalm 119:126 should perhaps not be seen as « peu compétent », but involves a careful re-reading of a shared source with the Kabbalists, in which Moses, using Kabbalistic vocabulary, subtly tries to win over his most-critical readers. This point will be explained more in detail below.

Three strains (Jewish mysticism, Aristotelian and Neo-Platonic philosophy, and Scripture) provide Moses with the intuition that God acts without any intermediary, and that creation is unique, *a parte ante*. Moreover, Moses underlines (through Maimonides's philosophy and the Plotinian influence on *Liber de causis*<sup>6</sup>) the assertion of negative theology that God cannot be known, except through his creation. This latter idea regarding the unknowability of God belongs to the core ideas that Moses adopts from his sources. This argument combines the Maimonidean negative theology, positing that God is transcendent and unknowable, with the (also Maimonidean) idea that God can be known only through creation. In its core, Moses's argument is heavily indebted to Aristotle,

---

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., p. 28.

<sup>6</sup> Rothschild refers here to the detailed study of Cristina D'Ancona Costa, who describes in more detail the Plotinian, monotheistic influence on Proclus's account. Doing so, she highlights the importance of negative theology of the *Liber de causis*, thanks to the Plotinian modification made to the doctrine of Proclus, which was unacceptable in a monotheistic regime. See CRISTINA D'ANCONA COSTA, *Recherches sur le Liber de causis*, Vrin, Paris 1995 (Études de philosophie médiévale).

as it departs from the idea that the intellect, the intelligible, and the intellectual act are one. Since they are one, to Moses, it is precisely through the study of creation – which is understood to be the thought of the unique God – that one can access God to a certain extent. Rothschild, building on this double-edged argument, characterizes Moses's philosophy as

'mysticanté', en tant que marquée au sceau d'une expérience personnelle de la divinité et formulée en des termes qui en témoignent, 'mystique' pouvant être nommé le niveau auquel parvient le disciple des philosophes à force de méditer sur les idées de l'unicité, de l'unité et de la transcendance absolues, ainsi que de la grandeur et de la beauté des œuvres, du Créateur.<sup>7</sup>

Whereas the *Liber de causis* provides Moses arguments in favor of a creation *a parte ante*, it is Aristotle and especially Maimonides, as well as notes of Jewish mysticism, that offer Moses the tools to think at once about the transcendence and the tangible presence of God.

Strikingly, those very same intellectual currents (i.e. Jewish mysticism, Latin philosophy, the Bible and Talmud) which constitute and offer to Moses his sources, at the same time also present theses Moses will harshly oppose. Rothschild writes:

Le Ša'arēy *šedeq* montre en Moïse b. Sabbataï un farouche adversaire, et pas mal informé des Kabbalistes, mais il ne se déclare pas moins éloigné du parti dit des Philosophes qui soutient l'éternité du monde, en dépit de l'enseignement révélé. Il combat encore les anti-intellectualistes qui bornent les devoirs – et les droits – de l'intelligence à la compréhension des préceptes de la Loi en vue de leur application.<sup>8</sup>

Moses thus is critical of three major groups – (1) Kabbalists, (2) philosophers, (3) halakists) – with whom he nonetheless shares many ideas.

## II. *Moses and His Sources: A Critical Follower*

The first group Moses opposes are the Kabbalists. The Italian Kabbalists – disciples of Abulafia and the 'recent' Italian Kabbalist, Menahem of Recanati (c. 1250–1310) – share with Moses the notion of 'effusion', and the opposition to the Platonic Ideas. Moreover, the Kabbalists share with Moses metaphors and formulas of this effusion, of the first cause and of the special status of the first created entities. Moses, however, will refute the Kabbalist conception of the *sefirot* (emanations) – a conception shared by both the ancient and recent threads

---

<sup>7</sup> ROTHSCHILD, *Moïse b. Sabbatai*, p. 38.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 26.

of Kabbalah – relying especially on the *Liber de causis*. Rothschild cites Recanati, thus presenting clearly the position Moses will criticize:

Toutes les choses d'en bas dépendent de choses plus élevées, car nous devons croire que les œuvres de Dieu sont exemptes de toute perfection; or ce monde dans lequel nous nous trouvons, nous voyons que tout [y] est passager. Il faut donc savoir que ce n'est pas [là] le premier existant qui procède de Dieu, car [si c'était le cas] la perfection de l'œuvre indiquerait celle de l'Artisan. Il nous faut donc dire que d'autres choses ont précédé, immuables, par l'intermédiaire desquelles est advenu le monde d'en bas. Et, à partir de celui-ci, nous [pouvons] connaître le secret du régime du monde d'en haut et les choses que l'on a nommées *sefirot*, etc.<sup>9</sup>

Menahem of Recanati speaks of a *mediated* creation, through the *sefirot*. He believes the notion of intermediate emanations having causality is necessary to safeguard God from the imperfections of the world, which are in his view caused by the intermediary causes and not by God himself. Moses, on the other hand, will argue strongly against this in his *Ša'arēy šedeq*, trapping the Kabbalists by posing a dilemma:

soit les sefirot sont en Dieu (selon les 'Kabbalistes anciens') et elles introduisent en lui une multiplicité inacceptable; soit elles sont en dehors de lui (pour les 'Kabbalistes récents') et tous les écrits de Moïse b. Sabbataï témoignent de son intuition fondamentale, contraire à toute idée de création par intermédiaire.<sup>10</sup>

To combat both the 'recent' and 'ancient' Kabbalists, Moses utilizes both Aristotelian and Neoplatonic conceptual tools – viz., the act-potency distinction of Aristotle and the Neoplatonic pair of the simple and composite, both of which underline the causal priority of the first principle, and its pure being with a creating causality. The *Liber de causis* and Aristotle's *Metaphysics* appear especially important here.

In Moses's explication of Psalm 119:126, where Moses argues against the interpretation of these Psalms as indicating that God operates 'in a moment', he makes strong use of the *Liber de causis* to show that God acts without intermediary, and can therefore not act *through* time. Moses writes:

Dieu agit par son existence seulement, sans avoir besoin de quelque chose de conjoint ou de quelque instrument qui serve d'intermédiaire entre lui et ses œuvres. S'il en est ainsi, il n'agit pas par l'intermédiaire du temps. Et si certaines

---

<sup>9</sup> MENAHEM OF RECANATI, *Ṭa'amey ha-mišwot*, (Raison des commandements), ed. Isaac & Eliézer Soncino, Constantinople 1544, [5]304 [1533/4], n.p., [p. 3], translated by ROTHSCHILD in *Moïse b. Sabbataï*, p. 13–14.

<sup>10</sup> ROTHSCHILD, *Moïse b. Sabbataï*, p. 14.

des causes dernières ont besoin d'une continuité temporelle dans leurs actions, cela ne convient pas à la définition de Dieu.<sup>11</sup>

Departing from the *Liber de causis* (more specifically, proposition 19), Moses argues that God, acting solely by his existence, cannot act through intermediaries.<sup>12</sup> The Aristotelian idea of the first principle that is pure act is also an important stepping stone in Moses's argumentation. Even though Moses is arguing here against the claim that God acts through the intermediary of time (and not arguing explicitly against the Kabbalists), he perhaps already points subtly to the *sefirot*, stating that other « dernières » causes cannot belong to God, as they would imply that God depends on something exterior, conditioned by time.

The true refutation of the Kabbalists appears in Moses's *Ša'arēy šedeq*. Moses writes:

Soit Dieu agit sans intermédiaire, soit au moyen d'intermédiaires extérieurs à sa substance. Si sans intermédiaire, alors l'opinion des philosophes selon laquelle les causés sont causes les uns des autres et celle des tenants des *sefirot* qui les considèrent comme les intermédiaires de la création sont fausses car s'il n'agit que par son désir et sa volonté, parce qu'en lui le désir, la volonté, l'unité et l'existence sont une seule substance, alors ces intermédiaires ne serviraient à rien.<sup>13</sup>

Moses argues here that if God is one, he does not need external *sefirot*, because he acts through his desire and will which both are one with his unique existence (cf. *Liber de causis*, where the first principle is « agens quod agit per esse suum tantum » [prop. 19]). Accordingly, the intermediate *sefirot* are unnecessary; but nothing in life exists without a reason; therefore, the *sefirot* do not exist. In sum, Moses argues that the *sefirot* – conceiving of them to be *outside of* God (i.e. the claim of the 'recent' Kabbalists) – cannot exist as absolute causes since everything flows from God, and God, as the first cause, transcends all other causality and does not depend upon it. What is more, stating that these *sefirot* are *within* God (i.e. the opinion of the 'ancient' Kabbalists) would be erroneous as well, since this would mean that God is composite and not simple, which is impossible since he is pure being.

---

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., p. 53.

<sup>12</sup> *Liber de causis / Das Buch von den Ursachen: Lateinisch-Deutsch*, prop. 19, 58, ed. and trans. ANDREAS SCHÖNFELD, Felix Meiner Verlag, Hamburg 2003 (Philosophische Bibliothek, 553), p. 40 « inter omne agens quod agit per esse suum tantum et inter factum suum non est continuator neque res alia media. et non est continuator inter agens et factum nisi additio super esse scilicet quando agens et factum sunt per instrumentum et non facit per esse suum <...> et sunt composita ».

<sup>13</sup> ROTHCHILD, *Moïse b. Sabbatai*, p. 252.

Strikingly, with these same arguments, Moses will go against his (probable) master, Juda of Rome. In Juda's *Ben porat*, as a commentary on the words that the first cause makes existing every existent, we read: « il fait exister en qualité d'agent qui a deux actions. Car tous ses effets sont [produits] au moyen d'intermédiaires » (p. 228). Juda of Rome limits here the actions of the first cause strictly to the First Intellect, which in turn imparts a series of intermediary causes. Moses, with the help of Isa 48:13, reuses his argument against the Kabbalists, this time addressed at his master (?) Juda of Rome, and states « [Dieu] n'a pas besoin d'intermédiaire entre lui et les creatures » (p. 229). Accordingly, Moses both is a patient reader of Juda of Rome and at the same time critical of his master.

The second group Moses criticizes are the philosophers who argue against the eternity of the world. These philosophers either argue (1) that the world is not eternal because it was created by God and thus has a starting point, or else they argue (2) that the eternity of the world is *a parte post*, an eternity conditioned by the moment of creation. Moses will use the *Liber de causis* to argue, instead, that the eternity of the world is created by God and that this eternity exists *a parte ante*. With this group of philosophers, Moses does share the idea of a created world and similarly is in need of a philosophical system to think about God's eternity in relation to this created world. Moses's first discussion related to the idea of an eternal world appears in his explication of Psalm 119:126. Here, Moses argues against those who think that the six days of creation point to God's acting through time. However, since God does not act through an intermediary (i.e. neither through time), it is impossible that God's creation took place within time. It is not God who created the world through the intermediary of time, but rather the inverse: « Le temps, avec toutes ses parties, est créé par l'intermédiaire de l'existence une, créée, et non l'inverse, car le temps est un accident inhérent au mouvement de la sphère et est une partie accidentelle des accidents créés » (p. 64) Again, the combination of Aristotle and the *Liber de causis* is here apparent. Moses uses the *Liber de causis* to assert that God's creation *preceded* eternity, as we read in proposition 4 [37] (« prima rerum creatarum est esse et non est ante ipsum creatum aliud ») and proposition 2 [24] (« causa prima est supra aeternitatem quoniam aeternitas est causatum ipsius »). Besides this eternity *a parte ante*, Moses refers to the Aristotelian system of spheres, of which time is an accident. Rothschild summarizes the argument sharply:

Dieu, son acte créateur, son attention au monde qu'il a créé [...] ne sont pas soumis au temps [...] l'ensemble de la création procède d'un acte unique et instantané ou plutôt précédant le temps, en dépit des divisions du créé (auxquelles correspondent les 'jours' du récit de la création).<sup>14</sup>

---

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., p. 49.

The theme of eternity *a parte ante* returns in the other writings of Moses. In his *Ša'arēy šedeq*, Moses does not speak explicitly of the theme of the world's eternity, but makes reference to it by comparing creation to a bouquet of myrrh (an image from Song of Songs):

l'intelligible suprême [...] a été comparé à un bouquet de myrrhe car, de même que le parfum de celle-ci monte de manière égale, sans qu'une partie soit cause ou causée l'une de l'autre, de même les formes séparées incluses et intelligées par le 'bien-aimé', intelligible suprême ne sont point causes ou causées l'une de l'autre, mais sont épanchées et créés par l'épanchement suprême, pur et intact, duquel sont épanchés toute existence, tout bien et toute perfection.<sup>15</sup>

Moses is speaking here of God in terms of the supreme intelligible, and accordingly, the context in which the theme of creation is treated differs from the one in Explication of Psalm 119:126. Moses here stresses – similar to his argument against the Kabbalists – that creation takes place as a *pure effusion*, without intermediary causes or tools. Again, Moses seems to be inspired by the *Liber de causis*:

La thèse célèbre de la prop. 1 du *Livre des causes* semble, ici et dans le paragraphe suivant, implicitement présente, mais poussée à la limite: la cause première est agissante dans les causes secondes et plus forte qu'elles, au point qu'elle est en vérité la seule cause, même si les causés sont attachés les uns aux autres.<sup>16</sup>

What is more, Moses introduces here a special kind of causality, that characterizes the creative causality of God. Rothschild speaks of « une causalité [créatrice] en-deça de la causalité [relative, ou apparente] des causes agissantes dans le monde qui est déployé dans l'exégèse du 'bouquet de myrrhe' » (p. 239). It is exactly this type of causality that will allow Moses to argue against Thomas Aquinas's conception of the eternity of the world, in his note on Thomas's commentary on the *Liber de causis* (translated by Juda of Rome). Moses argues that when philosophers like Aquinas state that the world is not created in time, they defy the Torah. For Moses, the world is not eternal, but the creation of it *precedes* time. Here again, he makes use of the *Liber de causis*, stating:

c'est Dieu qui épanche tous les existants, l'existence éternelle et l'existence matérielle, comme y fait allusion l'auteur du *Livre des causes*, dans la proposition 2

---

<sup>15</sup> ROTHSCHILD, *Moïse b. Sabbatai*, p. 125.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 126, fn. 132.

en disant: 'l'existence qui est au-dessus de l'éternité est la Cause première, car elle est sa cause'.<sup>17</sup>

Similar to the « causalité en-deça de la causalité », Moses has in mind « une antériorité [de la création] en-deça de la temporalité » (p. 239). The world is thus not eternal, for eternity belongs only to God, but it is eternal *a parte post*, imputed on the world by the First Cause.

The third group Moses combats are the halakists. These Jews study the Torah and Talmud only for practical and legal purposes, but not as a means for intellectual or theoretical speculation. With this group, Moses shares a real reverence for the Law and the Talmud, which he uses on multiple occasions both as arguments from faith, as well as for offering exemplary metaphors. Moses's disagreement with this group stems from his (almost Averroïst) stance that the human intellective soul should approach, as much as possible, the supreme intelligible – viz., God. That people are occupied only with material or practical matters constitutes a huge obstacle in reaching that goal and, ultimately, attaining human perfection. In these matters, Moses is strongly inspired by Maimonides's negative theology, which implies that God is unknowable except by His effects. This is why Moses, in his *Ša'arēy šedeq*, uses the image of the Artisan: « On ne peut louer un artisan pour son acte à moins de connaître celui-ci. Par la connaissance des œuvres de Dieu nous pourrions à la fois le louer quant à celles-ci et aussi atteindre les concepts métaphysiques relatifs à lui » (p. 107). Arriving at knowledge of the created world is like knowing the arts of the artisan – viz., God. Obtaining this knowledge has a twofold importance. First, it helps the human (intellective) soul to achieve its perfection. Indeed, in the beginning, the human soul is essence in potency, which contains *in potency* the six kinds of 'arts' of God (material existence, the spheres and stars, intellective human soul, heavenly intellective soul, angels/separated intellects, archangels, and the first intellect). Contained potentially in the soul, the human soul can activate this knowledge through science and reach God, who is both its perfection and its eternal and immovable source. Accordingly, the perfected human soul knows its own Artisan. Secondly, this knowledge has as a consequence the fact that man will exalt God with respect to his arts: man will be able to exalt God *fully*, as he knows all of God's arts. The importance of this intellective activity is already apparent in Moses's explication of Psalm 119:126, where Moses explores the other side of his argument, explaining why it is harmful to be absorbed in practical or material matters, rather than pursuing intellectual affairs. He states: « l'âme humaine étant unifiée en ses capacités [diverses], tant qu'elle est absorbée dans l'activité de l'une, elle est empêchée de se prodiguer dans l'activité de l'autre » (p. 67). Man

---

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., p. 240.

is quite far from arriving at knowledge of God and the other intelligibles while overly absorbed by material and practical concerns. This is why, for Moses, the liturgical time is so important: these days offer man time away from practical matters, in order to invest in acquiring knowledge of intelligible objects in order to attain perfection. Perhaps the major mistake of the halakists is not so much that they focus on the legal and practical aspects of the sacred scriptures, but that they find in these laws an end in themselves. Moses, on the contrary, conceives of the Law as a way for the human intellectual soul to attain perfection: « La sainte Loi nous a prescrit de faire certaines actions qui incitent l'âme à se faire des représentations intellectuelles au moyen desquelles elle passe de la puissance et de la virtualité à l'acte et la perfection » (p. 63). Following the Law should not be seen as an *end*, but rather as a way of attaining perfection.

### III. Attaining Knowledge: Return by Waking-up

In a recent article, Rothschild accentuates the importance of linguistic phraseology in Moses's writings: « l'hébreu de Moïse b. Sabbataï laisse transparaître des tournures et des constructions manifestement calquées sur l'idiome vernaculaire ». <sup>18</sup> This is a common characteristic of many texts and translations of the end of the thirteenth to the middle of the fourteenth century, and much research has been done on this specificity in Hebrew, Latin, and dialects. <sup>19</sup> An interesting question to answer, in the light of Rothschild's book, would be to know whether there was a specific philosophical vocabulary of the so-called Italian Jewish Maimonidean 'cult' or 'school' that existed during that period. Rothschild's glossary of Moses's vocabulary forms an exceptional tool and provides an avenue towards answering this question. One of the Hebrew twists, not so much related to the vernacular idiom, but important to Moses's writing, is his epistemological description of the human intellectual soul proceeding from potency to act in terms of 'waking up' and 'repentance'. In Moses's explication of Psalm 119:126, Moses b. Sabbataï speaks of the need to turn away from material occupations, towards intellectual activities in order to know all the created world in order to reach God, and subsequently human perfection. In paragraph 5 of Moses's Psalm-explication, he builds to his subsequent explanation of Isa 55:6 (« Seek God while he may be found; call on him while he is near »). In fact, Isa 55:6 as interpreted in the Talmud could serve as an objection against Moses's

---

<sup>18</sup> JEAN-PIERRE ROTHSCHILD, « Langue et littérature hébraïques dans l'Occident médiéval et moderne », *Annuaire de l'École pratique des hautes études (EPHE), Section des sciences historiques et philologiques*, 150 (2019), p. 33–37, at p. 37.

<sup>19</sup> See for instance MAURO ZONTA, *Hebrew Scholasticism in the Fifteenth Century: A History and Source Book*, Dordrecht, Springer 2006. Also the 22<sup>nd</sup> issue of *Yod* treats the extensive vocabulary in (amongst others) Renaissance Italy: ALESSANDRO GUETTA, DIANA DI SEGNI (eds.), *Medieval and Early Modern Translations of Maimonides' Guide of the Perplexed*, in *Yod*, 22 (2019).

argument that God does not act through time. A sage of the Talmud would have interpreted this verse as pointing to the specific days between New Year and Yom Kippur as the days in which prayers are heard. This would imply that God sometimes listens and sometimes does not, which, in turn, implies that God would act through the intermediary of time. Already preparing the refutation of this Talmudic interpretation (the only Talmud-paragraph Moses cites in his works), Moses, in the preceding paragraph 5, argues that the liturgical time is not installed for God to either act or not act, but is there to free man from worldly occupations. Accordingly, we read:

la Loi [...] leur avait spécifié des jours connus et des temps fixes parmi les jours de l'année afin qu'ils s'y réparassent des vanités du temps et des préoccupations du corps et de ses plaisirs, s'y éveillent de leur sommeil et s'y repentissent d'un entier repentir en se rappelant le caractère du créé du monde [...] pendant qu'ils gravent dans leur représentation et leur connaissance ce qu'ils peuvent atteindre de l'existence de Dieu.<sup>20</sup>

The Law fixes liturgical moments in order to free man from material occupation, for him to attain knowledge. This abstinence from material or practical activities and movement towards intellectual occupation is described in terms of waking up and, even more surprising, repentance. The Hebrew used here reads: וישבו שלימה בהם בתשובה שלימה (« And they *repented* within [these fixed days] with a complete repentance »).

The use of repentance is surprising here, even more so because later in the same passage, the same metaphor of awaking from sleep is used (p. 66), while the image of repentance does not return.

The image of waking up fits well with the Aristotelian epistemology we have encountered in Moses's writings, describing how, at first, the human intellectual soul contains the intellectual forms *in potency* and then moves to possess these in *act*, and thus attains its perfection. Moses writes:

l'âme intellectuelle humaine, étant informée de la part de l'existence divine [...] aussitôt cette âme [intellective] est éveillée de son sommeil et se prend de dégoût pour les vanités et les plaisirs du monde; il se crée en elle un désir et un amour intellectuels pour le seul service de Dieu.<sup>21</sup>

Here again, Moses describes the acquisition of the human intellectual soul's knowledge of God in terms of 'waking up' from the material world, in order to follow the spiritual and moral path of truth that leads to God. Perhaps this notion

---

<sup>20</sup> ROTHSCHILD, *Moïse b. Sabbatai*, p. 66.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 72.

of waking up is necessary for Moses to show that it is not so much that the created world causes man to attain God, since this would introduce the created world as an intermediary cause, but rather that these divine truths are already present within man (even if only in potency at first), stemming from God and leading to God. Besides, the metaphor of waking up, could provide Moses with the tool to allow a theodicy for God. Indeed, when Juda of Rome writes in his *Sefer ben porat* that the causality of the First Cause is limited to the first of the superior existents, he exempts God from the imperfections of the world, which are attributed to secondary, intermediary causes. Moses, in his strong opposition to God requiring intermediary causes, does not provide this ‘alibi’ for God. Rothschild comments:

La différence entre ces deux types d'explication, c'est d'abord que le premier, celui de Juda de Rome, résout le scandale de l'injustice en relativisant en termes d'économie interne du monde et de rapport du tout et de ses parties, alors que le second, celui de Moïse b. Sabbataï, relativise l'importance de la vie dans ce monde.<sup>22</sup>

Moses, stressing the intellectual, rather than material (and therefore imperfect and unjust) life, tries in his way to safeguard God from earthly imperfections that would appear in the metaphor of ‘waking up’ as only a bad dream.

Accordingly, the metaphor of ‘waking up’ does not come as a surprise and can be explained from different angles. But what about ‘repentance’? In order to understand what repentance has to do with acquiring knowledge, we ought to look at the Hebrew. The Hebrew uses the word *teshuva* (תשובה), which can indeed be translated as repentance. Its meaning can be traced back to the root ‘shuv’ (שוב, to turn), equivalent to ‘niham’ (נחם, to repent, to console), pointing at a dynamic form of repentance.<sup>23</sup> *Teshuva* can also be understood in a broader way as *returning*.<sup>24</sup> It could be interesting to posit that in the above-cited passage we find an instance of ambiguity as well as precision in which Moses employs both understandings of *teshuva* at once. Understanding *teshuva* in its broader sense as *return*, one could read the phrase from the same Aristotelian perspective as ‘waking up’. When man attains knowledge, especially knowledge of the First Principle, the human intellectual soul *returns* to what it already contained in *potency*, but now possesses in *act*. Doing so, man acknowledges God as his perfection and as his source. Thereupon, man exalts God, which could be seen as

---

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., p. 229.

<sup>23</sup> KOHLER KAUFMANN, MAX SCHLESINGER, « Repentance (Hebr. ‘teshubah’) », in *Jewish Encyclopedia*, ed. ISIDORE SINGER, Funk and Wagnalls, New York 1906, p. 376–379.

<sup>24</sup> LOUIS E. NEWMAN, *Repentance: the Meaning and Practice of Teshuva*, Jewish Lights Publishing, Vermont 2010, p. 107.

an ultimate *return* to its eternal and immovable source. Next to understanding *teshuva* in its broad sense, its moral meaning as ‘repentance’ is crucial in understanding the context of the passage. We find Moses’s reference to *teshuva* under the title, « Raison du calendrier liturgique ». Moses previously argued that God does not act through time, since He acts without intermediary. This raises the question regarding the necessity of the liturgical calendar: if God does not act through time, why would liturgical time be necessary? Moses argues that we need this time to reach God, by turning away from corporeal activities during liturgical feasts. He stresses in particular the importance of Yom Kippur. In the preceding part of the text, Moses writes:

Tous ces jours sont-ils réservés à éveiller notre intellect de la torpeur du sommeil et à [lui] faire acquérir le monde futur. De même pendant les dix jours qui sont entre le Jour de l’An et Kippour, Dieu nous a ordonné de nous consacrer pendant ce temps, par les prières et implorations, et de revenir d’un entier repentir, et de nous mortifier le jour de Kippour [...] pour inciter notre intellect à revenir à lui d’un repentir complet.<sup>25</sup>

We should first note the twofold combination of the terms ‘return’ (שוב in the Hebrew text) and ‘repentance’ (תשובה). The two senses of *teshuva* seem to be interwoven here. Moreover, the image of ‘waking up’ is also used here. There seems to be a strict correlation between attaining knowledge by waking up from worldly pleasures and returning to God by repenting. These two interwoven motifs stress the importance of liturgical time, not as an *intermediary of God*, but as an *intermediary of man* to come to God. The repentance that takes place on Yom Kippur, accordingly, seems to have not only moral, but also epistemological implications. By confessing one’s sins before God, man ‘wakes up’ from worldly pleasures and vows to follow God’s path, thereby searching to know God by acquiring the six intelligible forms that he already possess in potency, and ultimately perfecting the human intellectual soul.

The combination of the metaphor of ‘waking up’ together with ‘repentance’ can perhaps be seen as a limitation on the rationalist undercurrent of Moses’s ideology. Whereas Moses had argued against the halakists, claiming that they are too concerned with practical matters at the expense of pursuing speculative and theoretical truth, perhaps Moses argues here the inverse: man cannot place his trust upon the intellect alone; the practical, liturgical matters are also important in reaching God. Man has to ‘wake up’ from his corporeal pleasures and devote himself to the search of God, and at the same time the practical, liturgical rituals will both enflame and sustain his desire to know God. The two images (waking up and repenting) appear here as different perspectives on man. Man awakening is

---

<sup>25</sup> ROTHCHILD, *Moïse b. Sabbataï*, p. 65.

the human intellectualive soul fervently seeking God, as *independent* as possible from practical matters. Man repenting is man *dependent* upon practical matters, but more importantly, man *dependent upon divine grace*. This double face of man, of dependence and independence, is visible most clearly in Moses's poem *Šir 'eden ha-hayyim* (Song of the Eden of the living). This poem consists of a chorus and four stanzas. In the second strophe, we read: « Discerne [les voies de] la recherche de l'intellect et tu acquerras la félicité des vivants » (p. 247). This phrase points to the importance of the perfection of the human intellectualive soul by acquiring knowledge of the intellectual forms. In the fourth stanza, we read: « J'écouterai la voix qui me réveille: 'Lève-toi, somnolent, écoute les paroles plus que l'or, l'or fin, précieuses et tu verras la voie des vivants' » (p. 248). In the fourth stanza, the image of waking up returns. Moses portrays man here as drowsy and fatigued, desperate for help. It is God's voice who will awaken the man in need, and who will lead him to the way of the living. Similar to Yom Kippur, where man confesses his sins and waits for a divine response, here man waits for God's voice to wake him up. Rothschild comments on the poem:

L'étude scientifique de la création, celle-ci ne peut servir que de 'promesse' ou de 'confirmation'; mais on ne saurait s'engager sur la Voie elle-même sans un appel divin (strophe 4): n'est-ce pas là, tout de même, introduire comme la notion d'une grâce divine en forte réaction contre le naturalisme intellectualiste maïmonidien selon son interprétation rationaliste classique, d'après laquelle la mise en œuvre des facultés et du programme intellectuels requis entraîne infailliblement l'adhésion à l'Intellect Agent? Et même, une mise en doute du rôle de l'intelligence tel que l'a conçu Juda de Rome?<sup>26</sup>

Rothschild views the last stanza in light of the criticism of the over-independent, infallible (human) intellect. Perhaps Moses does not have in mind specifically Maimonides, nor Juda of Rome. Nonetheless, his criticism on an overly categorical rationalism by his emphasis on divine grace through the need of God's voice and the emphasis on repentance that requires a divine answer, seems to fit Moses's general ideology. Indeed, Moses, from the beginning, stresses the dependence of *everything* upon the First Cause. In this view, mankind does not form an exception: even though the human soul can independently acquire knowledge through science and thus climb up to know the first principle, he still depends upon God who will wake him up, forgive him, and place him on the track of acquiring truth.

The use of the interwoven images of 'waking up' and 'repentance' is not only characteristic for Moses's thinking, but fits also into what Rothschild

---

<sup>26</sup> ROTHSCHILD, *Moïse b. Sabbatai*, p. 249.

characterizes as the ‘performative writing’ of Moses b. Sabbatai. Rothschild explains:

Ne suivant pas [...] les règles de la logique aristotélicienne et reproduisant en quelque sorte le flux métaphysique qu’il décrit, il peut être regardé [...] comme pratiquant une sorte d’écriture performative dans laquelle le flux de l’écriture traduit, voire suscite, celui de la pensée elle-même [...] et doit entraîner à son tour non la conviction (argumentative), ni la persuasion (rhétorique), mais l’élévation de l’âme du lecteur qui lui permet de parvenir à la coïncidence de l’intelligent, de l’acte d’intellection et de l’intelligible.<sup>27</sup>

In this performative writing, the writing itself carries the reader very subtly to the conclusion and it forms the way to understanding (rather than representing the result of understanding). It is precisely within the framework of this ‘nudging,’ performative writing that we should situate Moses’s use of the term *teshuva* (repentance). First of all, we find this term in a paragraph that prepares the re-reading of a Talmudic interpretation of Isa. 55:6 (« Seek God while He can be found, Call to Him while He is near »). This Talmudic interpretation was probably known to the Kabbalists. Menahem of Recanati, whom we cited earlier amongst the ‘recent’ Kabbalists of Moses’s time, shows in his interpretation of this verse striking similarities to the Talmudic interpretation of the verse as God acting through the intermediary of time. Recanati, in his commentary on the Torah, draws the parallel between Isa 55:6 and the story of Abraham and Isaac.<sup>28</sup> Recanati sees the invocation of the name of Abraham, when he is about to sacrifice his son, as a « gate (*š’a’ar*) to *Bina* (understanding) and *Teshuva* (repentance) ». He then draws attention to the verse of Isa 55:6, and states that God is being near, and can thus be invoked, when these so-called ‘gates’ are open, and the path to God is not far. This brings us to a second point of Moses’s subtle argumentation. Moses uses the term *teshuva* (repentance). This term is far from being neutral. Instead, its use is strongly related to the Kabbalistic doctrine of the *sefirot*,<sup>29</sup> where *teshuva* figures mostly amongst the highest *sefira* of *Bina* (understanding).<sup>30</sup> Even more important to note is that the term *teshuva* was used

---

<sup>27</sup> Ibid., p. 38.

<sup>28</sup> MENAHEM OF RECANATI, *Vayera*, p. 24.

<sup>29</sup> BRIAN OGREN, *The Beginning of the World in Renaissance Jewish Thought: Ma’aseh Bereshit in Italian Jewish Philosophy and Kabbalah 1492-1535*, Brill, Leiden 2016 (Supplements to The Journal of Jewish Thought and Philosophy, 27), p. 124: « In Kabbalistic parlance, *Teshuvah* is a common designation for the third *sefirah* of *Binah* as the upper *Teshuvah*, and for the tenth *sefirah* of *Malkhut* as the lower *Teshuvah* ».

<sup>30</sup> At least two important Kabbalistic writings associate *teshuva* with *bina*: RABBI ISAAC, *Perush le-Sefer Yetzirah*, 15, line 333; RABBI ASHER B. DAVID, *Kabbalat*, 18, 1.40. Cited in MARK VERMAN, *The Books of Contemplation: Medieval Jewish Mystical Sources*, State University of New York Press, New York 1992.

explicitly in connection with these *sefirot* in the writings of Menahem of Recanati. Rothschild states that it is possible that Moses knew this recent Kabbalist (p. 13) and it is very probable that Moses's polemics against the recent Kabbalists were addressed (at least partly) at Menahem of Recanati. Recanati explicitly connects *teshuva* to the *sefirot* of *Bina* (understanding) and *Malkhut* (kingdom).<sup>31</sup> In this light, it could be possible to read Moses's use of *teshuva* as a subtle criticism on the Kabbalists. By using a term so dear to the Kabbalists in his metaphysics in order precisely to oppose Kabbalistic ideas, Moses turns the weapons of the Kabbalists against them.

### Conclusion

In conclusion, the nuanced, well-researched and extremely detailed study of Moses b. Sabbatai proves to be an interesting starting point for further studies on Jewish philosophy at the end of the thirteenth and beginning of the fourteenth century, which up to now « figure à peine dans la cartographie ou la chronologie de l'histoire de la pensée juive » (p. 1). Rothschild makes clear that Moses b. Sabbatai offers a valuable window into this still under-studied period – « a gap in the history of Jewish thought between the late Middle Ages and the early Renaissance »<sup>32</sup> – and through his analysis of Moses's commentary on Aquinas highlights the interplay between Latin scholasticism and Jewish (Maimonidean) philosophy. As has been shown by Giuseppe Veltri in his recent book on the Renaissance in Jewish thinking, the under-studied role of Judaism in the mostly Christian Renaissance brings up important and uncovered elements of this admired period in history.<sup>33</sup> Veltri rightly indicates that Judaism stood between inclusion and exclusion in the Renaissance, where it was not so much the *homo universalis*, but rather the *homo christianus* that was central. Nonetheless, because the Jews were in possession of the *lingua sacra* (Hebrew), which was revalued within the « return to the old » of the Renaissance, Judaism certainly had its place in the religious and intellectual exchange between Christians and Jews of the time, focusing on the Biblical sources and mysticism. Certainly, we can place Moses b. Sabbatai in this landscape, as it is clear how his combination of Biblical exegesis and mysticism forms a response not only to the Kabbalists, but also to Christian thinkers such as Thomas Aquinas. Rothschild, in a recent article,

---

<sup>31</sup> MENAHEM OF RECANATI, *Nasso 2* (Commentary on Numbers, 17): בוא וראה אפילו כנסת ישראל שהיא מלכות: וקראת תשובה ואם תאמר תשובה עליונה שהיא בינה היא אינה מצויה בכל מקום. Translation by OGREN, *The Beginning of the World*, p. 124: « Come and see: even the Assembly of Israel, which is Malkhut, is called Teshuvah, and if you should say that it is the upper Teshuvah, which is Binah, [know] that this is not found in every place ».

<sup>32</sup> See the review by ELISA CODA in *Studia graeco-arabica*, 9 (2019), p. 344.

<sup>33</sup> GIUSEPPE VELTRI, *Il Rinascimento nel pensiero ebraico*, Paideia, Turin 2020 (Biblioteca di Cultura Ebraica Italiana, 3).

stresses one important aspect of this religious and intellectual exchange.<sup>34</sup> He focuses on the interest for Christian literature among Jews in Italy, France, and Iberia in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. Even while no common language existed between Jews and Christians at the time, the intellectual exchange was possible thanks to Greco-Arabic sources shared by both the Jewish and Latin world. Moses b. Sabbataï is in this regard an excellent example of the intellectual exchange between Jews and Christians, as it becomes clear how the *Liber de causis* functions as a shared understanding between Latin scholasticism and Jewish philosophy, enabling thus an interchange that is not solely religious, but also deeply philosophical. Within this intellectual, philosophical exchange, we briefly touched upon the issue of the specific language and phraseology used in Jewish Italy, and focused on the image of ‘waking up’ and ‘repentance.’ In her article on Jewish-Italian, Sandra Debenedetti Stow more deeply analyzes certain linguistic aspects and lists works that portray the specific philosophical and religious language of Jewish Italy.<sup>35</sup> It would be most interesting to integrate Moses b. Sabbataï into these studies, since his specific phraseology and philosophical vocabulary offer another outlook on Jewish-Italian in the fourteenth century. Questions that need to be answered include: Was there a specific vocabulary of this Jewish-Italian school? If so, what role does Moses b. Sabbataï play in this linguistic exchange? Does Moses share a specific language with this school, or does he keep to a rather standard language? In any case, it must be remarked that Rothschild’s translations of Moses b. Sabbataï’s works are both accurate and reliable: the critical apparatus with the text and the extensive glossary are indicative of a meticulous translation, most useful not only for future studies on Moses, but also the general Hebrew reception of the *Liber de causis*. In sum, Rothschild’s book portrays a thinker who provides an insight into Judaism in the Renaissance, more specifically in Italy of the fourteenth century, and furnishes detailed and critical materials that might spark further studies on the exchange between Latin scholasticism and Judaism, and the specific language associated within this exchange.

---

<sup>34</sup> JEAN-PIERRE ROTHSCHILD, « Quelques philosophes juifs du Moyen Âge tardif, traducteurs ou lecteurs de saint Thomas d’Aquin », in ELIAS H. FÜLLENBACH, GIANFRANCO MILETTO (eds.), *Dominicans and Jews: Personalities, Conflicts, and Perspectives from the 13th to the 20th Century*, De Gruyter, Berlin 2014 (Quellen und Forschungen zur Geschichte des Dominikanerordens – Neue Folge, 14), p. 25–64.

<sup>35</sup> SANDRA DEBENEDETTI STOW, « Il giudeo-italiano dal medioevo al primo Rinascimento: Caratteristiche, metodologia, studi e sviluppi », *La Rassegna Mensile di Israel*, 82/2–3, Umberto Cassuto: Maestro di Bibbia nel Paese della Bibbia, t. 1 (May-December 2016), p. 257–284.

# ARISTOTLE *REDIVIVUS* AND HIS ALTER-EGOS

LUCA BIANCHI  
UNIVERSITY OF MILANO



Francesco Tecchini, Abbot of Santa Justina, was studying a beautifully made copy of Aristotle's *Organon*. It was, of course, the translation of Boethius, not that Moorish edition with the footnotes of Averroes that of late had become so popular in certain clerical circles – that mixture of Aristotelian truth and Averroist heresy that one fine day would ruin the good name of the Stagirite. If only someone would come to clean that stable of Augeas – someone who would prove to those glib, self-assured Moslem philosophers that Aristotle, if he were alive today, would laugh at their fatalistic interpretations...

Louis de Wohl, *The Quiet Light. A Novel about Saint Thomas Aquinas*.

In the information age, you don't teach philosophy as they did after feudalism. You perform it. If Aristotle were alive today he'd have a talk show.

Timothy Leary, as quoted in Charles McGuire and Diana Abitz (eds.), *The Best Advice Ever for Teachers*.

## I. Introduction

*Early Modern Aristotle. On the Making and Unmaking of Authority*, recently published by Eva Del Soldato,<sup>1</sup> is a major contribution to the history of Renaissance and early modern philosophy. Presenting from a new angle well-known authors and works but also examining little known or unedited sources, Del Soldato highlights the

---

\* This research was funded by the Department of Philosophy 'Piero Martinetti' of the University of Milan under the project 'Departments of Excellence 2018–2022' awarded by the Ministry of Education, University and Research (MIUR).

<sup>1</sup> EVA DEL SOLDATO, *Early Modern Aristotle. On the Making and Unmaking of Authority*, University of Pennsylvania Press, Philadelphia 2020.

different strategies adopted in this period to establish or undermine the authority of Aristotle, to confront it with that of other religious or philosophical authorities (first of all, Plato), and to distinguish his doctrines and attitudes from those of his true or alleged disciples.

Brilliantly written, Del Soldato's book is organized into five chapters. The first three offer a rich analysis of the *comparationes* between Plato and Aristotle.<sup>2</sup> The practice of comparing their philosophies was notoriously widespread in late antiquity and was developed in the Middle Ages,<sup>3</sup> but it only gave rise to a specific genre of philosophical literature in the Italian Quattrocento, when Plato's works were passionately studied, translated and edited, and the idea that Aristotle should be considered the Philosopher par excellence was openly challenged.<sup>4</sup> Although several works have been devoted to specific texts belonging to this genre, Del Soldato remarks that « *comparationes* have never been studied as a whole, save

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 11–82.

<sup>3</sup> Del Soldato opportunely outlines the background of the practice of comparing Plato and Aristotle in Greek, Arabic, Byzantine, and Latin culture (ibid., p. 11–16), before the 'Greek Affair' started with Gemistio Pletho's *De differentiis*. It is useful to recall that from the thirteenth century onwards – in the footsteps of Eustratius of Nicaea, who in his commentary on the first Book of the *Nicomachean Ethics* criticised Aristotle's attack on the theory of ideas – several Latin theologians presented Plato as a better metaphysician than Aristotle. Some even claimed that he was 'the worst metaphysician': see EDWARD P. MAHONEY, « Aristotle as 'The Worst Natural Philosopher' (*pessimus naturalis*) and 'The Worst Metaphysician' (*pessimus metaphysicus*): His Reputation among some Franciscan Philosophers (Bonaventure, Francis of Mayronnes, Antonius Andreas, and Joannes Canonicus) and Later Reactions », in OLAF PLUTA (ed.), *Die Philosophie im 14. und 15. Jahrhundert. In memoriam K. Michalski (1879–1947)*, Grüner, Amsterdam 1988 (Bochumer Studien zur Philosophie, 10), p. 261–273. So, when Gemistio Pletho in his *De differentiis*, c. 18 (PG 160, c. 911–912 C) wrote that « in metaphysics, Aristotle spoke worse than anyone else », he reaffirmed an idea that already circulated in the Latin world.

<sup>4</sup> This point was not unprecedented, as one can see, e.g. in a treatise of logic redacted between 1324 and 1334 and erroneously ascribed to Richard of Campsall. The author of this treatise, while presenting the different types of *suppositio impropria*, refuted the assumption that the term 'philosopher' necessarily supposits for Aristotle, « according to the habit of the moderns who consider him the most important and the greatest among the philosophers, although some maintained that Plato was greater and more excellent ». Having quoted Cicero and Augustine to support this view, Pseudo-Campsall openly endorsed it: « Suppositio, autem 'antonomastica' est quando terminus supponit pro aliquo individuo cui maxime et principaliter competit. Verbi gratia: 'philosophus dicit hoc', 'philosophus negat hoc'. In istis, enim, propositionibus, subiectum supponit pro aristotile et hoc secundum usum modernorum, qui ipsum inter philosophos reputant principaliorem et maiorem licet, secundum aliquos, plato pro maiori et excellenciori habeatur. Unde de platone dicit tullius in libro *de natura deorum*, plato 'deus philosophorum', et augustinus: 'plato', inquit, 'omnium philosophorum prelatus', et ego credo platonem excellenciozem aristotile; ipse, enim, nunquam cogitavit illas abusiones quas sibi aristotiles inponit ». See *Logica Campsall Anglici*, in EDWARD A. SYNAN (ed.), *The Works of Richard of Campsall*, vol. II, Pontifical Institute for Mediaeval Studies, Toronto 1982, p. 402. All italics in quotations are mine unless otherwise stated.

Purnell Jr. ».<sup>5</sup> Therefore, Del Soldato has the great merit of filling this remarkable gap, as she attentively scrutinises a large number of significant texts written between 1439 (when Gemistius Pletho's *De differentiis* appeared in Greek) and 1697 (date of composition of the *Discorso della filosofia* by Giovanbattista Vico's friend, Giuseppe Valletta). The complete list of texts that she examines includes those authored by major figures such as Cardinal Bessarion, George of Trebizond, Francesco Vimercato, Francesco Patrizi and Jacopo Mazzoni, but she also pays attention to less-known booklets by Livio Galante, Alfonso Pandolfi, Vincent Raffar, and Antonio Montecatini.<sup>6</sup> Moreover, Del Soldato supplements this substantial part of her book with four appendices, containing the transcription and English translation of the preface by Alfonso Pandolfi to his comparison between Plato and Aristotle; an unedited lecture by Federico Pendasio on the same topic; a note on some sceptical reactions against the concord between Aristotelianism and Platonism; and another note on the attribution to Vimercato of an anonymous *comparatio* preserved in a manuscript of the Ambrosiana Library of Milan.<sup>7</sup>

Chapter 4 is also highly original. It deals with anecdotes and legends concerning Aristotle circulating in Europe between the fifteenth and the seventeenth century, when some affirmed that the Stagirite was a Spaniard, others depicted him as a Jew, some blamed him as a detractor of Moses, and others presented him as a good Christian or even a Papist.<sup>8</sup> This chapter confirms the main theses of *Early Modern Aristotle*: first, that Aristotle's authority was used and abused throughout the centuries in a flexible and often opportunistic way; second, that « the diffraction of Aristotle's authority » provides evidence to Charles Schmitt's ground-breaking assumption that there were multiple 'Aristotelianisms' during the Renaissance and that in this period the Aristotelian tradition displayed an extraordinary vitality and adaptive spirit.<sup>9</sup>

Even more valuable in this perspective is chapter 5, devoted to the history of a « mental [or thought] experiment »<sup>10</sup> applied to different figures such as Plato, Cicero and Petrarch,<sup>11</sup> but generally associated to the Stagirite: according to this

<sup>5</sup> DEL SOLDATO, *Early Modern Aristotle*, p. 7–8.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 11–82, in particular p. 50–52, 61, 67.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.* p. 155–181.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 83–108.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 5–6, 150. On Renaissance 'Aristotelianisms', see CHARLES B. SCHMITT, *Aristotle and the Renaissance*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, MA 1983. I argued that this 'pluralistic' approach should be extended to the medieval Aristotelian tradition in LUCA BIANCHI, EUGENIO RANDI, *Le verità dissonanti. Aristotele alla fine del medioevo*, Laterza, Roma–Bari 1990, p. 3–31.

<sup>10</sup> DEL SOLDATO, *Early Modern Aristotle*, p. 9, 120, 142.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.* p. 115–117, 141. One might add to the list other ancient and medieval authors, including Seneca and Dante. On Seneca see e.g. GIAN VITTORIO ROSSI (JANUS NICIUS ERYTHRAEUS), *Eudemiae libri*

experiment, « if Aristotle were alive, he would say/do this ».<sup>12</sup> Del Soldato presents the different formulations of this motif; she keenly investigates its relationship with the ‘principle of authority’ and its rhetorical and polemical functions in a large number of significant works composed not only by anti-Aristotelian thinkers (Juan Luis Vives, Petrus Ramus, Gerolamo Cardano, Tommaso Campanella, and Pierre Gassendi) but also by some Renaissance and early modern Aristotelians; she skilfully shows how this motif was used, for various purposes, in religious debates and in several fields of research, notably logic, astronomy, natural philosophy, ethics, textual criticism; she reconstructs its role in eighteenth-century debates on the *Poetics* and the adequacy of its precepts in the age of the *commedia dell’arte*.<sup>13</sup>

One cannot but admire the erudition of Del Soldato, who detects the presence of this motif in texts redacted in different periods by the most different authors: particularly striking are quotations from fourteenth-century works trying to

---

*decem*, Iodocum Kalcovivum, Coloniae 1645, *ep. ded.*, fol. \*rv: « Quid? Putasne quod Seneca, si revivisceret, hanc ab isti confessionem terroribus vel minis exprimeret? ». On Dante Alighieri see Benvenuto da Imola’s commentary on *Paradiso* XXI, vv. 133–135 (<[https://dante.dartmouth.edu/search\\_view.php?doc=137553211300&cmd=gotoresult&arg1=4](https://dante.dartmouth.edu/search_view.php?doc=137553211300&cmd=gotoresult&arg1=4)>; last accessed 16 March 2021): « Hic Petrus Damianus aperte infamat pastores modernos [...]; unde dicit: ‘sì che due bestie van sotto una pelle’, scilicet, bestia portans, et ipse portatus, qui verius est bestia et bestialior ipsa bestia. Et certe si autor revivisceret hodie posset mutare literam istam et dicere: ‘sì che tre bestie van sotto una pelle’, scilicet, cardinalis, meretrix et equus; sicut audivi de uno quem bene novi, qui portabat concubinam suam ad venationem post se in clune equi vel muli; et ipse vere erat sicut equus et mulus sine ratione ». It is moreover noteworthy that the adjective ‘redivivus’ was often used in the title of books devoted to different authors and subjects: one has only think of Marino Ghetaldi’s *Apollonius Redivivus*, published in 1607; of the *Hypocrates redivivus sive theses medicae inaugurales* published at Prague in 1684; and of the two seventeenth-century books that share the title *Theophrastus redivivus*.

<sup>12</sup> DEL SOLDATO, *Early Modern Aristotle*, p. 9.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 109–149: on different formulations of the expression see *ibid.*, p. 110–111. DEL SOLDATO, *ibid.*, p. 112–113, remarks that the ‘if Aristotle were alive’ motif is rarely associated with the argument ‘Aristotle was a man and could therefore err’, whose extraordinary success from the Middle Ages to the Enlightenment is examined in LUCA BIANCHI, « ‘Aristotele fu un uomo e poté errare’: sulle origini medievali della critica al ‘principio di autorità’ », now in LUCA BIANCHI, *Studi sull’aristotelismo del Rinascimento*, Il Poligrafo, Padova 2003 (Subsidia Mediaevalia Patavina, 5), p. 101–132. It is worth noting that at the beginning of the fourteenth century, John of Pouilly minimised the gravity of Aristotle’s mistakes and, extolling his authority *in pure speculativis*, complained that some of his masters not only declared that Aristotle erred in a very bad way, but went as far as saying that if he came back to life they would be able to convince him of their intellectual superiority: « *Cum vero dicunt, quod in hiis, que sciri possunt per naturam, pessime erravit, quero: ubi, nec possent dicere. Cum dicunt, quod illi doctores Aristotelem convincerent, si ambo viverent, quod magis fuerunt regula in natura quam Aristoteles istud probatione indiget aut per rationem aut per testimonium autenticum, que tunc plura induxi pro Aristotele* ». The passage is quoted by MARTIN GRABMANN, *Mittelalterliches Geistesleben. Abhandlungen zur Geschichte der Scholastik und Mystik*, Hueber, München 1926–1956, vol. II, p. 101.

adapt Aristotelian logic to Trinitarian theology,<sup>14</sup> from medieval vernacular poems by Thomasin von Zirclaria and Christine de Pizan, from Carlo Goldoni's comedy *Il teatro comico*.<sup>15</sup> More importantly, Del Soldato analyses how Aristotle « was opportunistically called back to life » in a « paradoxical use of the principle of authority ». In fact, the resurrected philosopher was often invoked « to correct himself and to admit his own errors » and, at the same time, to distinguish himself – a true philosopher, ready to change his views and accept recent discoveries and new ideas – from his narrow-minded disciples, supposedly attached to his words in a dogmatic way. So he collaborated « to his own dethronement », to the emergence of a world view totally different from his own and to the triumph of rival traditions of thought.<sup>16</sup>

Presenting this chapter in her Introduction, Del Soldato remarks that « following the transformations of an expression can offer unexpected and insightful perspectives on the history of ideas over the *longue durée* ». <sup>17</sup> I fully concur and would simply add that whoever practiced this kind of enquiry<sup>18</sup> is well aware that this is a captivating, yet somewhat frustrating task, because research is potentially infinite and one has to renounce any pretension to exhaustiveness from the offset. Consequently, although Del Soldato provides her readers with an extraordinarily rich selection of passages employing the 'if Aristotle were alive' argument, other occurrences could be added. My purpose, however, is not to supplement her list, but to call attention to those occurrences which may be useful to discuss a few points that, I think, deserve further investigation.

---

<sup>14</sup> Besides the texts mentioned by DEL SOLDATO, *Early Modern Aristotle*, p. 117 and n. 33, p. 212–213, see WALTER CHATTON, *Reportatio super Sententias*, I, q. 4, a. 2, ed. JOSEPH C. WEY, GIRARD J. ETZKORN, Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies, Toronto 2002, p. 78–79: « Et quod obstat de modo arguendi, verum est quod non est modus secundum doctrinam Aristotelis, quia ipse non tradidit artem quae sufficeret in his quae sunt fidei; sed si vidisset quae sunt fidei, tradidisset regulas multas quas non tradidit ».

<sup>15</sup> DEL SOLDATO, *Early Modern Aristotle*, p. 114, 145–146.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 9, 126, 147, 151.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 9.

<sup>18</sup> As far as I am concerned, besides the paper mentioned above, n. 13, see LUCA BIANCHI, « 'Vae vobis homines': una massima di 'Avenzoreth' e le sue metamorfosi fra XIII e XVI secolo », in ANNA RODOLFI (ed.), *'Ratio practica' e 'ratio civilis'. Studi di etica e politica medievali per Giancarlo Garfagnini*, ETS, Pisa 2016 (*Philosophica*, 172), p. 225–248; *Id.*, « Ubi desinit physicus, ibi medicus incipit », in GABRIELLA ZUCCOLIN (ed.), *'Summa doctrina et certa experientia'. Studi su medicina e filosofia per Chiara Crisciani*, SISMEL–Edizioni del Galluzzo, Firenze 2017 (*Micrologus' Library*, 79), p. 5–28.

## II. *Different Ways of Encountering Aristotle*

I will start with two preliminary remarks. First, there are widely present in the Aristotelian tradition speculations about what the Stagirite might think, about his possible answers to certain questions, and about his capability or incapability to look at a variety of issues. For instance, expressions such as ‘if one would ask Aristotle...’ were already used by late medieval thinkers: a leading Parisian master of Arts of this period such as Siger of Brabant repeatedly resorted to this formula and went as far as considering what the Philosopher would likely respond, in agreement with his Commentator.<sup>19</sup> Siger also imagined how Aristotle might react « if he had grasped [*si vidisset*] » the correct meaning of a term – and similar hypotheses were also introduced by some fourteenth-century theologians.<sup>20</sup> Moreover, in the exegetical tradition of the *Nicomachean Ethics* fictional debates with him are rather common which follow the pattern: ‘you, Aristotle, say that ...; and I say...’. One can find them in the authoritative Greek commentary by Eustratius of Nicaea, likely composed between 1120 and 1130; in the well-received Latin *Expositio* by Donato Acciaiuoli, first printed in 1478;<sup>21</sup> in Francesco Pona’s

<sup>19</sup> See e.g. SIGER OF BRABANT, *Quaestiones in tertium de anima*, q. 12, ed. BERNARDO BAZÁN, p. 34: « Forte, si quaeretur ab Aristotele utrum anima intellectiva esset passibilis, ipse responderet quod ipsa intellectiva separata impassibilis est, et forte ipse cum Commentatore eius diceret quod ipsa inseparabilis est ». See also q. 2, *ibid.*, p. 6: « Unde, si quaeretur ab Aristotele utrum intellectus sit factum novum vel sit factum aeternum, ipse iudicaret intellectum esse factum aeternum sicut mundum ».

<sup>20</sup> SIGER OF BRABANT, *Quaestiones in Metaphysicam*, Vienna reportation, ed. WILLIAM DUNPHY, Éditions de l’Institut Supérieur de Philosophie, Louvain-la-Neuve 1981, p. 346: « Et praeterea, si Aristoteles vidisset quod scientia non secundum se diceretur ad aliquid, sed per aliud, iam non numerasset scientiam inter numerum relatorum secundum se, sed inter numerum relatorum per aliud ». As to fourteenth-century theologians, besides the passage quoted above, n. 14, see e.g. DUNS SCOTUS, *Quaestiones quodlibetales*, q. 15, in *Johannis Duns Scoti [...] Opera Omnia*, ed. LUKE WADDING, Vivès, Paris 1895, p. 121: « Istud autem, quod dicitur ex Philosopho, videtur facere ad propositum nostrum, quia si Philosophus vidisset aliquam intellectionem novam posse competere Angelo, dixisset ipsum aliquando esse in potentia accidentali ad intellectionem, quia haec est dispositio perfectior eius quod aliquando est in potentia ad intelligendum; igitur ille qui tenet, sive per rationem sive per fidem, aliquam esse intellectionem novam in angelo, consequenter dicat angelum quandoque ad illam esse in potentia accidentali, sicut Philosophus consequenter diceret ad illud quod ipse tenet; magis autem concordat cum Philosopho qui tenens aliquod antecedens, concedit consequens quod Philosophus etiam concederet, si illud antecedens teneret, quam ille, qui tenendo illud antecedens negat illud consequens, quia Aristoteles illud non negaret, concedendo illud antecedens »; HUGH OF NEWCASTLE, *Scriptum in librum Sententiarum, prol.*, in FRANCESCO FIORENTINO (ed.), « Le questioni prologali di Ugo di Novocastro », *Rivista di Filosofia Neoscolastica*, 4 (2014), p. 889–940: p. 931: « Ad aliam dico quod, si Philosophus vidisset istam operationem, posuisset felicitatem practicam; sed ista non fuit ei nota ».

<sup>21</sup> See LUCA BIANCHI, « Un commento ‘umanistico’ ad Aristotele: l’*Expositio super libros Ethicorum* di Donato Acciaiuoli », now in LUCA BIANCHI, *Studi sull’aristotelismo del Rinascimento*, p. 23–24. The

vernacular *Discorsi sopra le Morali di Aristotele a Nicomaco*, a text published in 1627 which derives from lectures on the first Book given at the *Accademia dei Filarmonici* of Verona,<sup>22</sup> where the counterfactual hypothesis that Aristotle « came back alive » is also introduced.<sup>23</sup>

Second, in their polemics against the Scholastic approach to philosophy, the humanists refused to consider Aristotle as the interpreter of ‘pure reason’, as a timeless thinker to whom one could pose contemporary problems, and started seeing him as a ‘classic’, as an author to be situated in his cultural context. As a result, humanist Aristotelians wished to draw – to use Bruni’s and Lefèvre d’Étaples’s eloquent metaphor – the waters of Aristotelianism ‘at their source’, to re-establish a direct contact with his texts conceived as documents of a historically-determined worldview that needed to be understood in its original meaning. Yet Renaissance culture was also permeated with the myth of the ‘rebirth of the Ancients’ and the ideal of a conversation with the great figures of the past – a conversation that, as Petrarch had shown, need not necessarily be located in the netherworld as in Homer, Virgil, Cicero and Dante. This naturally led to envisage a plurality of situations that allowed to examine the Philosopher’s ideas without following the Scholastic ‘timeless’ method of disputed questions – which the humanists abhorred – but by listening, so to speak, to his own voice: Ludovico Beccadelli’s declared purpose to understand the controversial third book of the treatise *On the soul* « quasi cum Aristotele colloquentes » is emblematic in this respect.<sup>24</sup>

---

technique of addressing Aristotle directly was still used by Galileo. See e.g. the *Frammenti attenenti al Dialogo*, in *Le Opere di Galileo Galilei*, Barbèra, Firenze 1890–1909, vol. VII, p. 546: « Tu, Aristotile, determini i moti semplici esser quelli che si fanno per linee semplici [...] tuttavia poi tu dirai [...]; e non vorrai più che il medesimo moto che tu chiami semplice [...] ».

<sup>22</sup> *Discorsi sopra le Morali di Aristotele a Nicomaco di Francesco Pona Dottor Medico Filosofo L’insatiabile Academico Filarmonico*, Giacomo Sarcina, Venezia 1627, p. 38. On this neglected commentary, see LUCA BIANCHI, « Uses of Latin Sources in Renaissance Vernacularizations of Aristotle: The Cases of Galeazzo Florimonte, Francesco Venier and Francesco Pona », in LUCA BIANCHI, SIMON GILSON, JILL KRAYE (eds.), *Vernacular Aristotelianism in Italy from the Fourteenth to the Seventeenth Century*, The Warburg Institute, London 2016, p. 31-55: p. 34-38.

<sup>23</sup> In explaining I.5, 1095b15–22 Pona takes the opportunity to denounce the moral degeneration of his times, arguing that « if Aristotle came back alive » he might give many other examples of people sharing the way of life of the « dirty Sardanapalus »: « Mà che se Aristotele adesso tornasse vivo, egli scioglierebbe [sic] altro essemplio, e il sozzo Sardanapalo gli parrebbe persona tollerabile, per non dir lodevole frà le sceleraggini c’hoggi si costumano: poiche altri vitij molto più enormi vanno hora non solo castigati, ma protetti, premiati, lodati », *Discorsi sopra le Morali di Aristotele a Nicomaco*, p. 28–29.

<sup>24</sup> See the *De immortalitate animae* studied and edited by PIETRO B. ROSSI, « ‘Sempre alla pietà et buoni costumi ha exortato le genti’: Aristotle in the milieu of Cardinal Contarini », in LUCA BIANCHI (ed.),

So the fiction of bringing Aristotle back to life was *one* of the strategies adopted to encounter him, to let him express his views, to qualify, change or recant them, to comment on events and doctrines that he did not, and often could not, know. As Del Soldato admirably shows, many authors « between the late Middle Ages and the eighteenth century » indeed obliged Aristotle to travel to the future,<sup>25</sup> to live – in a much stronger way than Oliver Sacks’s patients in *Awakenings* – the shocking experience of a totally changed world, to meet and interact with people that spoke a different language, accepted different religious beliefs and moral values, had acquired new technological capabilities and new knowledge.<sup>26</sup> Yet *other* narrative frameworks could also be successfully developed.

---

*Christian Readings of Aristotle from the Middle Ages to the Renaissance*, Brepols, Turnhout 2011 (Studia artistarum, 29), p. 317–395: p. 364.

- <sup>25</sup> DEL SOLDATO, *Early Modern Aristotle*, p. 110: « Whereas in the previous chapters I considered Aristotle (and Plato) in comparationes, fictions and legends, the present one deals instead with the European trajectory of the single motif ‘if Aristotle were alive’ between the late Middle Ages and the eighteenth century ». This was undoubtedly the ‘golden age’ of the motif, but one might perhaps extend the chronological boundaries of the inquiry to cover the period from the ninth century (date of Al-Ma’mūn’s dream examined below) to our times. A remarkable example of nineteenth-century speculations on Aristotle’s reactions to his modern followers is provided by ALESSANDRO MANZONI, *Lettre à monsieur Chauvet sur l’unité de temps et de lieu dans la tragédie*, in *Opere scelte del conte Alessandro Manzoni*, Passigli e Soci, Firenze 1832, p. 481: « Et par respect pour qui supporterait-on à perpétuité cette gêne? Par respect pour quelques commentateurs d’Aristote? Ah! Si Aristote le savait! ». As to the twentieth and twenty-first century, different and at times bizarre versions of the motif can be found in novels and collections of quotes (see the passages quoted in *exergo*); in books meant for a general audience (see e.g. TOM MORRIS, *If Aristotle Ran General Motors. The new Soul of Business*, Holt & C., New York 1998; DAVID BAGGET, SHAWN E. KLEIN (eds.), *Harry Potter and Philosophy. If Aristotle Ran Hogwarts*, Open Court, Chicago-La Salle 2004); in articles published in scientific journals (see e.g. JAMES H. MOOR, « If Aristotle were a Computing Professional », *Computers and Society*, 98 (1998), p. 13–16). However the most sophisticated witness of the enduring success of the *topos* of Aristotle coming back to earth in our times and discussing new theories is the German philosopher and diplomat Kurt Rietzeler, who wrote an entire book conceived as the record of lectures given by the Stagirite to a group of twentieth-century physicists: see KURT RIETZELER, *Physics and Reality: Lectures of Aristotle on Modern Physics at an International Congress of Science 679 Olympiad, Cambridge, 1940 A.D.*, Yale University Press, New Haven 1940. DEL SOLDATO, *Early Modern Aristotle*, ends Chapter 5 by claiming that when in the second half of the seventeenth century « new philosophies, new visions of nature, new paradigms prevailed, also at the institutional level, there was no longer any need to resurrect him in order to defend his tradition or to invoke him in order to demolish his doctrines and his school and endorse novel ones. At that point, Aristotle could finally be allowed to rest in peace » (p. 149). This is as brilliant as it is correct: yet the Philosopher’s eternal sleep at times was, and still is, interrupted.
- <sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 113: « Aristotle’s fixed place in history precluded him from obtaining knowledge of the many things discovered, or revealed, after his death. Yet by virtue of an imaginary return to the world of the living he can overcome the temporal boundaries of his existence, thus filling in the gaps in his learning, correcting his own doctrines, and, crucially, providing support for modern tenets ».

First of all, for Christian thinkers, meeting Aristotle or other authors of the past could not only be a « mental [or thought] experiment », a « counterfactual imagining », <sup>27</sup> but also a possibility that could be *actually realised* by God. This is clear, for instance, in the commentary on the *Nicomachean Ethics* first published in 1550 by the French humanist Omer Talon. Influenced by Pierre de la Ramée (Peter Ramus) – who, as Del Soldato highlights, alluded to Aristotle’s rebirth in order to make him a supporter of the *libertas philosophandi*<sup>28</sup> – Talon strongly criticized the assumption that Christian theology should be grounded on Peripatetic doctrines and censored those who stubbornly worshipped a fallible, pagan thinker who, if he were raised from the dead and instructed in the Christian faith, would reject his teachings.<sup>29</sup> Later on, Talon repeats this scolding against the Aristotelianising theology of Late Scholasticism, adding that if Aristotle, « like many others », were resurrected by God, he « would condemn and burn his books » and, acknowledging the limits of his rational wisdom, he would call « awfully stupid and brainless [*stultissimos et amentissimos*] » the advocates of his « impious and perverse » opinions.<sup>30</sup>

Moreover, Christian thinkers – as well as those who followed other monotheistic religions – believed not only in an Omnipotent God who could miraculously resuscitate the Philosopher as he did with Lazarus. They also believed in the afterlife of individual souls, and this allowed them to imagine that they could confer with Aristotle without assuming that he would return to *this* world. Thanks to divine supernatural intervention or human imagination, one could also come across him and his new opinions in *another* world: in dreamland,

---

<sup>27</sup> For these formulae see *ibid.*, p. 9, 110, 115, 120, 142.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 123–124.

<sup>29</sup> *Primus Aristotelis Liber ad Nicomachum, de beatitudine hominis, ab Audomaro Talaeo explicatus, in Audomari Talei ... Opera, ex officina Pernaie, Basileae 1575*, p. 652: « Si Aristoteles hoc tempore a mortuis excitaretur, eaque opinione, quam de Deo et Christo habemus imbueretur, confestim decreta sua tolleret, penitusque damnaret, quae inepti quidam Christiani stultissime probant, et pertinacissime sequuntur ».

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 706: « Quamobrem si Aristoteles ab illo ipso Deo, ut multi alij quondam, excitari posset lumenque Evangelicae veritatis intueri, libros suos damnaret atque incenderet; seque miserrima et infoelicissima caligine mentis occaecatum fuisse praedicaret nosque servos tam impiae et perversae opinionis stultissimos et amentissimos appellaret. Minime igitur decet nos, qui verae lucis possessores videri volumus, ab auctore suo damnatas tenebras improbatosque errores tam arcte tamque pertinaciter defendere, et gigantum more cum Deo et veritatem bellum impium et nefarium pro homine ethnico gerere. Quamobrem valde mirandum est hominis huius auctoritatem tam sanctam gravemque esse, ut quae ruinam et exitium verae pietatis adfert, pro unico religionis fundamento a Christianis hominibus habeatur ». Talo’s passages must be read in the light of Del Soldato’s discussion of the use of the motif in order to postulate Aristotle’s conversion to Christianity: see DEL SOLDATO, *Early Modern Aristotle*, p. 113, 117–120.

the netherworld, Hell or even – according to the classicising tastes of the time – in mythological places such as Parnassus.

Dream narratives have been repeatedly used to introduce a leading figure of the past and make him reveal important truths. An early witness to the application of this technique to Aristotle is provided by the celebrated dream of the ‘Abbāsīd caliph al-Ma’mūn, who reigned in Baghdad from 813 to 833 A.D. This dream is transmitted in two independent versions, the first of which is of great interest to us:

‘Abdallā ibn-Ṭhāir relates that al-Ma’mūn said: « I saw in my dream a man seated in the assembly of the philosophers, and said to him, ‘Who are you?’. He replied: ‘Aristotle the philosopher’. I said: ‘O philosopher, what is the best speech?’. He replied: ‘Whatever is correct according to personal judgment’. I said: ‘Then what?’. He replied: ‘Whatever the person who hears it finds to be good’. I said: ‘Then what?’. He replied: ‘That about whose consequences one would have no fears’. I said: ‘Then what?’. He replied: ‘Everything else is the same as a donkey’s bray’ ». Al-Ma’mūn said: « Had Aristotle been alive, he would not have added anything else to what he said here, since in this statement he collected everything that needed to be said and refrained from saying anything superfluous ».<sup>31</sup>

Dimitri Gutas has argued that this dream, « in all probability fabricated within circles closest to the caliph », reflects his religious and political project: the primacy accorded to the ‘personal judgement’ of an individual, first of all al-Ma’mūn himself, was indeed functional to his attempt « to consolidate and centralize power ». According to Gutas, the choice of Aristotle as the authority confirming the principles of the caliph’s policy is also significant: it shows the high reputation already acquired by the Greek philosopher, and more generally speaking by non-Arab thinkers, in intellectual circles in Baghdād – and therefore might bear witness to the fact that the translation movement had already developed.<sup>32</sup> However one interprets its ideological and historical significance, what now needs to be fully appreciated is the literary structure of this tale: we first find the record of a dialogue where Aristotle, in a dream, briefly answers a few elementary questions, raised by al-Ma’mūn, which deal with practical behaviour (« what is the best speech? »); then the reliability of the teachings imparted by Aristotle is confirmed by the dreamer himself who remarks that « had Aristotle been alive, he would not have added anything else to what he said here ».

<sup>31</sup> I quote the translation provided by DIMITRI GUTAS, *Greek Thought, Arabic Culture. The Graeco-Arabic Translation Movement in Baghdad and Early ‘Abbāsīd Society (2<sup>nd</sup>-4<sup>th</sup>/8<sup>th</sup>-10<sup>th</sup> centuries)*, Routledge, London–New York 1998, p. 97.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 97–104.

Therefore, Al-Ma'mūn's dream offers not only one of the first occurrences (to the best of my knowledge) of the 'if Aristotle were alive' motif but, in a certain sense, also one of the first samples of its « philological-exegetical application ».<sup>33</sup> The reborn philosopher, indeed, is evoked by the caliph in order to certify the full accuracy of the report of what he told him. But the dialogue between them did not take place in the real world: however powerful and open-minded, the Muslim caliph did not dare to call the pagan thinker back to life to be instructed by him and was happy with receiving his teachings in a dream.

Del Soldato devotes an entire paragraph to different applications of the 'if Aristotle were alive' motif in discussions on the translations and interpretations of the Aristotelian corpus.<sup>34</sup> She finely notes that if in other cases – as we will see with Galileo and his contemporaries – Aristotle « is transported to the modern world and placed before its novelties, so that he can say that the best way to honour his teaching is to abandon blind devotion to his writings », in « the philological-exegetical application of the motif, by contrast, he is called on, not to admit that his doctrines need to be corrected in light of new discoveries, but rather to verify the fidelity of the translations and the interpretations of his works, from the standpoint of his own original context and times »: the cases of Galeotto Marzio and Juan Luis Vives that she examines are emblematic in this respect.<sup>35</sup> Del Soldato also recalls Leonardo Bruni, who was one of the first humanists who complained that the original meaning of Aristotle's supposedly refined writings could not be understood because of flawed Latin translations and, in his *Dialogues*, wrote that these writings « have suffered such a great transformation that, were anyone to bring them to Aristotle himself, he would not recognize them as his own any more than his own dogs recognized Actaeon ».<sup>36</sup> But where could one bring

---

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 142.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 139–142. A beautiful example of this use of the *topos*, generally applied to the texts that he was going to edit and publish (among whom Aristotle and his commentators played a decisive role), can be found in Aldus Manutius's preface to a volume of Greek authors (Theocritus, Hesiodus, Theognides etc.), printed in 1496: « Non enim recipio me emendaturum libros – nam in quibus Oedipo coniectore opus esset: ita enim mutilati quidam sunt et inversi, ut *ne ille quidem qui composuit, si revivisceret, emendare posset...* ». See GIOVANNI ORLANDI (ed.), *Aldo Manuzio editore. Dediche, prefazioni, note ai testi*, Il Poligrafo, Milano 1975 (Documenti sulle arti del libro ; 11), vol. I, p. 9.

<sup>35</sup> DEL SOLDATO, *Early Modern Aristotle*, p. 140, 142.

<sup>36</sup> *Dialogi ad Petrum Paulum Histrum*, in LEONARDO BRUNI, *Opere letterarie e politiche*, ed. PAOLO VITI, UTET, Torino 1996, p. 96: « Fieri non potest, mihi crede, Coluci, ut illi quicquam recte teneant, presertim cum hi libri, quos Aristotelis esse dicunt, tam magnam transformationem passi sunt, ut si quis eos ad Aristotelem ipsum deferat, non magis ille suos esse cognoscat quam Acteonem illum, qui ex homine in cervum conversus est, canes sue cognoverint »; I use the English translation by David Thompson in GORDON GRIFFITS, JAMES HANKINS, DAVID THOMPSON, *The Humanism of Leonardo*

the Philosopher a copy of the Latin versions produced by ‘barbarous’ translators such as Robert Grosseteste and William of Moerbeke?

Bruni’s later treatise *De interpretatione recta*, written around 1420, allows a tentative answer to this question: *apud inferos*. This – it should be said – is not Bruni’s last word on this subject. As a matter of fact, about ten years later, in his *Vita Aristotelis* the Florentine chancellor repeated his scolding against those who deny the grace of the Stagirite’s style, adding that « if he were alive, he would himself repudiate » the medieval Latin translations of the Aristotelian corpus as his own works.<sup>37</sup> It remains that in his previous treatise on the correct way to translate, after quoting passages from the current Latin versions of the *Nicomachean Ethics* and the *Politics*, Bruni describes how Aristotle would react if he were informed in the netherworld of the bad rendering of his elegant prose:

*If there be among those below [apud inferos] any knowledge of our doings, Aristotle is surely pained and angry that his books have been so mangled by the ignorant, he is surely eager to deny his authorship, he is surely infuriated that they have used his name*<sup>38</sup>.

*Apud inferos*: using this vague term, Bruni carefully avoided to take a stance on the issue of the ultimate fate of Aristotle’s soul, which was passionately debated from the Middle Ages onwards. In the seventeenth century, the problem of the salvation or damnation of the Stagirite was still hot, as Del Soldato recalls in chapter 4 of her

---

*Bruni. Selected Texts*, The Renaissance Society of America, Binghamton, New York 1987 (Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies, 46), p. 69. This passage is quoted and discussed by DEL SOLDATO, *Early Modern Aristotle*, p. 139 and n. 103, p. 219.

<sup>37</sup> *Vita Aristotelis*, in BRUNI, *Opere letterarie e politiche*, p. 522: « Quippe adulterinas huius philosophi translationes lectitare soliti, intricatum quendam et obscurum et inconcinnum arbitrantur. Sed non sunt illi Aristotelis libri *nec si vivat ipse suos dici velit*, sed mere translatorum ineptie. Ille enim politissimus scriptor esse voluit, et quod voluit curavit et quod curavit assecutus est »; English translation by James Hankins in GRIFFITS, HANKINS, THOMPSON, *The Humanism of Leonardo Bruni*, p. 290.

<sup>38</sup> *De interpretatione recta*, in BRUNI, *Opere letterarie e politiche*, p. 192: « ... ut, *si quis apud inferos sensus sit rerum nostrarum*, indignetur et doleat Aristoteles libros suos ab imperitis hominibus ita lacerari, ac suos esse neget, quos isti transtulerunt, ac suum illis nomen inscribi molestissime ferat »; English translation by James Hankins, in GRIFFITS, HANKINS, THOMPSON, *The Humanism of Leonardo Bruni*, p. 229. Bruni expands here on what he had written in 1416 in the preface to his new translation of the *Nicomachean Ethics*. See the text edited in LEONARDO BRUNI, *Sulla perfetta traduzione*, ed. PAOLO VITI, Liguori, Napoli, p. 256: « ... *si quis illi nunc sensus est rerum nostrarum*, iampridem credendum est eum huic absurditati et inconcinnitati traductionis infensum et tantam barbariem indignatum hos suos libros esse negare, cum talis, apud Latinos videri cupiat, qualem apud Grecos sese ipse exhibuit ». As such, the description of the sentiments that an outstanding figure of the past might have in the underworld is hardly new. See e.g. Titus Livius’s *History of Rome*, Book 39, ch. 37: « si existat hodie ab inferis Lycurgus, gaudeat ruinis eorum ».

fine book, examining first the treatise *De pietate Aristotelis* by the Italian philosopher Fortunio Liceti, printed in 1645, then the pamphlets published by the Jesuit Melchior Cornaeus in the 1650s, notably the question *An Papista, an non Christianus* and the series of dialogues entitled *Aristoteles redivivus*. Cornaeus argues that, if a pagan thinker who ignored the Christian revelation came to know it, he would convert to Catholicism but could not embrace Lutheranism or Calvinism. To confirm this belief, Cornaeus presents the Stagirite as ready to appreciate the unique balance of natural reason and Scriptural faith that – he claims – is offered only by the Roman Church. The Aristotle imagined by the German Jesuit, however, could become a fervent Catholic only when, « getting out of the netherworld [*ab inferis reducem*] », was sent back to live on Earth and had the opportunity to meet faithful Catholics. This hypothesis sparked the reaction of some Lutherans, such as Conrad Dannhauer and Goffried Zapf. For them, the Philosopher was indeed unable to leave Hell, where he served his sentence, but Zapf « pretended to be the editor of a resentful letter written by Aristotle himself », who had obtained a special permission from the devil to answer the Jesuits and demonstrate, quoting the Bible, that Lutherans had a better understanding than Catholics of his thought!<sup>39</sup>

A few decades before the amazing exchanges between the German Jesuits and Lutherans which Del Soldato has rediscovered and reconstructed, a different attitude was adopted by an Italian nobleman, Cesare Crivellati. Author of several works on medicine, music and philosophy, Crivellati published Italian paraphrases of Aristotle's *Physics*, *De generatione et corruptione* and *Meteorologica*.<sup>40</sup> Giving a 'Christianised' reading of these texts, Crivellati particularly insisted on the idea that Aristotle deemed that the heavens have « received being » and never intended to prove that the world is eternal. To clarify this point, Crivellati appended to his paraphrase of the second book of the *Physics*, published in 1616, a *Dialogo fra Platone, e Aristotile circa l'origine, e duratione del Mondo*<sup>41</sup>. This « feigned

---

<sup>39</sup> See DEL SOLDATO, *Early Modern Aristotle*, p. 87-89 (on Liceti), 101-108 (on Cornaeus and his critics). As a book title, the expression 'Aristoteles redivivus' was later used by Barbarino de Angelis: see his *Aristoteles Redivivus in entis, et naturae systemate apologia vindicata contra universalem Veterum Philosophorum Hypothesin a Recentioribus Atomistis renovatam, ex typographia Simonis Trento, Cataniae 1741*.

<sup>40</sup> On Crivellati see LUCA BIANCHI, « 'Reducing Aristotle's Doctrine to Simple Truth': Cesare Crivellati and his Struggle against the 'Averroists' », in BIANCHI, *Christian Readings of Aristotle from the Middle Ages to the Renaissance*, p. 397-424; on the *Dialogue* see in particular p. 407-412.

<sup>41</sup> *Il secondo libro della Fisica. Tradotto per modo di Parafrese in lingua volgare. Con un Dialogo fra Platone, e Aristotile circa l'origine, e duratione del Mondo. Nel quale si sciogliono tutti gli apparenti argomenti fatti da esso Aristotile intorno à questa materia. Di Cesare Criuellati Fisico Viterbese, Con licenza de' Superiori [s. ed.], Viterbo 1616.*

[*finto*] dialogue »<sup>42</sup> was conceived as the record of a real conversation between the old master and his disciple and, therefore, to a certain extent, avoided the deliberate anachronism of the ‘if Aristotle were alive’ argument. Yet, what is at stake in Crivellati’s fiction is not only Aristotle’s endorsement of Christian religion, but also his attitude towards recent developments in philosophy. Plato indeed first explains to a too submissive Aristotle that, moving from the rational principles that the latter accepted, philosophy can demonstrate (or at least show the plausibility of) fundamental tenets of Christian faith: the existence of an immutable, omnipotent, omniscient and free God; the immortality of the human soul; the creation of the world *de novo*.<sup>43</sup> Then, though giving an indulgent reading of his arguments for the eternity of the world, reduced to mere dialectical tools, Plato complains that his disciple is accountable for secular controversies about the origin of the universe and that, willy-nilly, he paved the way to Averroes and the ‘Averroists’. The latter, which include the fourteenth-century Arts master John of Jandun, are precisely the main target of Plato, who violently attacks them and condemns their way of distinguishing philosophical and religious doctrines « as if there were two truths »<sup>44</sup> – an expression echoing Stephen Tempier’s prefatory

<sup>42</sup> *Il secondo libro della Fisica*, « A’ lettori », p. 5: « Eccovi benignissimi Lettori, [...] il secondo Libro della Fisica, nell’istesso modo che il primo tradotto in questa nostra lingua, nel quale, se non m’inganno, col mezzo d’alcune digressioni si verrà confermando quanto si è detto nel primo dell’origine del mondo; sciogliendosi di più da Platone nel *finto Dialogo tutte le ragioni, che da Aristotile sono state fatte intorno all’eternità di quello*; con dimostrare, che non è stata sua intentione ferma d’haver ciò dimostrato, e che non conclude la maggior parte di quelle, se non per cagion di supposto ».

<sup>43</sup> With regard to this point, Plato is proud of having taken a position which corresponds verbatim to the teachings of « Moses’s law »: « Io sò ben questo, che la mia opinione è verissima, e toglie via ogni difficoltà, e è stata seguita, e sarà sempre, fin che durerà il mondo, *per esser tanto conforme alla legge di Mosè, che par ch’io habbia cavato de verbo, à verbo, le sue parole*, della qual cosa tanto mi compiacchio, che niente più » (*Dialogo fra Platone, e Aristotile circa l’origine, e duratione del Mondo*, p. 86). For a general survey on early-modern debates concerning Plato and Aristotle as followers of Moses, see DEL SOLDATO, *Early Modern Aristotle*, p. 93–100.

<sup>44</sup> *Il primo libro della Fisica Volgarizzato per modo di Parafrase [...] Di Cesare Criuellati Fisico Viterbese*, Discepoli, Viterbo 1615, p. 89–90: « Nè anco bisogna dire, *per ritornare al landone*, [...] che questo è articolo di fede, e che il disputarlo toglie il merito: perche se bene è di fede non per questo si vieta, che non si disputi; e poi se così è, perche lo si disputa lui, si come fa; tanto più che tanti filosofi e antichi e moderni l’hanno disputato, e lo disputano. Ma è ben da maravigliarsi di quei tali, che con la creazione, e con la fede vogliono difendere l’eternità del mondo semplicemente, *quasi che siano due verità*, di maniera, che se la fede è vera, come è verissima, non è vera l’eternità, nel modo che la difendono, e se l’eternità fosse vera, non saria vera la fede; si che volendo salvar l’eternità, semplicemente parlando, e la fede, è cosa impossibile, tanto più, che come vuol S. Tomaso, la fede non distrugge la ragione, e però si può disputar anco con ragione, e in somma bisogna ridursi, che unica est veritas; si che se è verità questa, è falsità l’opposta, se *l’havessero detto cento Aristotili non che uno Auerroe* ».

letter to the articles censured in 1277, the first document of the ecclesiastical reaction towards the so-called ‘theory of double truth’ denounced again in the bull *Apostolici regiminis* promulgated by pope Leo X in 1513.<sup>45</sup>

According to Crivellati, the bizarre ‘question-and-answer session’ between the two greatest ancient philosophers started when Aristotle, coming « from the immense abysses of Hell [*da gli immensi abissi dell’Inferno*] », suddenly appeared in the « sulphurous and boiling land of Bollicame »,<sup>46</sup> i.e. in the healing springs near Viterbo that Dante Alighieri had described in the fourteenth canto of the first part of his *Divine Comedy* while illustrating the eternal punishment of those guilty of violence against God. Choosing a similar setting, Crivellati suggested the image of a damned Aristotle who, although relegated to an infernal space, is ready to recognise his faults thanks to the providential intervention of his former master Plato, and disapproves that impious misinterpretations of his teachings still circulate many centuries after his death.

Four years earlier, another Italian writer had presented Aristotle conversing in a totally different milieu. In his *Ragguagli di Parnaso*, first published in 1612 and soon translated in several languages, Traiano Boccalini describes the daily life of a separate world governed by Apollo, who receives the complaints of learned men and political figures living in the classical antiquity, the Middle Ages and modern times.<sup>47</sup> In one of his reports, Boccalini states that, when Torquato Tasso submitted

<sup>45</sup> *Dialogo fra Platone, e Aristotile circa l’origine, e duratione del Mondo*, p. 105: « Ar. Tu mi dici cose che mi paiono impossibili; dunque si trovano studiosi di Filosofia, cioè di verità, che facciano più conto de’ miei apparenti detti, che dell’istessa verità? non lo posso in un certo modo credere. Pl. Stanne certo Aristotile, e per hora ti fo mentione solo d’Averroe, il quale non solo in questo, che pure vi è qualche apparenza, ma in quelle cose ancora, che pur sono espressamente di tuo volere, per cagion di questa eternità, ha havuto ardire di opportisi, e di dire il falso; ma tal sia di lui, e di chi pospone la verità a te, e al tuo Averroe. Ar. Io mi maraviglio grandemente di questo, e fanno male a voler difendere il falso, ancorche l’havessero detto mille miei pari, e doveriano, secondo il mio parere, cercar di rispondere alli miei argomenti, si come hai fatto tu, e lasciar la verità nel suo luogo, e amar quella sopra qualsivoglia ragione, ò detto di Filosofo, massime havendo [ed.: hanendo] io accennato il contrario in tanti luoghi. Pl. Talche non doveriano fare come ha fatto un’Auerroista detto il Iandone, e altri [...] ». On the *Apostolici regiminis* and its impact see LUCA BIANCHI, *Pour une histoire de la ‘double vérité’*, Vrin, Paris 2008, p. 119–156.

<sup>46</sup> *Dialogo fra Platone, e Aristotile circa l’origine, e duratione del Mondo*, p. 47: « Pl. E chi sei tù, che da gli immensi abissi dell’Inferno vieni in queste solitudini, e in questa solfurea, e bollente, campagna del Bollicame così prontamente, e così improvvemente [sic] ad incontrarmi? ». After reminding his disciple that he previously did not have the opportunity to meet him because he was « confined in the abysses » (« Così anco, se tu stavi sempre rinchiuso ne gli abissi, era impossibile, che tu m’incontrassi [...] », *ibid.*, p. 76), Plato ends the *Dialogue* expressing the wish to be allowed to see him again (« à rivederci, pur che ci sia permesso il poterlo conseguire », *ibid.* p. 106).

<sup>47</sup> On Boccalini’s life and works see the entry by LUIGI FIRPO in *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani*, vol. XI, Istituto della Enciclopedia italiana, Roma 1969, p. 10–19. Literature on his *Ragguagli* is large: see

his *Gerusalemme liberata* as a patent for literary immortality, Ludovico Castelvetro – the author of a remarkable Italian translation of the *Poetics* who, in Apollo's imaginary kingdom, served as a *censore bibliotecario* – refused it, arguing that Tasso did not respect « the rules of Poetry published by Aristotle ». Claiming that he simply followed his inspiration, Tasso appealed to Apollo, who asked the guards to bring the Stagirite before him, defended the poets' « absolute liberty of writing and inventing », praised Tasso and rebuked the Philosopher for his presumption in establishing rules that curbed the writers' creativity. The poor, trembling Aristotle denied the charge, arguing that he simply gave a few general rules derived from the poetic practice of his time; that he never stated that only following these rules one can compose perfect literary works; that some ignorant men had turned them into universal laws; and that his only fault was his ambition, which encouraged him to accept this situation instead of denouncing the distortion of his authentic thought. In Henry Carey's seventeenth-century English translation the main passage reads as follows:

Poor Aristotle trembled at the hearing of these words, and humbly beseeched his Majestie that he would commiserate his old age, and *that such a Philosopher as he might not suffer for another's ignorance, saying, that he had writ the rules of Poetry, not in that sense in which it was afterwards understood by the ignorant, as if without observing his Rules and Precepts, no Poem could possibly arrive at perfection; but that, only to facilitate the Art of Poetry, he had shewed the way wherein the best Poets had walked.* That the only fault which he had committed, and for which he humbly craved his Majestie's pardon, was, that having found long before, that the ignorant took those his [*sic*] Observations for Laws, and peremptory Precepts, blinded with that Ambition which robs all men of their eye-sight; for that that error had encreased his Honour and Reputation, he had given his Majestie thereby so high a displeasure. And that he confest that the brains of high-strained Poets might write Poems so absolutely perfect, as they might serve others for Rules and Laws to be observed, without keeping his Laws and Precepts. And that the truth of this that he had said was clearly proved by the *Politicks* which he had published, which in comparison to the madly-wrested Reason of State which was now practised by many, was meer foppery.<sup>48</sup>

---

at least NICOLA BONAZZI, *Dire il vero scherzando: moralismo, satira e utopia nei Ragguagli di Parnaso di Traiano Boccalini*, Angeli, Milano 2017.

<sup>48</sup> *Ragguagli di Parnaso, Centuria prima*, XXVIII, ed. LUIGI FIRPO, Laterza, Roma-Bari 1948, vol. I, p. 86–88: p. 87–88: « Tremava il misero Aristotile a queste parole, e umilissimamente supplicava Sua Maestà che avesse per raccomandata la sua vecchiaia, e che per l'altrui ignoranza non dovesse pericolare un filosofo suo pari; e ch'egli non avea scritte le regole dell'arte poetica col senso che dagl'ignoranti gli era stato dato poi, che senza osservar i precetti e le regole pubblicate da lui non fosse possibile che poema alcuno avesse la sua perfezione: ma che solo per altrui facilitar l'arte del poetare avea mostrata la strada che lodevolmente avevano camminata i più famosi poeti; ch'egli solo aveva commesso

While in this case the fearful Aristotle hastens to qualify his position, distinguishing it from that of his followers, in the seventy-sixth 'news-letter' from Parnassus he displays a higher level of self-criticism. Aristotle was indeed « besieged » in his « Country-house » by many princes who complained that he gave a definition of the tyrant that was so large and « malignant [*maligna*] » as to include « every good Prince ». After the intervention of Federico Feltrio, duke of Urbino, Aristotle was obliged to acknowledge that he was « grossly ignorant [*grasso ingorantone*] » in political matters and, scared to death, he « suddenly recanted » his definition admitting that it was totally outdated:

By these words, Duke Federico found that the Princes had just reason to be incensed; wherefore *he easily prevailed with Aristotle to revoke his former definition of a Tyrant, and to make a new one, which might satisfie those so highly offended Princes. Then Aristotle suddenly recanted, and said, that Tyrants were a certain sort of men in the old time, the Race whereof was wholly lost now.* The Princes having received such satisfaction as they desired, presently quitted their quarters: and being gone towards their own States, Aristotle, being half dead with fear, returned to Parnassus, assuring all the Vertuosi, that his Philosophical Precepts failed him very much against the fear of death; and bade the Litterati attend their Studies, and let alone the Reason of State, which it

---

l'errore, del quale a Sua Maestà chiedeva umilmente perdono, che molto tempo prima essendosi avveduto che gl'ignoranti quelle sue osservazioni interpretavano regole e precetti irrefragabili, perché quell'errore gli accresceva onore e riputazione, accettato da quell'ambizione che ad ognuno toglie il vedere, era caduto nel disordine di dar così grave disgusto a Sua Maestà; e che confessava che senza osservar que' suoi precetti e il modo ch'egli aveva mostrato, gl'ingegni elevati dei poeti potevano compor poemi di tanta assoluta perfezione, ch'altrui avrebbero potuto servir poi per regole e leggi degne di essere osservate: e che delle cose ch'egli aveva detto, chiarissimo testimonio ne rendeva al mondo tutto la *Politica* pubblicata da lui, la quale, in comparazione dell'arrabbiata e stirata ragion di stato che ne' tempi presenti usavano molti, era una mera buffoneria ». For the English translation see *I Ragguagli di Parnasso or, Advertisements from Parnasus: in two Centuries [...] written originally in Italian by the famous Roman Trajano Boccalini, and now put into English [...] Second Edition*, Starkey and Basset, London 1669, p. 37–38: p. 38. In 1639 also Paganino Gaudenzi, who taught Greek, rhetoric, history and politics in Rome and Pisa, wrote a *comparatio* of Plato and Origenes (mentioned by DEL SOLDATO, *Early Modern Aristotle*, p. 194, n. 77) and was an admirer of Galileo, defended the writers' freedom using the 'if Aristotle were alive' motif: « Qualora ammettano che i Latini si siano dedicati alla riprensione degli errori umani col favore di Apollo è necessario che, sconfitti, ci concedano anche che è possibile e legittimo dare vita ad un carne anche se esso non si conforma ai precetti di Aristotele. Che se lo *Stagirita fosse vivo forse non espungerebbe e ritratterebbe ciò che scrisse sulla poesia, ma accrescerebbe ed emenderebbe il suo volume in base a quello che, dopo la sua morte, è stato prodotto dalla felice audacia dei grandi ingegni* ». I quote from FRANCESCO GUARDIANI, ANTONIO ROSSINI, « Un'apologia del Marino *ex cathedra*: l'orazione di Paganino Gaudenzi (1595–1649) », *Quaderni d'Italianistica*, 19 (1998), p. 101–131: p. 122.

was impossible to treat of, without running evident danger of being esteemed Criminal by Princes.<sup>49</sup>

### III. 'If Aristotle Had Seen': Galileo and His Friends

On June 22, 1613 Girolamo Magagnati – a poet, active in Venice in the mirror and glass industry – sent a letter to Galileo informing him, among other things, that he had drunk to his health together with Traiano Boccalini.<sup>50</sup> Magagnati was indeed a good friend to both Boccalini and Galileo, and had recently honoured the latter's discovery of Jupiter's 'planets' announced in the *Sidereus Nuncius* in a short poem, dedicated to Cosimo II de' Medici.<sup>51</sup> There is no need to recall that this and the other telescopic discoveries, as well as Tycho Brahe's observations of the new star that appeared in 1572 and of the comet of 1577, caused great excitement and challenged the most basic concepts of Aristotelian cosmology.<sup>52</sup> In this context, Galileo started systematically using the 'if Aristotle were alive' motif, and Eva Del Soldato has the great merit of calling attention to the pivotal role that it played in

<sup>49</sup> *Ragguagli di Parnaso, Centuria prima*, LXXVI, ed. LUIGI FIRPO, Laterza, Bari 1948, vol. I, p. 255–257: p. 256–257: « Da queste parole il duca Federico chiaramente conobbe esser giusto lo sdegno de' principi: onde facilmente ottenne da Aristotile che rivoctasse l'antica diffinizione del tiranno e che ne facesse una nuova, che di soddisfazione fosse a quei principi tanto adirati. Allora si ritrattò subito Aristotile, e disse che i tiranni furono certi uomini del tempo antico, de' quali oggi giorno affatto si era perduta la razza. Avuta che ebbono i principi la soddisfazione che tanto desideravano, disloggiarono subito; ed essendosi partiti per gli Stati loro, Aristotile, mezzo morto dalla paura, ritornò in Parnaso, facendo pienissima fede a' virtuosi tutti, che i precetti della sua filosofia, molto scarsi gli erano riusciti contro la paura della morte; e pubblicamente disse che i letterati attendessero agli studi loro e che lasciassero andare la ragion di Stato, della quale non era possibile trattare senza correre evidente pericolo di entrar co' principi ne' criminali »; English translation, p. 118–119. On this passage see MAURIZIO VIROLI, « Il significato storico della nascita del concetto di ragion di stato », in A. ENZO BALDINI (ed.), *Aristotelismo politico e ragion di stato*, Olschki, Firenze 1995 (Fondazione Luigi Firpo. Centro di studi sul pensiero politico, Studi e testi, 4), p. 67–81: p. 76. See also a remarkable passage of the *Centuria seconda*, XC, vol. II, p. 298–310: p. 298–299 (English translation, p. 309): in this advertisement ancient cosmographers have the opportunity to meet Columbus and other « discoverers of the new world ». Aristotle, in particular, understands « how many falsehoods he and other Philosophers had published of the Torrid Zone », giving an inaccurate picture of the world « miraculously fabricated » by the Omnipotent God.

<sup>50</sup> See *Le Opere di Galileo Galilei*, vol. XI, p. 527.

<sup>51</sup> On Magagnati's friendship with Boccalini and Galileo see CARLO CARABBA, GIULIANO GASPARRI, « La vita e le opere di Girolamo Magagnati », *Nouvelles de la République des Lettres*, 2 (2005), p. 61–85: p. 64–65, 73–74. See also MASSIMO BUCCIANINI, MICHELE CAMEROTA, FRANCO GIUDICE, *Il telescopio di Galileo. Una storia europea*, Einaudi, Torino 2012, p. 208–209.

<sup>52</sup> For a general survey see PAOLO GALLUZZI (ed.), *Novità celesti e crisi del sapere. Atti del convegno internazionale di studi galileiani*, Giunti-Barbera, Firenze 1984 (Istituto e Museo di storia della scienza di Firenze. Monografie, 7); MIGUEL ANGEL GRANADA (ed.), *Novas y cometas entre 1572 y 1618. Revolución cosmológica y renovación política y religiosa*, Universitat de Barcelona, Barcelona 2012; DARIO TESSICINI, PATRICK J. BONER (eds), *Celestial Novelties in the Eve of the Scientific Revolution (1540-1630)*, Olschki, Firenze 2013 (Biblioteca di Galilaiana, 3).

his argumentative strategy for destroying two fundamental doctrines of Peripatetic cosmology: the distinction between the sublunary and the superlunary world and the existence of hard celestial orbs, made of an incorruptible and unchanging element, namely the ether.<sup>53</sup>

As Del Soldato remarks, from Rheticus and Kepler onwards, the idea that a reincarnated Aristotle would change his view of the heavenly world « became almost a matter of course » among the astronomers.<sup>54</sup> One might add that the ‘if Aristotle were alive’ motif circulated among them even before, as witnessed by the great German mathematician and astronomer Johannes Müller, better known as Regiomontanus. In 1464, he lectured on the Arabic astronomer al-Farghānī at the University of Padua, and in his inaugural oration, which offers a history of the arts of the *quadrivium* and related disciplines from antiquity to his own time, he emphasised the continuity of the mathematical tradition; he praised not only ancient authorities such as Euclid, Archimedes, Apollonius and Ptolemy, but also more recent mathematicians such as Jordanus Nemorarius, Jean de Murs, and his master and friend Peuerbach; he stressed the practical utility of mathematics, which he considered necessary for the study of philosophy, Aristotle’s works included. According to Regiomontanus, the advancement of learning in mathematics – whose theorems are « as certain today as they were a thousand years ago » – has no equivalent in philosophy, as witnessed by the cultural situation of his age; while different sects, first of all the Thomists and the Scotists, contrast each other, « the prince of philosophers is completely abandoned, and he who is better than others in *sophismata* usurps his name, so that if Aristotle himself were revived, he would not, I believe, even understand his followers and disciples ».<sup>55</sup>

Neither the polemics against the growing importance of *sophismata*-literature nor the appreciation for the Aristotelian corpus are surprising in a humanist such

<sup>53</sup> DEL SOLDATO, *Early Modern Aristotle*, p. 127–137.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 127.

<sup>55</sup> *Oratio ... habita Patavij in praelectione Alfragani*, in *Johannis Regimontani Opera Collectanea*, ed. FELIX SCHMEIDLER, Zeller, Osnabrück 1972, p. 43–53: p. 50–51: « Pars Ioannem Scotum imitatur; alij sanctum Thomam; nonnulli autem ingenio promiscuo haec atque illac defluunt. Scotistas se pronunciant victos, ubi vero liberam dicendi sententiam locus datur ad Thomam revertuntur. Igitur quo plures philosophia duces habet, eo minus hac nostra tempestate addiscitur. Princeps interea philosophorum prorsus destituitur, nomenque suum is sibi usurpat, qui in *sophismatibus* plus caeteris valet, neque Aristoteles ipse si revivisceret discipulos suos atque sequaces satis intelligere crederetur. Quod de nostris disciplinis nemo nisi insanus praedicare ausit, quandoquidem neque aetas neque hominum mores sibi quicquam detrahare possunt. Theoremata Euclidis eandem hodie quam ante mille annos habent certitudinem. Inventa Archimedis post mille secula venturis hominibus non minorem inducent admirationem quam legentibus nobis iucunditatem ». On this oration see JAMES S. BYRNE, « A Humanist History of Mathematics? Regiomontanus’s Padua Oration in Context », *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 67 (2006), p. 41–61 (I borrow from p. 59 the English translation of this remarkable passage).

as Regimontanus, linked to Bessarion's circle. Yet his picture of Paduan masters neglecting or distorting the Stagirite to the point that he would not be able to comprehend their jargon is striking, both in itself and as a document of the early reception of the *topos* of the *Aristoteles redivivus* at the university where Galileo would work one and a half centuries later<sup>56</sup>. Still, Del Soldato rightly points out that the latter did not content himself with saying that, if Aristotle came back to life, he would accept new astronomical theories. It is, of course, significant that he made frequent recourse to this argument during his polemics on the sunspots in the 1610s, then in his *Dialogo sopra i massimi sistemi del mondo*, published in 1632, and later in his correspondence and in his personal notes. But the originality of his approach, as Del Soldato explains, depends first of all on the fact that, far from reducing it to a mere rhetorical tool, Galileo gave this argument a strong theoretical foundation: he indeed made reference to Aristotle's own claim, in the first book of his *De caelo* (I.3, 270b13-17), that the assumption that the heavenly world is eternal, not subject to increase or diminution and unalterable, is confirmed by « mere evidence of the senses », since « in the whole range of time past, so far as our inherited records reach, no change appears to have taken place in it ».<sup>57</sup> For this reason, Del Soldato emphasises, Galileo employed the 'if Aristotle were alive' motif only while discussing the problem of celestial immutability, at times significantly preferring the variant 'if Aristotle saw'.<sup>58</sup> After discovering

<sup>56</sup> The idea that Aristotle himself, « if he came back », would not be able to solve abstruse questions supposedly deriving from his texts can be found also in the satirical comedy *Le nubi*, written between 1603 and 1611 by Cesare Cremonini, an Aristotelian who notoriously was at the same time a personal friend and a philosophical opponent of Galileo: « CARINO: Vedi, povero me, ch'io mi credevo / Che 'l più di queste, tanto / Da te magnificate questioni, / Non fosse altro, ch'invogli, e' fosser nate / Dal non aver in fronte / Le materie vedute, non vedute, / O se forse vedute, non vedute, / Se non così à barlume, / E aver udito dire, / Che 'l testo d'Aristotele è la scure, / E chi l'intende bene tronca e recide / La molteplicità di queste ciancie. PROBO: Ciancie? che ciancie: Vi sono argomenti / Che mi dice il Maestro / Se venisse Aristotile non saprebbe / Disciorli ». The text is edited and studied by UGO MONTANARI, « L'opera letteraria di Cesare Cremonini », in *Cesare Cremonini (1550-1631). Il suo pensiero e il suo tempo*, Centro studi Girolamo Baruffaldi, Cento 1990, p. 125-247: p. 171-172.

<sup>57</sup> DEL SOLDATO, *Early Modern Aristotle*, p. 9, 127-130, 134-135, 147.

<sup>58</sup> DEL SOLDATO, *Early Modern Aristotle*, p. 134, calls attention to Galileo's use of the verb 'to see' in the *Dialogue* and related texts. I will examine below a treatise written in 1605 where this version of the argument is already used. No less interesting is a passage of the *Lettera [...] sopra l'opinione de' Pittagorici e del Copernico della mobilità della terra e stabilità del sole*, where Father Antonio Foscarini praises the superiority of the Moderns in these terms: « Lascero qui per brevità i molti sogni d'Aristotele, e di altri Filosofi antichi, che si sono modernamente scoperti per quello che sono, e dirò solamente che se essi havessero visto, e osservato quello che han visto, e osservato i Moderni; e havessero le loro ragioni intese, senza dubbio havrebbero anco essi mutato parere, e creduto alla evidentissima verità di questi, onde non bisogna attribuire tanto a gli antichi, che tutto quello che essi affermarono si habbia come per pregiudicato a credere, e tenere per certissimo, quasi fusse rivelato, e disceso da cielo »: see ANTONIO FOSCARINI, *Lettera [...] sopra l'opinione de' Pittagorici e del Copernico della mobilità della terra e stabilità del sole*, Lazzaro Scoriggio, Napoli 1615, p. 7.

lunar peaks and valleys, Jupiter's 'planets', the innumerable stars of the Milky Way and later the sunspots through his telescopic observations, he was indeed in a position to claim that sensory experience provided indisputable evidence for the mutability of the heavens; that Aristotle denied it because he saw « no new thing », but « if he had seen any such events he would have reversed his opinion »; that the dogmatic supporters of his cosmological doctrines should not be considered as his genuine followers because, adhering blindly to every proposition written in his books, they forgot his scientific method, and notably his 'empirical' approach to natural philosophy. As Salviati says in the first day of the *Dialogue*:

I declare that we do have in our age new events and observations such that *if Aristotle were now alive, I have no doubt that he would change his opinion*. This is easily inferred [*si raccoglie*] from his own manner of philosophizing, for when he writes of considering the heavens inalterable etc., because no new thing is seen to be generated there or any old one dissolved, he seems implicitly to let us understand [*viene implicitamente a lasciarsi intendere*] that *if he had seen any such events he would have reversed his opinion*, and properly preferred the sensible experience to natural reason. Unless he had taken the senses into account, he would not have argued immutability from sensible mutations not being seen.<sup>59</sup>

Things, however, were a little more complicated because one might wonder what 'seeing' means, and whether the current association of this term to visual perception through the eyes might be extended to what could be 'seen' only thanks to Galileo's *occhiale*. It is indeed well known that while a few Aristotelians –

---

<sup>59</sup> *Dialogo, giornata prima*, in *Le Opere di Galileo Galilei*, vol. VII, p. 75: « SALVIATI: Ma per dar soprabbondante soddisfazione al signor Simplicio e torlo, se è possibile, di errore, dico che noi aviamo nel nostro secolo accidenti ed osservazioni nuove e tali, ch'io non dubito punto che se Aristotile fusse all'età nostra, muterebbe opinione. Il che manifestamente si raccoglie dal suo stesso modo di filosofare: imperocchè mentre egli scrive di stimare i cieli inalterabili etc., perché nissuna cosa nuova si è veduta generarvisi o dissolversi delle vecchie, viene implicitamente a lasciarsi intendere che quando egli avesse veduto uno di tali accidenti, averebbe stimato il contrario ed anteposto, come conviene, la sensata esperienza al natural discorso, perché quando e' non avesse voluto fare stima de' sensi, non avrebbe, almeno dal non si vedere sensatamente mutazione alcuna, argumentata l'immutabilità ». See also *Dialogo, giornata seconda*, *ibid.*, p. 136: « SALVIATI: [...] Avete voi forse dubbio che quando Aristotile vedesse le novità scoperte in cielo, e' non fusse per mutar opinione e per emendar i suoi libri e per accostarsi alle più sensate dottrine, discacciando da sè quei così poveretti di cervello che troppo pusillanamente s'inducono a voler sostenere ogni suo detto, senza intendere che quando Aristotile fusse tale quale essi se lo figurano, sarebbe un cervello indocile, una mente ostinata, un animo pieno di barbarie, un voler tirannico, che, reputando tutti gli altri come pecore stolide, volesse che i suoi decreti fossero anteposti a i sensi, alle esperienze, alla natura istessa? ». Both passages are examined by DEL SOLDATO, *Early Modern Aristotle*, p. 131–132. As she does, I quote the English translation by STILLMAN DRAKE, *Dialogue concerning the two chief World Systems*, University of California Press, Berkeley 1953, p. 50.

Cremonini included, at least in a first phase<sup>60</sup> – even refused to look through the telescope, many of them wondered whether it reinforced vision and allowed to observe natural phenomena never seen before or whether it was instead *the cause* of these phenomena, producing optical illusions and dubious images.<sup>61</sup> It is also well known that controversies on this point lasted for decades. Del Soldato calls attention to Galileo’s reaction to Antonio Rocco’s *Esercitazioni filosofiche*, a refutation of the *Dialogue* dedicated to pope Urban VIII and published in Venice in 1633.<sup>62</sup> Though not answering publicly, Galileo covered his copy of Rocco’s text with annotations which have been published by Favaro in his celebrated edition of Galileo’s works. Del Soldato emphasises that, in one of these annotations, the great scientist assumes that « Aristotle, had he seen the celestial alterations, would have preferred to have him as a disciple than Rocco, since Galileo relied on ‘sensate esperienze’, and the self-proclaimed Aristotelian only on questionable conjectures ». <sup>63</sup> This is undoubtedly a significant development of what Salviati had said in the above-cited passage of the first day of the *Dialogue*, but as the wording of his note makes clear, Galileo here is simply replying to Rocco’s account of the ‘if Aristotle had seen’ argument. Rocco indeed had been impressed by Salviati’s claim,<sup>64</sup> and had declared that he was ready to accept it, but in a qualified version:

<sup>60</sup> New evidence on Cremonini’s controversial attitude is provided in LUCA BIANCHI, « ‘Hauendo lui publicato sette fogli di carta’: Leandro Pizzoni e la reputazione scientifica di Galileo », *Rivista di storia della filosofia*, 71 (2016), p. 153–174; p. 164–171.

<sup>61</sup> In this regard a letter by Ottavio Brenzoni (*Le Opere di Galileo Galilei*, vol. X, p. 309) is emblematic: « dicono che l’occhiale è caggione di quelle apparenze nella luna et di quelle stelle et pianeti non più veduti: prima, con qualche inaequalità del vetro; poi, che vedendosi alcun grosso vapore da vista affaticata per mezo di lucido vetro, puo facilmente apparer corpo lucido ». On negative reactions toward Galileo’s telescopic discoveries, see ISABELLE PANTIN’s introduction to KEPLER, *Discussion avec le messenger celeste*, Les Belles Lettres, Paris 1993, p. xviii–xxvii; MASSIMO BUCCIANINI, *Galileo e Keplero. Filosofia, cosmologia e teologia nell’Età della Controriforma*, Einaudi, Torino 2003, p. 181–189; BUCCIANINI, CAMEROTA, GIUDICE, *Il telescopio di Galileo*, passim.

<sup>62</sup> This work is published in *Le Opere di Galileo Galilei*, vol. VII, p. 569–750. On its genesis and significance see LUIGI GUERRINI, *Galileo e gli aristotelici. Storia di una disputa*, Carocci, Roma 2010 (Biblioteca di testi e studi, 542), p. 123–137.

<sup>63</sup> DEL SOLDATO, *Early Modern Aristotle*, p. 133. Galileo’s note reads as follow: « Ma da vero filosofo, e filosofo peripatetico, confessate, che se Aristotele vedesse queste e le altre mutazioni che si fanno in cielo, le quali ad esso furono ignote e inimaginabili, riceverebbe assai più volentieri me per suo scolare e seguace che voi, poiché io antepongo i suoi dogmi certissimi alle sue proposizioni opinabili, e voi per mantenere queste rifiutate quelli, cioè posponete le sensate esperienze alle opinabili conietture ». See *Le Opere di Galileo Galilei*, vol. VII, p. 714.

<sup>64</sup> Rocco, *Esercitazioni*, *ibid.*, p. 617: « Di più dite, che abbiamo nel nostro secolo accidenti e osservazioni nove e tali, circa il cielo, che se Aristotile fusse all’età nostra, mutarebbe [sic] opinione: sia che il suo filosofare ha per base la cognizione sensitiva o sperimentale, la quale se ora gli si mostrasse l’opposito di quel che egli stimava, senza dubbio anch’ei l’opposito concluderia, cioè che i cieli fossero corruttibili etc. ».

a reborn Aristotle would surely « change his opinion », abandoning his doctrine of the ether, if Galileo gave an « infallible demonstration » that changes occurred *in the heaven*.<sup>65</sup> This, according to Rocco, was still lacking, because when looking at remote objects one's sight may err, measuring the distance of the heavenly bodies is difficult, not to say impossible, and the telescope is not unfailing.<sup>66</sup>

In his personal notes, Galileo did not answer these objections. It goes without saying that – with all due respect to Paul K. Feyerabend – he had good reasons to consider his instrument fully reliable, especially as late as 1633 when his observations had been confirmed by numerous astronomers, natural philosophers, practitioners and amateurs.<sup>67</sup> Nonetheless, some Aristotelians continued to insist on the « illusions of the lenses [*de' cristalli*] » and argued that it is « foolish » to assume that it is shown « by the sense » what in fact seen through a telescope.<sup>68</sup> It is therefore noteworthy to recall that the 'if Aristotle had seen' argument had been used also *before* telescopic discoveries, with reference to

<sup>65</sup> Ibid., p. 624: « Quanto a gli accidenti ed osservazioni che avemo nel nostro secolo circa il cielo, se voi realmente con dimostrazione infallibile proverete che siano successi nell'interno de' corpi celesti, non ha dubbio alcun che Aristotele mutarebbe [sic] opinione: già esso non intende ricercar altro che il vero, e quello specialmente che ha per fondamento la cognizione del senso; egli stesso in molti luoghi lo dice, come sapete benissimo. Anzi non solo bisognerebbe mutar opinione circa l'incorruttibilità de' corpi celesti, ma rivolger sossopra i primi principi delle cose naturali, e dire (all'opposito di quel che a piena bocca diciamo, cioè che operi la natura ordinatamente sempre nell'istessa maniera) che sia essa natura più variabile, più incostante, più cieca, più capricciosa della fortuna medesima: già fa corpi vastissimi celesti (dico delle nuove stelle), e poi di lì a poco tempo gli distrugge; il che non ha fatto mai per il passato. Voi però durerete fatica a dimostrarlo; dalle istanze lo conoscerete; già le dimostrazioni sono insolubili, né patiscono istanze ».

<sup>66</sup> Ibid., p. 627: « E quanti errori commetta la nostra vista nel risguardar gli oggetti lontani per venir al nostro punto, ne siano testimoni mille continue esperienze. [...] E per venir al nostro punto, il vostro telescopio è quello che vi mostra queste novelle cose in cielo, queste macchie nel Sole; però voi per stabilir saldamente la vostra dottrina avrete da far tre cose: la prima, mandar per il mondo il vostro libro insieme col telescopio, acciò si abbi la medicina e la ricetta, perché molti non credono queste vostre visioni, il che vi apporta pregiudizio e discapito non mediocre [...]: la seconda, dovete provare che questo instrumento non possa errare, e suderete a farlo: la terza, che l'arte di misurar distanze in spazii immensi sia certa ed infallibile; e qui troverete non il difficile solo, ma l'impossibile istesso ». Rocco often insists on the limits of human knowledge of the superlunar world: see e.g. *ibid.*, p. 629, 696–697.

<sup>67</sup> As a matter of fact, as early as 1610 Galileo wrote that « l'occhiale è arciveridico, et i Pianeti Medicei sono pianeti, et saranno sempre, come gli altri »: *Le Opere di Galileo Galilei*, vol. X, p. 357.

<sup>68</sup> The formula is taken from Galileo's *Dialogue*, in *Le Opere di Galileo Galilei*, vol. VII, p. 380. Still in 1638, in another reply to the *Dialogue*, Giovanni Barenghi would write: « [...] perché i Fenomeni scoperti nouellamente in Cielo, non sono noti al senso, al meno ottimamente disposto, e dalla maggior parte degl'huomini non si sanno, e dalla migliore si negano, e quei vetri possono ingannare in tante maniere, che è stoltizia dire, che il senso mostra le cose vedute per loro [...] », *Considerazioni del Signor Giovanni Barenghi Sopra il Dialogo de dua massimi Sistemi Tolemaico, e Copernicano...*, Francesco delle Dote, Pisa 1638, p. 96.

naked-eye observations of the 1604 *nova*, which gave origin to controversies that were particularly lively at Padua and personally involved Galileo and his friends.<sup>69</sup>

One of them is Ilario Altobelli, a Franciscan mathematician and astronomer who was among the first to observe the new star that appeared in the constellation of Ophiucus and is now generally known as Kepler's *nova*. On November 25, 1604, Altobelli wrote to Galileo attacking « these Peripatetics or, better to say, semi-philosophers » who obtusely repeated their rooted opinions, denied the celestial location of the new star and, in doing so, contradicted « manifest experience » whose « force » would be acknowledged by Aristotle himself:

But if these Peripatetics or, better to say, semi-philosophers, do not understand the irrefutable demonstration of the diversity of the aspect, in order to feel tangibly that it is located up there, in the starry sky, and therefore exceeds in size about three hundred times the earth and the sea, how could one overcome their pertinacity? Galen claims in the third book of his *Critical days* that refusing to experiment and refusing to believe those who experiment or the like, is unfair, and denying manifest experience is sophistic. After all, education is always too powerful, since we see that being fed on an assumed opinion causes such obstinacy that the shiny truth cannot remove it. I believe that *if the author himself were alive he would surrender to so great a force*. Anyway, the star itself, emulating Jupiter, and opposed to Mercury's temple, double in size as well as in nature, will destroy falsity and will give birth to the truth, and finally one will walk in the light and not in the dark.<sup>70</sup>

<sup>69</sup> See at least MASSIMO BUCCIANTINI, « Galileo e la nova del 1604 », in MASSIMO BUCCIANTINI, MAURIZIO TORRINI (eds.), *La diffusione del copernicanesimo in Italia: 1543-1610*, Olschki, Firenze 1997 (Biblioteca di Nuncius, 21), p. 237–248; BUCCIANTINI, *Galileo e Keplero*, p. 123–138; MICHELE CAMEROTA, PATRIZIA RUFFO, « Le lezioni di Galileo sulla nuova stella del 1604 nel resoconto di Antonio Alberti (17 Dicembre 1604) », *Galilæana*, 12 (2015), p. 193–201; MATTEO COSCI, « Le fonti di Galileo Galilei per le *Lezioni e studi sulla stella nuova del 1604* », *Archives Internationales d'Histoires des Sciences*, 68 (2018), p. 6–70.

<sup>70</sup> Letter to Galileo, November 25, 1604, in *Le Opere di Galileo Galilei*, vol. X, p. 118: « Ma se questi Peripatetici, o, per dir meglio, semifilosofi, non intendono la dimostrazione insuperabile della diversità dell'aspetto, per toccar con mano ch'ella risiede insin lasù [*sic*] nel ciel stellato, e che perciò eccede intorno a trecento volte di grandezza la terra e 'l mare, come si potrà convincere la pertinacia loro? E' cosa improba o simile, dice Galeno nel 3° *De Diebus decretoriis*, il non voler far esperienza et non voler credere a chi la fa, et che è cosa soffistica [*sic*] il voler negar la manifesta esperienza. In fine, l'educatione è troppo potente in tutte le cose, poi che vediamo che l'esser nodrito in una imaginata opinione cagiona tal ostinatione, che la verità lucente non può rimuoverla. *Io credo certo, che se l'istesso Autor vivesse, si renderebe [*sic*] a tanta forza*. Ma, in ogni modo, l'istessa stella, emula di Giove, et opposta al tempio di Mercurio, doppio non men di figura che di natura, distruggerà [*sic*] il falso e parturirà il vero, e finalmente si caminerà [*sic*] per la luce e non per le tenebre »; the English translation is my own. On Altobelli see BUCCIANTINI, *Galileo e Keplero*, p. 123–124; ALESSANDRO GIOSTRA, FRANCESCO MERLETTI, WILLIAM M. SHEA, *Ilario Altobelli: scienziato, teologo, corrispondente di Galileo Galilei*, Empatiabooks, Camerano 2011; FLAVIA MARCACCI, « La rivoluzione scientifica di un francescano: Ilario Altobelli tra astronomia e astrologia »,

The opposition between what men are accustomed to believing and the « shiny truth » produced by « manifest experience » which will allow men to « walk in the light and not in the dark » is rhetorically effective: it is nonetheless remarkable that, in extolling sense experience, Altobelli did not invoke Aristotle, but another ancient authority, i.e. Galen. The idea that « Aristotle formed his arguments guided by the senses, as he himself confesses » was however introduced in the *nova* controversies in the first months of 1605, when a *Discorso sopra la Stella nuova* was published at Padua under the name of the otherwise unknown Astolfo Arnerio Marchiano, who according to some scholars could even be identified with Galileo himself, writing under a pseudonym. Whoever he might be, the author first recalls the views of the philosophers who, in the footsteps of Aristotle, maintain that the generation of new stars in the heaven is impossible and affirm that the new phenomenon observed is not a superlunary body; he then rebukes them because, in doing so, they forget the supernatural power of God, who can produce or annihilate new stars, as he can « create infinite other bodies unseen and unknown »; he adds that even when Aristotle described « the parts of the animals, which are after all the object of the senses [*che pure sono sensate*] » he affirmed « much foolishness [*molte pazzie*] ». And he eventually concludes:

What? Can one not say that Aristotle formed his arguments guided by the senses, as he himself confesses, so that, if such novelty had been seen in his time, or rather *if he happened to see it in our time, he would undoubtedly change his mind* so as to leave no room to arguments against sense experience that would contradict his rule? Since the thing is as clear and evident as mathematical sciences are true and certain, and the methods of measuring and determining the height of heavenly bodies, totally unknown to many modern philosophers, and badly understood and applied by others.<sup>71</sup>

---

*Franciscan Studies*, 72 (2015), p. 199–211. On his correspondence with Galileo concerning the new star, see also Cosci, « Le fonti di Galileo Galilei », p. 21–23.

<sup>71</sup> *Discorso sopra la Stella nuova comparsa l'Ottobre prossimo passato, dell'eccellentissimo Atrologo et Medico, Astolfo Arnerio Marchiano, s.e.*, Padova 1605, f. A2v: « Ma che? Non si può dire che Aristotele ha formato le sue ragioni guidato dai sensi, come esso confessa; si che, se overo à tempi suoi fosse stata vista simil novità, ò pur'egli à nostri tempi si ritrovasse a vederla, senza fallo mutarebbe parere, per non dar loco contra la sua regola agli argomenti fatti contra il senso; posciache la cosa è tanto chiara, e tanto manifesta, quanto sono vere, et certe le scienze Matematiche, et le vie di pigliar le misure et l'altezze dei corpi celesti, a molti moderni Filosofi in tutto ignote, et da altri malamente intese et applicate? »; the English translation is my own. Already suggested by a few scholars, the hypothesis of Galileo's authorship of this text has been recently upheld by MATTEO COSCI, « Galileo alias Astolfo Arnerio Marchiano e la disputa padovana sulla Stella Nuova », *Atti e Memorie dell'Accademia Galileiana di Scienze, Lettere ed Arti in Padova, già dei Ricoverati, Memorie della Classe di Scienze, Lettere ed Arti*, 131 (2018–2019), p. 35–83 (p. 58 on the above mentioned passage).

In her remarkable analysis of Galileo's « special treatment »<sup>72</sup> of the 'if Aristotle were alive' motif, Del Soldato observes that « it would be reasonable to assume » that it was inspired by Reticus and Kepler, but she prudently adds that Galileo was « an avid reader of a variety of texts » and therefore « it is impossible to attribute his appropriation of it to any one author ».<sup>73</sup> I totally agree that in this, as well as in other cases, it is difficult to identify Galileo's sources. Still, it seems to me significant that speculations about the reaction of a reborn Aristotle after seeing celestial novelties circulated among his correspondents and friends as early as 1604, when one could simply think of the Philosopher observing the heavens with unaided eyes, not looking through a telescope; and it is equally significant that at the beginning of 1605 one of Galileo's disciples – or maybe himself – wrote that, if Aristotle « happened to see » the new star, « he would undoubtedly change his mind ».<sup>74</sup>

---

<sup>72</sup> DEL SOLDATO, *Early Modern Aristotle*, p. 147.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 127.

<sup>74</sup> Another early occurrence of the *topos* in the writings of Galileo's correspondents is in the treatise *Della penetrazione e incorruttibilità del cielo* by Giovanbattista Agucchi (1611): « Et di vero se Aristotele avesse o ricercate le prove de' matematici, o prestata fede a Democrito et Anassagora, che forse per le medesime prove non si erano dilungati dal vero, non avrebbe riposti tra le meteori [*sic*] le comete, e molto meno la via lattea; e sarebbe stato costretto di riconoscere qualche sorte di alteratione nel cielo. Et se parimente si fosse persuaso quel che noi per fede crediamo, cioè che'l cielo e'l mondo habbiano avuto principio e siino per haver qualche sorte di fine, sì come non si sarebbe potuta imaginare l'eternità dell'istesso mondo, così non avrebbe proposta, né stabilita la quinta essenza celeste. Onde, *s'egli tornasse a vivere, si meraviglierebbe forse de' teologi, che sono forzati a credere le cose che la distruggono, e la pur vogliono sostenere* ». I quote from the edition provided by MASSIMO BUCCIANTINI, « Teologia e nuova filosofia. Galileo, Federico Cesi, Giovambattista Agucchi e la discussione sulla fluidità e corruttibilità del cielo », in *Sciences et religions de Copernic à Galilée (1540-1610)*, École française de Rome, Roma 1999 (Collection de l'École française de Rome, 260), p. 411-442: p. 441.

# A NEW EDITION OF CONTARINI'S *DE IMMORTALITATE ANIMAE*\*

LUCA BURZELLI  
ISTITUTO 'ENRICO FERMI', PONTEDERA (PISA)



The edition of Gasparo Contarini's *De immortalitate animae* provides a fundamental contribution to our knowledge of the so-called 'Pomponazzi affair', namely an intellectual controversy concerning the immortality of the soul, which engaged university masters, friars and members of the clergy around 1516 and 1519.<sup>1</sup> The controversy started with the publication of one of the most explosive works of the Italian Renaissance, i.e. Pomponazzi's *Tractatus de immortalitate animae* (1516).<sup>2</sup> The master's purpose was to challenge and refute those attempts to prove the immortality of the soul on the basis of Aristotelian arguments – a purpose which had already been pursued by cardinal Caetano some years before.<sup>3</sup> In doing so, he consciously ignored the provisions of the bull *Apostolici regiminis* (December 1513), which required university professors to support the doctrine of

---

\* Review of GASPARO CONTARINI, *De immortalitate animae / On the Immortality of the Soul*, edited by PAUL RICHARD BLUM in cooperation with ELISABETH BLUM, JAN ČÍŽEK, MARTIN HOLAN, JAN JANOUŠEK, JOZEF MATULA, JIŘÍ MICHALÍK, TOMÁŠ NEJESCHLEBA, LLOYD A. NEWTON, JANA SLEZÁKOVÁ, MARTIN ŽEMLA, Verlag Traugott Bautz, Nordhausen 2020 (*Studia Classica et Mediaevalia* 26), 271 pp.

<sup>1</sup> With 'Pomponazzi affair' I refer to the expression used by ETIENNE GILSON, *L'Affaire de l'immortalité de l'âme à Venise au début du XVIe siècle*, Sansoni, Firenze 1963; later, by LEEN SPRUIT, *The Pomponazzi Affair: The Controversy over the Immortality of the Soul*, in HENRIK LAGERLUND, BENJAMIN HILL (eds.), *Routledge Companion to Sixteenth Century Philosophy*, Routledge, London 2017, p. 225–246.

<sup>2</sup> According to Giovanni Gentile, Pomponazzi's *Tractatus* and Machiavelli's *The Prince* were « among the most scandalous and irreligious books of the Renaissance » (in PIETRO POMPONAZZI, *De immortalitate animae*, ed. GIOVANNI GENTILE, Principato, Messina 1925, p. III).

<sup>3</sup> On the role of Caetano see VITTORIA PERRONE COMPAGNI, « Introduzione », in PIETRO POMPONAZZI, *Trattato sull'immortalità dell'anima*, Olschki, Firenze 1999 (*Immagini della Ragione*, 1), p. xxvi–xxviii; ANNALISA CAPPIELLO, « Tommaso de Vio Gaetano, Pietro Pomponazzi e la polemica sull'immortalità dell'anima. *Status quaestionis* e nuove scoperte », *Noctua*, 5/1 (2018), p. 32–71.

immortality from a philosophical point of view.<sup>4</sup> On the contrary, Pomponazzi was capable of proving that, due to the role of phantasy into the process of human understanding, the human soul can never be separated from a material body in order to operate: on the contrary, the human soul, when deprived of phantasy, cannot have any kind of activity at all. In addition, Pomponazzi concluded the treatise with a thorny discussion about the function of the religious doctrine: the idea of the immortality of the soul is not philosophically true, being merely a useful tool; and the authorities (both civic and religious) use to keep poor people under ethical control, thanks to the promise of future rewards and punishments.

This radical interpretation of the functions of the human mind and soul had the effect of starting a widespread polemical discussion, inside and outside the universities, whose protagonists came from different intellectual backgrounds. The first who argued against Pomponazzi was Gasparo Contarini, a venetian nobleman which had been his pupil in Padua from 1500 to 1509, and at that moment was applying for his first public offices.<sup>5</sup> Contarini's answer – which is the treatise edited by Blum – is a philosophical inquiry about the fundamentals of Pomponazzi's argumentation as well as an attempt of defending the immortality of the soul. Unfortunately for Pomponazzi, Contarini was not the only one who developed a criticism, and surely the most indulgent: indeed, at the same time the friars in Venice started burning Pomponazzi's treatise in the square, while the bishop of Mantua, Ambrogio Fiandino, harshly condemned the master during the Lent season 1517. The last criticism came from Agostino Nifo, a professor of philosophy who defended the immortality of the soul under request of Fiandino by employing Averroistic arguments. Pomponazzi devoted the first and the third books of his *Apologia* (1518) to answer Contarini's and Fiandino's objections;<sup>6</sup> soon later, he wrote a *Defensorium* (1519) against Nifo.<sup>7</sup> Nevertheless, only the

---

<sup>4</sup> About the bull *Apostolici regiminis* see ANNALISA CAPPIELLO, MARCO LAMANNA, « Il principio dell'unicità del vero dalla bolla *Apostolici regiminis* alla Rivoluzione scientifica », *Quaestio*, 14 (2014), p. 229–256.

<sup>5</sup> For a biographical note on Contarini see GIGLIOLA FRAGNITO, « Contarini Gasparo », in *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani* (= DBI), 28 (1983), *sub voce*, reprinted in EAD., *Gasparo Contarini. Un magistrato veneziano al servizio della Cristianità*, Olschki, Firenze 1988 (Biblioteca della Rivista di storia e letteratura religiosa. Testi e Documenti, 9), p. 1–78.

<sup>6</sup> VITTORIA PERRONE COMPAGNI, « L'*Apologia*: bilanci, anticipazioni, polemiche », in PIETRO POMPONAZZI, *Apologia*, ed. VITTORIA PERRONE COMPAGNI, Olschki, Firenze 2011 (Immagini della Ragione, 14), p. 1–LVIII, esp. XLII–LVIII.

<sup>7</sup> FRANCESCO PAOLO RAIMONDI, JOSÈ MANUEL GARCIA VALVERDE, « Monografia introduttiva », in PIETRO POMPONAZZI, *Tutti i trattati peripatetici*, ed. FRANCESCO PAOLO RAIMONDI, JOSÈ MANUEL GARCIA VALVERDE, Bompiani, Milano 2013, p. 94, p. 127. The collection of Pomponazzi's Aristotelian treatises was reprinted one year after Pietro's death, PETRI POMPONATII *Tractatus acutissimi, utillimi ac mere peripatetici*, Venetiis, apud haeredes Octaviani Scoti, 1525.

influential intervention of Piero Bembo permitted him to avoid unharmed an official condemnation from Rome.<sup>8</sup>

It is useful to introduce Contarini's answer through a genetic reconstruction of the text. The treatise that we call *De immortalitate animae* – which is here edited and translated by Blum and his associates – is actually the result of a posthumous conjunction of multiple texts and was probably not realised before the Parisian printed edition of 1571, after Gasparo's death. Thanks to few details in the premises, we know that Pomponazzi had sent a copy of his treatise to Contarini, asking for an evaluation: as Gasparo recalls in the preface, « ... your [i.e. Pomponazzi's] wonderful and splendid disputatio on the immortality of the soul, which you send to me out of your kindness a few days ago... » (we will call it **text A**).<sup>9</sup> Moreover, in the beginning of his *Apologia*, Pomponazzi confesses that Contarini sent him not one, but at least two different answers: « The argument supported by the thesis of the contradictor, both in his paper [*in suo scripto*] and in a letter [*in quadam epistula*] which he sent to me... ».<sup>10</sup> For nine times, in the first book of *Apologia*, Pomponazzi mentions this further letter;<sup>11</sup> this allows us to establish that Contarini had sent a well-structured work (which we call **text B**) and an additional, more confidential text, like a letter (**text β**). **Text B** corresponds to the treatise that Pomponazzi published anonymously in the appendix of his *Apologia* and confuted in the first book. **Text β**, on the contrary, is nowadays unknown: we can only suppose that, within this letter Contarini suggested that the master should not publish the *Tractatus* because it was against the faith.<sup>12</sup>

Contarini was faithful to his ancient master and this feeling was reciprocated. Therefore, Pomponazzi kept Contarini's position into serious consideration, as the most reliable of the critiques against his *Tractatus*:<sup>13</sup> Contarini's treatise

<sup>8</sup> On this topic see VITTORIA PERRONE COMPAGNI, *Pomponazzi Pietro*, in DBI, 84 (2015), *sub voce*.

<sup>9</sup> GASPARO CONTARINI, *De immortalitate animae*, ed. BLUM *et alii*, p. 37.

<sup>10</sup> PIETRO POMPONAZZI, *Apologia*, in ID., *Tutti i trattati peripatetici*, ed. RAIMONDI, VALVERDE, p. 1222: « Quod autem a positione dicitur et in suo scripto et in quadam epistula ad me scripta [...] ». However, Raimondi translates the latin « et ... et » with a disjunctive proposition. A more reliable translation can be found in the edition of PERRONE COMPAGNI, p. 80.

<sup>11</sup> PIETRO POMPONAZZI, *Apologia*, ed. RAIMONDI, VALVERDE, p. 1212, 1222, 1228, 1230, 1282, 1286, 1292, 1310, 1344.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 1292: « cum dictus Contradictor intellexisset me hunc Tractatum composuisse, per amicabiles litteras, caritatisque plenas me admonuit ne hunc Tractatum ederem, praecipue quoniam erat contra fidem ».

<sup>13</sup> So in PIETRO POMPONAZZI, *Apologia*, prologue, p. 1110: « Verum post aliquot dies Reverendus Dominus meus D. Petrus Lipomannus [...] libellum quemdam sine nominis auctore attulit, qui non minus acutissimus et gravissimus est, quam verborum nominumque elegantia refertus; et quamquam hic noster Contradictor prae caeteris mihi acutior et rationabilior videatur, tamen quoniam plene nostris argumentationibus satisfacere mihi non videtur [...] ». A similar opinion stands in the introduction of the appendix to Pomponazzi's *Apologia*, where the professor edited anonymously Contarini's treatise (this introduction is usefully published by BLUM, p. 30).

appears to be « rich, learned, serious and most perspicacious », even though Contarini himself said he wrote it pretty quickly and without revision.<sup>14</sup> What is certain is that Gasparo discovered his work published anonymously in the appendix of the master's *Apologia*, was not happy at all of this discovery, because he thought **text B** was unfit for a publication;<sup>15</sup> thus, he decided to reply once more with a new answer (which we call **text M**). This reply (which is now preserved in Venice, Biblioteca Marciana) remained unpublished – and probably, almost unknown – until the Parisian Edition in 1571. In that circumstance Alvise, one of Gasparo's nephews who was working as ambassador in Paris, decided to collect the philosophical and theological works of his uncle and publish them. He had draft material of two sorts: on the one hand, he used printed editions of some works, which had been circulating since the beginning of the 1540s (*De magistratibus*, 1543 and 1544; *De elementis*, 1548; *Compendium*, 1556); on the other hand, he had some manuscripts which laid in familiar archives. It was then that Alvise – or an editor on behalf of him – merged the two works concerning the immortality of the soul: the first one, **text B**, was well known since the printed edition of 1518;<sup>16</sup> the second one, **text M**, was new. The treatise we now read, thanks to Blum's edition and translation, is the result of a posthumous assembly, and the two sources became respectively 'book 1' and 'book 2'.

These few genetic remarks allow us to say something about the philological aspects of Blum's edition. The editor provides a table of witnesses (p. 24-26) and a list of variants for every part of the treatise:

- B** Contarini's treatise, appendix to Pomponazzi, *Apologia*, Bononiae, Leonardi 1518.
- M** Contarini's second answer, Venezia, Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana, ms. VI CCXXIX (= 2855).
- P** Contarini's *Opera*, Parisiis, apud Niuellium 1571.
- V** reprint of Pomponazzi's treatises, Venetiis, Scotus 1525 (*descriptus* of B).
- V**<sup>1578</sup> reprint of Contarini's *Opera*, Venetiis, Aldus 1578 (*descriptus* of P).

The most reliable witness for 'book 1' (**text B**) is Pomponazzi's edition of 1518, whose text is the closest to Contarini's original draft. The case of 'book 2' (**text M**) is more complicated. At first, Blum selects the Parisian edition as 'edition of reference' (p. 25). However, he does not declare why the Parisian edition (1571)

<sup>14</sup> So confesses Gasparo in *De immortalitate animae*, ed. BLUM *et alii*, p. 178.

<sup>15</sup> See the BLUM's *introduction* to Contarini's *De immortalitate animae*, p. 24.

<sup>16</sup> See, for example, the eulogy of Marcantonio Flaminio for Contarini's death in 1542, when the humanist celebrates Gasparo's doctrine of the immortality of the soul: « Contarene, tuo docuisti, magne, libello / exstinctis animas vivere corpus. / Ergo iure tui vivunt monumenta libelli / Et vivent saeculis innumerabilibus » (MARCI ANTONII FLAMINI *Carminum libri VIII*, Patavii, Excudebat Josephus Cominus 1727, p. 75).

should be more reliable than the manuscript of *text M*, preserved in Venice. In addition, almost every time the Parisian edition and the manuscript diverge from one another, Blum establishes the text preferring the manuscript over the printed edition. For these reasons, the manuscript of Venice *de facto* seems to be the most reliable witness.

Regarding the Latin text, the editor amended punctuation with respect to the current linguistic rules, as well as to the clarity of meaning. Only in a few places, punctuation still appears a bit imprecise since it faithfully reproduces the sixteenth-century printed edition. Two examples show this clearly: at p. 50, the propositions

[...] dixerunt nullo pacto formam operari aut agere sive moveri aut corrumpi aut generari. Sed composito deberi haec omnia et compositum esse illud quod ageret, moveretur ac corrumperetur.

should not be separated by a point, because the proposition « sed composito... » is the second term of a subordinate, infinitive clause, depending from « dixerunt... ». The same happens for the argument at p. 74:

Nam forma et materia, ut diximus superius, non sunt partes integrantes; ita quod una possit esse extra aliam. Sed sicuti forma actuans materiam est in quacunque parte materiae et totam materiam penetrat, ut ita dixerim, ita quod nihil est materiae, quin illud actuetur a forma.

The proposition « Sed sicuti... » is the second term of a distinction « non sunt... ita... sed sicuti » (thus, the semicolon after *integrantes* could be removed). One further, controversial point is located at p. 62, talking about Aquinas' opinion on subsistent forms (book 1). Blum lists two variants of the same sentence:

Quamobrem perficere et, ut crassius loquar in re difficili, actuare potest. Apud Thomam vero, qui aliter sentit, hoc non negatur, quia repugnet actui per se subsistenti actuare. Sed quia materia ordinatur ad formam et ad utilitatem formae referri debet, quod non est in intelligentiis apud ipsum.

Witness P contains the *lectio*: « Quamobrem perficere et, ut crassius loquar in re difficili, actuare potest. Ad Thoma vero... ». Witnesses B and V, instead, contain the *lectio*: « quare actuare paratam materiam potest: actuare namque non est perfici: sed perficere. Apud vero divinum Thomam... ». For the composition of the text, the editor employs the *lectio* P and he corrects it with respect of *lectio* BV, without justifying this preference. In addition, the sentence « sed quia... » should not be separated from the previous proposition since it is the second term of the verb « hoc non negatur quia.... sed quia ».

Regarding the translation (firstly made by Blum, then revised by the group and especially by Loyd A. Newton), the editor succeeds in making the text as clear as possible, even though the Latin syntax is sometimes complicated. The result is a smooth text, mostly easy to read, which often reminds of a letter more than a scientific treatise (especially at the beginning and at the end of the two books). Blum usefully inserts some textual sections (p. 37, *introduction*; p. 67, *Investigation*; p. 139, *Aristotle's opinion*; p. 181, *Contarini's premises*; p. 199, *Pomponazzi's arguments*; p. 245, *Some passages from Aristotle*) which concretely help the reader by highlighting the division of the argumentation. In addition, some linguistic choices are justified in footnote with a description of the semantic ambiguities. This is the case of the Latin word *simpliciter*, which Blum describes at p. 41, fn. 2: the English translation *simply* does not express precisely the meaning of this scholastic technicism, which has to do with the lack of conditions for the existence of a property; therefore, Blum prefers the translation *unqualifiedly* when he refers to the immortality of human soul with respect to its proper nature – moreover, the scholastic meaning of *simpliciter* is « taken according to its full denotation ». The same care is reserved to the term *organum*: at p. 79 Blum points out that it can refer both to the bodily organ and to the function of ‘instrument’ of something. On the other hand, the translation of few other expressions does not seem fully convincing. The first case is the translation of the Latin *subiectum* with the gerundive form *underlying* (a cast of the Greek ὑποκείμενον) without any other term: but this use is almost unusual, as one can see from Ross’ translation of Aristotle’s *Metaphysics*, where the ὑποκείμενον is always translated with « underlying body », « underlying nature », « underlying substance ».

In their conciseness, the introduction and the commentary provide a fulfilling insight of the argumentation and the philosophical background of Contarini’s treatise. Blum focuses on all the most meaningful aspects of the text: the epistemological relation between philosophy and faith; the theory of intellect as *actus* and *forma*; the theory of the soul as principle of movement.<sup>17</sup> Finally, he briefly describes Gasparo’s life and career. The translation is always accompanied by a commentary in footnotes, where Blum and his associates provide the philosophical sources. Some of them are explicitly mentioned by Gasparo, whereas some other must be reconstructed. The most interesting of these

---

<sup>17</sup> The role of the movement for the nature of the soul was well highlighted by ENRICO PERUZZI, *Gli allievi di Pomponazzi: Girolamo Fracastoro e Gasparo Contarini*, in MARCO SGARBI (ed.), *Pietro Pomponazzi. Tradizione e dissenso. Atti del Congresso internazionale di studi su Pietro Pomponazzi*. Mantova, 23–24 ottobre 2008, Olshki, Firenze 2010, p. 349–364; ID., « Natura e destino dell’anima umana: le critiche di Gasparo Contarini al *De immortalitate animae* di Pietro Pomponazzi », in FERDINANDO L. MARCOLUNGO (ed.), *Fenomeno, trascendenza, verità. Scritti in onore di Gianfranco Bosio*, Il Poligrafo, Padova 2012, p. 169–183.

sources is Avicenna, whose argument of the so-called 'flying man' is anonymously quoted.<sup>18</sup> Blum is very careful not to generally level Gasparo onto the doctrine of Thomas Aquinas – a care which has often been overlooked by the historical research on Contarini.<sup>19</sup> As a matter of fact, the name of the *doctor angelicus* appears very few times in the treatise and, when it appears, it is often joined with a criticism. Perhaps, more attention could have been reserved to Gasparo's disagreement with Thomas Aquinas, starting from the argument about the form as the act of matter. Gasparo quotes the *doctor angelicus* twice and points out that they diverge on the properties of the substantial form: for Aquinas, it must subsist separated from matter without giving being, while for Contarini there is « no impediment to being the act of that matter ».<sup>20</sup>

This divergence with Aquinas enables us to introduce a final, interesting aspect of the text, i.e. the reference to Antonio Fracanzian. In book 2, Gasparo says he was surprised by Pomponazzi's denial of substantial forms which give being to the bodies: indeed, when they were at the university, ten years before, Pomponazzi himself had supported the opposite position and had admitted the existence of such forms against the denial of professor Fracanzian. As Blum noticed, we have no information about this academic controversy and even less about Fracanzian's teaching activity.<sup>21</sup> Concrete information is still lacking on this professor; nevertheless, we can find some useful elements around Pomponazzi's academic courses. The assumption that the substantial forms give being to the celestial bodies is placed in the first part of Pomponazzi's *Expositio libelli de substantia orbis* (1507), where he discusses the role of the intelligence as form of the sky.<sup>22</sup> But even more meaningful is the *Expositio duodecimi metaphysices* (1511/12). In this new circumstance, Pomponazzi proposes the very same

<sup>18</sup> GASPARO CONTARINI, *De immortalitate animae*, ed. BLUM *et alii*, p. 17, 57, 99–101. Concerning the *Flying man*, see TOMMASO ALPINA, « The 'Soul of', the Soul 'in Itself', and the 'Flying Man' Experiment », *Arabic Sciences and Philosophy. A Historical Journal*, 28 (2018), p. 187–224; ID., « Intellectual Knowledge, Active Intellect and Intellectual Memory in Avicenna's *Kitāb al-Nafs* and its Aristotelian Background », *Documenti e studi sulla tradizione filosofica medievale*, 25 (2014), p. 131–183. I focused on the role of Avicenna for Contarini in LUCA BURZELLI, « Aspetti della tradizione aristotelica nel *De immortalitate animae*: Gasparo Contarini lettore di Avicenna », *Rinascimento*, ser. 2, 59 (2019), p. 365–390.

<sup>19</sup> See for example GIOVANNI DI NAPOLI, *L'immortalità dell'anima nel Rinascimento*, Società Editrice Italiana, Torino 1963, p. 180, 291; and EUGENIO GARIN, *Storia della filosofia italiana*, 3 vols., Einaudi, Torino 1959 (Piccola Biblioteca Einaudi, 80), vol. II, p. 30.

<sup>20</sup> GASPARO CONTARINI, *De immortalitate animae*, ed. BLUM *et alii*, p. 63, 196.

<sup>21</sup> The few information are provided by MARIA MUCCILLO, *Fracanziani Antonio*, in DBI, 49 (1997) *sub voce*.

<sup>22</sup> PIETRO POMPONAZZI, *Expositio libelli de substantia orbis*, in ID., *Corsi inediti dell'insegnamento padovano*, 2 vols., ed. ANTONINO POPPI, vol. I, Antenore, Padova 1966, p. 81–97; DI NAPOLI, *L'immortalità dell'anima nel Rinascimento*, p. 197; BRUNO NARDI, *Saggi sull'aristotelismo padovano dal secolo XIV al XVI*, Sansoni, Firenze 1958 (Studi sulla Tradizione Aristotelica nel Veneto, 1), p. 164–165.

interpretation of the intelligence that Contarini will propose against him, six years later: «we agree with Theophrastus since we want, like he does, that the agent intellect gives being and understands; and our form is ingenerable and unperishable».<sup>23</sup> The reference to Theophrastus is problematic, since the Greek philosopher did well saying that the soul is ingenerable and unperishable; at the same time, Theophrastus believed in a real composition of external intellects (*intellectus adsistens*) into the human being, which Pomponazzi never admitted and defined «una menchionaria», a ‘nonsense’.<sup>24</sup> These critical statements endorse the hypothesis of an ontological bound between substantial forms and bodies: around 1511/12 Pomponazzi still believed in the immortality of the soul and in the inherence of the intellect into the material body. Therefore, it is easy to understand Contarini’s surprise, reading the *Tractatus* in 1516: within four years, Pomponazzi had radically changed his mind.

In conclusion, it is often accepted that the history of philosophy – and particularly the history of Renaissance philosophy – proceeds through famous philosophers and paradigmatic concepts; thus, we see important analysis comparing the development of an idea in some relevant philosophers, normally acclaimed as ‘major personalities’. Blum and his research team teach us that we do not need only the ‘major figures’, but rather the debates; we need to reconstruct the questions by exploring all the possible solutions and the nuances of the arguments which were produced. With the edition of Contarini’s *De immortalitate animae*, we appreciate the debate on the immortality of the soul not only from the usual perspective of Pomponazzi, but from a choral point of view, which gives us back the vitality of a daily-practiced philosophy.

---

<sup>23</sup> The *Expositio duodecimi metaphysices* is preserved in several manuscripts (for which see BRUNO NARDI, *Studi su Pietro Pomponazzi*, Le Monnier, Firenze 1965, p. 68–69). I am quoting from MS Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, lat. 6537, fols. 131r–176v, esp. fol. 158r: «convenimus cum Theophrasto volentes, sicut ipse, intellectum agentem, dantem esse et intelligere, formam nostram esse ingenerabilem et incorruptibilem».

<sup>24</sup> MS Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, lat. 6537, fol. 157r: «De prima dicit commentator primum quod anima intellectiva est ut dicit [*ms. dicunt*] Theophrastus, composita. Dices: ‘Videtur una menchionaria dicere quod anima sit composita’; et mi idem videtur». Some other arguments against Theophrastus can be found in the course on *De anima* (1503/4). For these arguments see PIETRO POMPONAZZI, *Corsi inediti dell’insegnamento Padovano*, vol. II, p. 47.

# NOTES



LA TRADIZIONE LETTERARIA SULLA PROSTITUZIONE  
SACRA A LOCRI EPIZEFIRI:  
I DUE VOTI DEL 477 E DEL 351–346 A. C. \*

THE LITERARY TRADITION ABOUT THE SACRED PROSTITUTION IN LOCRI EPIZEFIRI:  
THE TWO VOWS OF 477 AND 351–346 BC

IGNAZIO D'ANGELO  
MEDITERRANEA UNIVERSITY OF REGGIO CALABRIA



L'esistenza della prostituzione sacra a Locri è stata oggetto di un intenso dibattito tra gli studiosi moderni: alcuni storici hanno negato che tale pratica fosse in vigore a Locri;<sup>1</sup> altri, con argomenti diversi, ne hanno affermato la presenza.<sup>2</sup>

Il Van Compernelle ha sostenuto che la sacra prostituzione locrese è un'invenzione moderna alla cui base sta una maldestra combinazione e interpretazione delle fonti antiche (la II ode pitica di Pindaro e la tradizione letteraria relativa alla fine riservata dai Locresi ai familiari di Dionigi II): in particolare, il noto passo di Clearco (apud Athen. XII 515 E-516 A, fr. 43 Wehrli),

---

\* A mia madre, Maria, che mi ha insegnato il valore della parola.

<sup>1</sup> RENÉ VAN COMPERNELLE, « Le tradizioni sulla fondazione e sulla storia arcaica di Locri Epizefirî e la propaganda politica alla fine del V secolo av. Cr. », *Annali della Scuola Normale Superiore di Pisa. Classe di Lettere e Filosofia*, III ser., 6/2 (1976), p. 329–400, in part. p. 367–381; FRITZ GRAF, « Culti e credenze religiose della Magna Grecia », in *Megale Hellas. Atti del XXI convegno di studi sulla Magna Grecia, Taranto, 2-5 ottobre 1981*, Istituto per la storia e l'archeologia della Magna Grecia, Taranto 1982, p. 157–184, in part. p. 175–179; STEPHANIE LYNN BUDIN, *The Myth of Sacred Prostitution in Antiquity*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 2008, in part. p. 219.

<sup>2</sup> DOMENICO MUSTI, « Problemi della storia di Locri Epizefirî », in *Atti del XVI convegno di studi sulla Magna Grecia, Taranto 3-8 ottobre 1976*, Arte Tipografica, Napoli 1977 (Atti del convegno di studi sulla Magna Grecia), p. 23–146, in part. p. 65–71; MARGHERITA GUARDUCCI, « Due pezzi insigni del museo nazionale romano: il 'Trono Ludovisi' e l'Acrolito Ludovisi' », *Bollettino d'arte*, 33–34 (1985), p. 1–20, in part. p. 10; DOMENICO MUSTI, « Dall'età di Dionisio II fino all'occupazione romana (350–200 a. C.) » in SALVATORE SETTIS (ed.), *Storia della Calabria antica*, vol. II. *Età italica e romana*, Gangemi, Roma–Reggio Calabria 1994, p. 363–399, in part. p. 367; MARIO TORELLI, « I culti di Locri », in *Atti del XVI convegno di studi sulla Magna Grecia*, p. 147–184; LUIGI SANTI AMANTINI, « Ancora sulla prostituzione sacra a Locri Epizefirî », *Miscellanea greca e romana*, 9 (1984), p. 39–62; MANUELA MARI, « Tributo a Ilio e prostituzione sacra: storia e riflessi sociali di due riti femminili locresi », *Rivista di cultura classica e medioevale*, 2 (1997), p. 131–177.

che attesta la presenza della prostituzione nella Lidia, a Locri Epizefiri e a Cipro, si riferirebbe alla prostituzione profana, attestata a Locri e per la quale riporta a conferma un epigramma di Nosside (Anth. Palat. IX, 332).<sup>3</sup>

Anche il Graf ha ribadito l'inesistenza di tale pratica a Locri, ritenendo che i due testi letterari di Clearco (apud Athen. XII 515 E-516 A) e di Giustino (XXI 3), che hanno fatto pensare alla prostituzione sacra, « contengano solo la vaga memoria di una rituale deflorazione prenuziale »<sup>4</sup>.

La Budin, che in generale ha negato con forza l'esistenza di ogni forma di prostituzione sacra nel mondo antico, nel caso specifico di Locri ritiene che, a parte Giustino, le altre fonti non menzionino alcuna pratica di prostituzione sacra: fra l'altro lo stesso racconto di Giustino apparirebbe poco coerente nella struttura narrativa.<sup>5</sup>

Il Musti, il Torelli, l'Amantini e la Mari, invece, hanno affermato non solo la storicità dei due voti pronunciati dai Locresi, quello del 477 all'epoca dell'attacco mosso da Anassila e dal figlio Leofrone contro Locri, e quello ripristinato per timore dei Lucani al tempo del soggiorno locrese di Dionigi II tra il 351 e il 346, ma anche la presenza abituale di una prostituzione sacra a Locri.<sup>6</sup>

Le differenti conclusioni, a cui sono giunti gli studiosi, impongono una rivisitazione e un'attenta analisi delle fonti letterarie al fine di chiarire i tanti dubbi in merito ad uno dei temi più controversi della storia di Locri Epizefiri.

La prima fonte in ordine cronologico che attesta la presenza di una forma di prostituzione a Locri è il peripatetico Clearco di Soli nell'isola di Cipro, che visse intorno alla metà del IV secolo a.C. e che scrisse opere di carattere erudito e filosofico.<sup>7</sup>

Il riferimento di Clearco alla prostituzione locrese<sup>8</sup> è inserito all'interno di un ampio frammento, riportato da Ateneo e tratto dal IV libro dell'opera *Περὶ βίωv*,<sup>9</sup>

---

<sup>3</sup> VAN COMPERNOLLE, « Le tradizioni », p. 367–381.

<sup>4</sup> GRAF, « Culti e credenze religiose », p. 175–179.

<sup>5</sup> BUDIN, « *The Myth of Sacred Prostitution* », p. 210 ss.

<sup>6</sup> MUSTI, « Problemi della storia », p. 65–71; TORELLI, « I culti di Locri », p. 147–156; AMANTINI, « Ancora sulla prostituzione sacra », p. 39–62; MARI, « Tributo a Ilio », p. 131–177. Tra questi studiosi è comune la convinzione che i due voti di prostituzione sacra furono dettati da una occasione particolare perché è difficile credere che gli aristocratici prostituissero le loro donne abitualmente: è probabile – a loro avviso – che la prostituzione sacra fosse pertinente ad un livello più basso di classi.

<sup>7</sup> La figura e l'opera di Clearco di Soli hanno attirato in questi ultimi anni l'interesse di tanti studiosi: ROBERT J. GORMAN, VANESSA B. GORMAN, « Τρυφή and ὕβρις in the Περὶ βίωv of Clearchus », *Philologus*, 154 (2010), p. 187–208; STAVROS TSITSIRIDIS, *Beiträge zu den Fragmenten des Klearchos von Soloi. Untersuchungen zur antiken Literatur und Geschichte*, vol. CVII, De Gruyter, Berlin–Boston 2013 (*Untersuchungen zur antiken Literatur und Geschichte*, 107), p. 155–172; GERTJAN VERHASSELT, « What Were Works Περὶ βίωv? A Study of the Extant Fragments », *Philologus*, 160 (2016), p. 59–83.

<sup>8</sup> Clear. apud Athen. XII 516 A–B.

in cui Clearco si sofferma sulla *τροφή* dei Lidi e sull'origine della pratica della prostituzione in Lidia:

Κλέαρχος δ' ἐν τῇ τετάρτῃ περὶ βίων ... φησί ... Οὐ μόνον δὲ Λυδῶν γυναῖκες ἄφρετοι οὔσαι τοῖς ἐντυχοῦσιν, ἀλλὰ καὶ Λοκρῶν τῶν Ἐπιζεφυρίων, καὶ ἔτι δὲ τῶν περὶ Κύπρον, καὶ πάντων ἀπλῶς τῶν ἐταιρισμῶ τὰς ἑαυτῶν κόρας ἀφοσιούντων, παλαιᾶς τινοῦ ὕβρεως ἕοικεν εἶναι πρὸς ἀλήθειαν ὑπόμνημα καὶ τιμωρία.<sup>10</sup>

Nel IV libro delle Vite, Clearco [...] riferisce [...] non solo le donne dei Lidi erano lasciate libere ai primi capitati ma anche quelle dei Locresi Epizefiri e ancora quelle di Cipro e in generale di tutti quei popoli che consacrano le loro fanciulle alla prostituzione, e ciò sembra che sia in verità memoria e punizione di una qualche antica tracotanza [...].

Per il Torelli, la connessione di Locri con la Lidia e con Cipro, dove era attestata la prostituzione sacra legata al culto di Afrodite,<sup>11</sup> è un chiaro indizio della sua presenza anche a Locri: infatti questa forma di ierodulia era praticata a Koloe, a Tmolos e in città greche<sup>12</sup> che avevano uno stretto contatto con la Lidia come per esempio Efeso, nell'isola di Cipro a Pafo e ad Amatunte<sup>13</sup> e in Sicilia presso Erice.<sup>14</sup>

---

<sup>9</sup> Clear. apud Athen. XII 515 E–516 B.

<sup>10</sup> La tradizione manoscritta presenta τιμωρία anche se alcuni studiosi hanno preferito emendare in τιμωρίας; la correzione proposta da Kaibel (Teubner 1887–1890) è stata accolta da FRITZ WEHRLI, *Die Schule des Aristoteles*, vol. III: *Klearchos*, Schwabe, Basel–Stuttgart 1969<sup>2</sup>, p. 22 e da VAN COMPERNOLLE, « Le tradizioni », p. 377–379. Non tutti gli storici hanno accolto l'emendamento: cfr. MUSTI, « Problemi della storia », p. 70–71, n. 25; TORELLI, « I culti di Locri », p. 150–151; AMANTINI, « Ancora sulla prostituzione sacra », p. 39–40, n. 1; MARI, « Tributo a Ilio », p. 135, n. 17; VANIA GHEZZI, « I tiranni siracusani e le vergini locresi », *Parola del Passato*, 338 (2004), p. 321–360, in part. p. 347, n. 117.

<sup>11</sup> A Locri nell'area di Cento Camere, dove era venerata Afrodite, è stata rinvenuta una dedica arcaica a Cibele: la dea era oggetto di culto in Asia e, in particolare a Sardi, nella Lidia, era la dea del *thalamos*. In ambiente ionico come attesta Ipponatte (fr. 36 Diehl), Cibele era identificata con Afrodite. Cfr. TORELLI, « I culti di Locri », p. 150; ID., « I culti », in SALVATORE SETTIS (ed.), *Storia della Calabria antica*, vol. I, Gangemi, Roma–Reggio Calabria 1987, p. 589–612, in part. p. 599; AMANTINI, « Ancora sulla prostituzione sacra », p. 44. Sul culto di Afrodite a Locri cfr. MARCELLA BARRA BAGNASCO, « Nuovi documenti sul culto di Afrodite a Locri Epizefiri », *Parola del Passato*, 250 (1990), p. 42–63.

<sup>12</sup> Anche a Corinto era presente la prostituzione sacra come si può trarre conferma da una notizia di Pindaro (fr. 122 Snell) che ricorda il dono di ierodule da parte di Senofonte corinzio al santuario dell'Acrocorinto, dove si trovava anche un tempio di Afrodite. Sulla prostituzione a Corinto cfr. GABRIELLA AMIOTTI, *Corinto città libertina*, Jesus, Edizioni San Paolo, Alba, 1984, p. 226–231. Alcuni studiosi negano la presenza della prostituzione sacra nella città dell'Istmo. Cfr. GABRIELLA PIRONTI, « L'Afrodite di Corinto e il 'mito' della prostituzione sacra », in PAOLA ANGELI BERNARDINI (ed.), *Corinto. Luogo di azione e luogo di racconto. Atti del Convegno internazionale di Urbino, 23–25 Settembre 2009*, Fabrizio Serra, Pisa–Roma 2013 (Quaderni urbinati di cultura classica. Atti di convegni, 9), p. 13–26.

<sup>13</sup> TORELLI, « I culti di Locri », p. 150.

Inoltre la forma verbale ἀφοσιούντων, che rimanda chiaramente ad un lessico sacrale, ci proietta verso quell'atmosfera religiosa nell'ambito della quale probabilmente doveva essere inserita tale pratica.

Nell'ottica di Clearco la prostituzione a Locri appare come un fatto abituale<sup>15</sup> che ha un'origine ben precisa: essa, infatti, è παλαιᾶς τινος ὕβρεως ... ὑπόμνημα καὶ τιμωρία.

I moderni sono divisi riguardo al significato da dare all'espressione παλαιᾶς τιμος ὕβρεως; il Van Compernelle,<sup>16</sup> innanzitutto, ritiene che non è certo che l'espressione παλαιᾶς τιμος ὕβρεως ἔοικεν εἶναι πρὸς ἀλήθειαν ὑπόμνημα καὶ τιμωρία alluda ai Locresi e che comunque si tratta, pur sempre, di un'ipotesi dell'autore (ἔοικεν εἶναι) che si riferisce probabilmente alla *tracotanza* e alla *vendetta* esercitata dai Locresi sulla famiglia di Dionigi II.<sup>17</sup>

Il Musti<sup>18</sup>, invece, ha interpretato la frase di Clearco nel senso che la prostituzione sacra sarebbe una specie di punizione inflitta alle discendenti dei servi locresi di Grecia, fondatori di Locri Epizefiri,<sup>19</sup> che avevano portato con loro le donne nobili, con le quali si erano uniti durante l'assenza dei mariti e dei padri, accorsi in aiuto di Sparta, impegnata nella guerra contro i Messeni.

Allo stato attuale della ricerca storica non è possibile dire con sicurezza a che cosa pensasse Clearco con l'espressione παλαιᾶς τιμος ὕβρεως. Non credo che il suo riferimento fosse diretto, come dice il Van Compernelle, alla strage della famiglia di Dionigi II per una ragione testuale e cronologica allo stesso tempo: mi domando, infatti, considerata la contemporaneità tra Clearco e il soggiorno locrese di Dionigi II, come nel pensiero di questo autore, quella ὕβρις potesse apparire παλαιά.

---

<sup>14</sup> BEATRICE LIETZ, « La dea di Erice e il suo rapporto con la prostituzione », in FRANCESCO GHIZZANI MARCÌA, CAROLINA MEGALE (eds.), *Materiali per Populonia*, 8, ETS, Pisa 2009, p. 247-254.

<sup>15</sup> Cfr. AMANTINI, « Ancora sulla prostituzione sacra », p. 40.

<sup>16</sup> VAN COMPERNELLE, « Le tradizioni », p. 378-379.

<sup>17</sup> Da notare che l'interpretazione del Van Compernelle è determinata dalla preferenza della lezione τιμωρίας a τιμωρία, quest'ultima attestata, come ribadisce il Musti, nella migliore tradizione manoscritta (cod. A e B). Cfr. MUSTI, « Problemi della storia », p. 70, n. 25.

<sup>18</sup> MUSTI, « Problemi della storia », p. 37 ss. e p. 70, n. 25.

<sup>19</sup> Sulla fondazione di Locri Epizefiri ci sono giunte due tradizioni: una aristotelica, che affermava l'origine servile dei coloni, l'altra timaica, secondo la quale i fondatori avevano un'origine libera. Non è questa la sede per affrontare questa problematica per cui rimando ai seguenti contributi: VAN COMPERNELLE, « Le tradizioni », p. 330-353; MUSTI, « Problemi della storia », p. 37-65; LOREDANA CAPPELLETTI, « Colonizzazioni al femminile: il caso di Locri Epizefiri », in MARIAVALERIA DEL TUFO, FRANCESCO LUCREZI (eds.), *Lo spazio della donna nel mondo antico*, *Atti del Seminario di Studi, Napoli, Università Suor Orsola Benincasa, Centro Studi sui Fondamenti del Diritto antico*, 22 maggio 2017, Editoriale scientifica, Napoli 2019 (Fondamenti del diritto antico, 6), p. 213-232.

Interessante per un chiarimento del problema è un testo di Licofrone (Alex., 1141-73),<sup>20</sup> dove Cassandra profetizza sofferenze per le giovani donne locresi (sta parlando dei Locresi di Grecia), che verranno inviate ad Ilio al tempio di Atena per mille anni come serve a riparazione della colpa di Aiace,<sup>21</sup> che durante il sacco di Troia aveva fatto violenza su di lei (1155-1159):

αἷς ἀκτέριστος ἐν ξένη ξέναις τάφος / ψάμμω κλύδωνος λυπρὸς ἐκκλυσθήσεται, /  
φυτοῖς ἀκάρποις γυῖα συμφλέξας ὅταν / Ἥφαιστος εἰς θάλασσαν ἐκβράσση σποδὸν  
/ τῆς ἐκ λόφων Τράρωνος ἐφθιτωμένης [...].<sup>22</sup>

Per loro, straniera in terra straniera, una tomba dolente, / priva di esequie, sarà  
lavata via dall'onda sabbiosa, / quando bruciando le membra con piante infeconde  
/ Efesto getterà in mare le ceneri / di colei che perì dalle cime del Trarone [...].<sup>23</sup>

A mio avviso, il testo di Licofrone è in stretto rapporto con l'affermazione di Clearco secondo cui la prostituzione, propria dei Locresi Epizefiri (al pari dei Lidi e dei Ciprioti), sia in verità memoria e punizione di una qualche antica tracotanza (παλαιᾶς τινοῦ ὕβρεως ἔοικεν εἶναι πρὸς ἀλήθειαν ὑπόμνημα καὶ τιμωρία): l'antica colpa, dunque, potrebbe essere per i Locresi quella di Aiace Oileo che aveva violentato Cassandra all'epoca della conquista di Troia.

Nel leggere il testo di Licofrone sono stato colpito dal riferimento all'incinerazione e alla dispersione in mare delle giovani locresi (ma dei Locresi di Grecia) che ricorda il trattamento a cui furono sottoposti i familiari di Dionigi II, dopo che essi furono violentati e uccisi secondo quanto ci viene riferito dallo

---

<sup>20</sup> Cfr. DENNIS D. HUGHES, *I sacrifici umani nell'antica Grecia*, Salerno, Roma 1999 (Piccoli saggi, 5), p. 265 ss.

<sup>21</sup> La figura di Aiace Oileo è strettamente collegata ai Locresi Epizefiri a proposito della battaglia della Sagra dal momento che, secondo la leggenda, Aiace sarebbe intervenuto a fianco dei Locresi nello scontro contro i Crotoniati. Cfr. RENÉ VAN COMPERNOLLE, « Ajax et les Dioscures au secours des Locriens sur les rives de la Sagra (ca. 575-565 av. notre ère) », in *Hommages à Marcel Renard*, vol. II, Latomus, Bruxelles 1969, p. 733-766. MARTA SORDI, « La leggenda dei Dioscuri nella battaglia della Sagra e di Lago Regillo », *Contributi dell'Istituto di storia antica*, 1 (1972), p. 47-70.

<sup>22</sup> Questi versi sono presenti anche in Tzetze (Chil. 5 728-745) dove l'erudito bizantino del XII secolo ricorda che nella Ionia, quando una sventura colpiva una città per la collera divina, veniva preso l'uomo più ripugnante e, dopo aver preparato il luogo del sacrificio e avergli dato in mano formaggio, focaccia e fichi secchi e dopo averlo frustato, veniva bruciato su una pira e le sue ceneri venivano disperse in mare come anche - dice Tzetze - Licofrone riferisce in qualche luogo delle giovinette locresi... (segue con qualche variante irrilevante il passo di Licofrone sopra riportato).

<sup>23</sup> La traduzione del passo di Licofrone è stata riportata dall'opera di HUGHES, *I sacrifici umani*, p. 265.

stesso Clearco (apud Athen. XII 541 C-E fr. 47 Wehrli), da Eliano (Var. Hist. IX, 8) e da Strabone (VI 1 8 C 259).<sup>24</sup>

Sia Clearco sia Eliano, dopo aver ricordato l'arrivo di Dionigi II a Locri, si soffermano su una strana scena in cui il tiranno è impegnato a rotolarsi nudo con donne nude su un tappeto di fiori nella casa più grande della città: per questa sua colpa i Locresi costrinsero la moglie e le figlie di Dionigi II a prostituirsi, le violentarono e, inserendo aghi dentro le unghie delle mani, le uccisero; mangiarono una parte dei loro corpi e il resto venne buttato in mare.

Nel suo racconto Strabone aggiunge altri particolari relativi al soggiorno locrese del tiranno: ricorda lo *ius primae noctis* esercitato nei confronti delle donne locresi, presenta un'altra curiosa scena in cui delle fanciulle nude, con sandali non legati, uno più alto, l'altro più basso, sono costrette da Dionigi a inseguire delle colombe, e infine si sofferma sulla violenza esercitata dai Locresi sui familiari del tiranno, che vengono violentati, uccisi, bruciati e le loro ceneri disperse in mare.<sup>25</sup>

L'ipotesi che Clearco, Eliano e Strabone abbiano arricchito i loro resoconti sull'uccisione della moglie e dei figli del tiranno con richiami a quei racconti che coinvolgevano le fanciulle dei Locresi di Grecia,<sup>26</sup> costrette a recarsi a Troia a servire nel tempio di Atena, prende sempre più consistenza se collegata alla prostituzione sacra, a cui questi testi sembrano in qualche modo alludere: l'episodio riferito da Clearco ed Eliano relativo ai giochi erotici sul tappeto di fiori nella casa più grande di Locri, la scena descritta da Strabone in cui le fanciulle nude inseguono delle colombe hanno portato il Prückner a vedere i residui della tradizione di una festa di Afrodite a Locri.<sup>27</sup>

Anche il Torelli, collegando il gioco delle colombe alla descrizione del pavimento cosperso di fiori nella casa più grande di Locri (Athen. XII 541 C-D-E; Ael. Var. Hist. IX, 8), ritiene che l'uno e l'altro si inseriscano nel clima della religiosità locrese:<sup>28</sup> la menzione da parte di Giustino del *die festo Veneris* conferma, a mio avviso, questa ipotesi e credo che questi momenti facciano parte proprio del cerimoniale del voto di prostituzione sacra, di cui parla Giustino.

<sup>24</sup> Per uno sguardo sinottico di questi racconti e per una loro discussione cfr. IGNAZIO D'ANGELO, « La tradizione letteraria sul soggiorno locrese di Dionigi II: un frammento sconosciuto di Timeo (Strab. VI 1, 8, C 259) », *Rivista dell'Istituto Lombardo*, 136/1 (2002), p. 177-191.

<sup>25</sup> Nel testo di Strabone è assente il particolare del cannibalismo, presente nella tradizione letteraria confluita nel racconto di Clearco ed Eliano.

<sup>26</sup> Sulla vicenda delle fanciulle locresi e il rapporto con i sacrifici umani cfr. HUGHES, *I sacrifici umani*, p. 263-289; PIERRE BONNECHERE, *Le sacrifice humain en Grèce ancienne*, Centre international d'étude de la religion grecque antique, Athènes-Liège 1994 (Kernos. Supplément, 3), p. 150-163.

<sup>27</sup> Cfr. HELMUT PRÜCKNER, *Die lokrischen Tonreliefs. Beitrag zur Kultgeschichte von Lokroi Epizephyrioi*, Philipp von Zabern, Mainz am Rhein 1968, p. 8-14.

<sup>28</sup> TORELLI, « I culti di Locri », p. 182.

Un altro testo che sembra inserirsi nell'atmosfera religiosa, di cui stiamo parlando, è il noto epigramma della poetessa locrese Nosside (Anth. Pal. IX, 332):<sup>29</sup>

Ἐλθοῖσαι ποτὶ ναὸν ἰδόμεθα τὰς Ἀφροδίτας / τὸ βρέτας, ὡς χρυσῶ δαιδαλόν  
τελέθει. / Εἷσατό μιν Πολυαρχίς, ἐπαυρομένα μάλα πολλὰν / κτῆσιν ἀπ'οικείου  
σώματος ἀγλαΐας

Giunte nel tempio guardiamo la statua di Afrodite / che appare scolpita in oro. / La innalzò Poliarchide che guadagnò molte ricchezze / dalla bellezza del proprio corpo.<sup>30</sup>

---

<sup>29</sup> Originaria di Locri visse intorno al 300 a. C. Su Nosside cfr. MARCELLO GIGANTE, « Nosside », *Parola del Passato*, 154–155 (1974), p. 22–39. In questo articolo l'autore commenta i dodici epigrammi di Nosside sulla base di un confronto con Saffo, Ibico di Reggio, Leonida di Taranto e altri poeti greci.

<sup>30</sup> Alcuni studiosi hanno pensato di collegare l'epigramma di Nosside con le tavolette 23, 30 e 31 dell'archivio del tempio di Zeus a Locri, nelle quali compare uno ἱερῶν μίσθωμα, che è stato considerato dal De Franciscis e dal Torelli come voce riferibile alla prostituzione sacra: in particolare il De Franciscis ha inteso l'espressione ἱερῶν μίσθωμα come « mercede delle sacerdotesse »; il Torelli ha fatto notare la corrispondenza tra la cifra di venti talenti della voce ἱερῶν μίσθωμα delle tavolette e il numero degli *oikoi* della Stoá ad U di Centocamere, identificata dal Torelli con il *lupanare* del testo di Giustino (XXI 3), dove Dionigi II aveva proposto ai Locresi di far assolvere il voto di prostituzione sacra; l'Amantini ha richiamato un passo di Ateneo (XIII 581 A) dove il termine μίσθωμα significa proprio « prezzo di una prostituta ». Significativa è l'osservazione del Gigante (Nosside, cit., in part. 31–32) secondo cui la κτῆσιν dell'epigramma di Nosside, sopra riportato, richiami il μίσθωμα delle tavole locresi. Tuttavia non tutti gli storici accettano lo ἱερῶν μίσθωμα delle tavolette come voce riferibile alla prostituzione sacra: lo stesso Gigante, che in un primo momento aveva accettato l'interpretazione data dal De Franciscis, successivamente se ne è allontanato, proponendo di intendere lo ἱερῶν μίσθωμα come un riferimento a terre sacre; il Costabile, infatti, ha interpretato lo ἱερῶν μίσθωμα come canone di affitto di terre sacre. È dunque difficile utilizzare le tavolette come prova per l'esistenza della prostituzione sacra a Locri, considerata l'ambiguità dell'espressione ἱερῶν μίσθωμα. Cfr. ALFONSO DE FRANCISCIS, *Stato e società in Locri Epizefiri: l'archivio dell'Olympieion locrese*, Libreria scientifica, Napoli 1972 (Pubblicazioni a cura del Centro studi della Magna Grecia della Università di Napoli, n. s., 3), p. 151–158; ID., « Le tavole di Locri negli studi dal 1972 ad oggi », in DOMENICO MUSTI (ed.), *Le Tavole di Locri. Atti del colloquio sugli aspetti politici, economici, culturali e linguistici dei testi dell'archivio locrese (Napoli 26–27 aprile 1977)*, Edizioni dell'Ateneo & Bizzarri, Roma 1979, p. 15–36, in part. p. 31–33; MARIO TORELLI, « Considerazioni sugli aspetti religiosi e culturali », in DOMENICO MUSTI (ed.), *Le Tavole di Locri*, p. 91–112, in part. p. 104–106; AMANTINI, « Ancora sulla prostituzione sacra », p. 55–62; GIGANTE, « Nosside », p. 31–32; ID., « Le tavole di Locri come testo storico », in DOMENICO MUSTI (ed.), *Le Tavole di Locri*, p. 37–59, in part. p. 43–45; discussione p. 114–115; FELICE COSTABILE, « Redditi, terre e fonti finanziarie dell'Olympieion: tributi, imposte e rapporti contrattuali », in FELICE COSTABILE (ed.), *Polis ed Olympieion a Locri Epizefiri. Costituzione economia e finanze di una città della Magna Grecia. Editio altera e traduzione delle tabelle locrese*, Rubbettino, Soveria Mannelli (CZ) 1992, p. 160–174, in part. p. 162; FELICE COSTABILE, « Santuari e culti a Locri Epizefiri », in *Enigmi delle civiltà antiche dal Mediterraneo al Nilo*, vol. I, Iiriti, Reggio Calabria 2007, p. 97–105, in part. p. 102.

L'epigramma di Nosside non lascia adito a dubbi: la statua in oro di Afrodite si presenta come un *ex voto* offerto da questa donna di nome Poliarchide, che evidentemente ha guadagnato ricchi compensi grazie alla bellezza del suo corpo e, dunque, all'attività di etera svolta all'interno del tempio.

Il fatto che tale statua si trovi in un tempio e che l'epigramma di Nosside sia inserito in un'atmosfera religiosa nell'ambito del culto ad Afrodite, credo che concorra a confermare la presenza della prostituzione sacra a Locri legata ad Afrodite, come d'altra parte viene confermato dal racconto di Giustino (XXI, 3) che inserisce il voto del 477 in rapporto ad una festa in onore di Venere (Cum Reginorum tyranni Leophronis bello Locrenses premerentur, voverant, si victores forent, ut *die festo Veneris* virgines suas prostituerent).

Proprio il testo di Giustino (XXI, 3), relativo al soggiorno locrese del tiranno Dionigi II, contiene espliciti riferimenti alla prostituzione sacra: in esso, infatti sono ricordati sia il voto risalente all'attacco reggino contro Locri nel 477 a.C. sia quello che cronologicamente si colloca durante il periodo di permanenza del tiranno siracusano a Locri (351–346 a.C.).

Alcuni studiosi moderni, confrontando il racconto di Giustino con altre fonti, sono giunti alle seguenti conclusioni soprattutto per quanto riguarda la natura di questi due voti.

Per l'Amantini,<sup>31</sup> la Mari<sup>32</sup> e il Cordiano,<sup>33</sup> i due voti di prostituzione sacra ebbero un carattere di eccezionalità<sup>34</sup> per due ragioni: innanzitutto per le circostanze di pericolo in cui furono pronunciati (l'attacco reggino del 477 a.C. contro Locri e una sconfitta locrese ad opera dei Lucani intorno alla metà del IV sec. a.C.) e poi per il coinvolgimento di donne di rango elevato. In particolare il voto del 477 non sarebbe stato adempiuto (come suggerirebbe l'espressione di Giustino '*quo voto intermisso*')<sup>35</sup>, grazie all'intervento diplomatico del tiranno siracusano Ierone, che, liberando le fanciulle locresi da un così pesante tributo, ne ottenne così quella gratitudine, a cui sembra alludere Pindaro nella II Pitica.<sup>36</sup>

---

<sup>31</sup> AMANTINI, « Ancora sulla prostituzione sacra », p. 49 ss.

<sup>32</sup> MARI, « Tributo a Ilio », p. 146 ss.

<sup>33</sup> Cfr. GIUSEPPE CORDIANO, « La fine della 'ierodulia' femminile a Temesa magno greca nella propaganda dei Locresi Epizefirii », *ARYS. Antigüedad: Religiones y Sociedades*, 3 (2000), p. 115–127, in part. p. 118 ss.

<sup>34</sup> La straordinarietà del voto si potrebbe comprendere ammettendo la presenza abituale a Locri di forme di prostituzione sacra che non coinvolgevano donne aristocratiche, ma elementi appartenenti a livelli più bassi della popolazione. Cfr. MUSTI, « *Problemi della storia* », p. 71; AMANTINI, « *Ancora sulla prostituzione sacra* », p. 47.

<sup>35</sup> Iust. XXI 3. Sulla mancata attuazione del voto del 477 a.C. si sono espressi diversi studiosi: VAN COMPERNOLLE, « *Le tradizioni* », p. 371–372; MUSTI, « *Problemi della storia* », p. 66; MARI, « *Tributo a Ilio* », p. 143, 146; GHEZZI, « *I tiranni siracusani* », p. 339.

<sup>36</sup> Cfr. AMANTINI, « *Ancora sulla prostituzione sacra* », p. 42 ss.; GUARDUCCI, « *Due pezzi insigni* », p. 12; MARI, « *Tributo a Ilio* », p. 151; CORDIANO, « *La fine della 'ierodulia' femminile* », p. 119. Anche il TORELLI (« *I culti* », p. 599) pensa di trovare un'eco del *votum* nell'ode di Pindaro. Al

Il voto di metà IV secolo avrebbe avuto, invece, un carattere simbolico,<sup>37</sup> stante al racconto dello stesso Giustino, che precisa che nessuno degli uomini avrebbe dovuto violare le donne convenute nel lupanare: il ripristino del voto ad opera di Dionigi II, giustificato da una sconfitta subita dai Locresi ad opera dei Lucani, in realtà fu un espediente con il quale Dionigi si appropriò delle ricchezze delle donne aristocratiche.

Le interessanti osservazioni contenute in questi studi e i risultati di alcune mie ricerche condotte negli anni passati sull'attacco reggino del 477 a.C. e sul soggiorno locrese di Dionigi II<sup>38</sup> costituiscono dei punti di partenza imprescindibili per tentare di aprire uno spiraglio sulla complessa struttura narrativa del racconto trogiano, di cui ritengo opportuno riportare il testo e la traduzione.

Giustino (XXI, 2, 8; 3) inserisce la ripresa del voto da parte di Dionigi in quei provvedimenti finalizzati a rimpinguare le finanze del tiranno:<sup>39</sup>

Qui cum obsidionem arcis timeret, cum omni regio apparatu in Italiam profugit tacitus. Exul Locrensibus sociis acceptus, velut iure regnaret, arcem occupat solitamque sibi saevitiam exercet. Coniuges principum ad stuprum rapi iubebat, virgines ante nuptias abducebat stupratasque procis reddebat, locupletissimos quosque aut civitate pellebat aut occidi imperabat bonaque eorum invadebat. Dein cum rapinae occasio deesset, universam civitatem callido commento circumvenit. Cum Reginorum tyranni Leophronis bello Locrenses premerentur, voverant, si victores forent, ut die festo Veneris virgines suas prostituerent. Quo voto intermisso cum adversa bella cum Lucanis gererent, in contionem eos Dionysius vocat; hortatur, ut uxores filiasque suas in templum Veneris quam possint ornatissimas mittant, ex quibus sorte ductae centum voto publico fungantur religionisque gratia uno stent in lupanari mense omnibus ante iuratis viris, ne quis ullam adtaminet. Quae res ne virginibus voto civitatem solventibus fraudi esset, decretum facerent: ne qua virgo nuberet, priusquam illae maritis traderentur.

---

contrario la SOURVINOU-INWOOD (« The votum of 477/6 B. C. and the foundation legend of Locri Epizephyrii », *The Classical Quarterly*, 24 (1974), p. 186–198, in part. p. 187, n. 4) aveva escluso che Pindaro conoscesse il *votum*. Così anche MARCELLO GIGANTE, « Pindaro quale testimone della civiltà letteraria e agonale di Locri Epizefiri », *Klearchos*, 20 (1978), p. 59–73, in part. p. 67.

<sup>37</sup> VAN COMPERNOLLE, « Le tradizioni », p. 373; MUSTI, « Problemi della storia », p. 67; AMANTINI, « Ancora sulla prostituzione sacra », p. 49.

<sup>38</sup> Cfr. IGNAZIO D'ANGELO, « L'attacco reggino del 477 a.C. contro Locri e l'intervento di Ierone », *Aevum*, 76/1 (2002), p. 9–15; D'ANGELO, « La tradizione letteraria », p. 177–191.

<sup>39</sup> Cfr. FEDERICOMARIA MUCCIOLI, *Dionisio II. Storia e tradizione letteraria*, CLUEB, Bologna 1999 (Monografie di Simblos, 1), p. 352–353; JOACHIM LOSEHAND, « Votum (publicum) intermissum: Bemerkungen zur 'sakralen Prostitution' in Lokroi Epizephyrioi », in TANJA S. SCHEER, MARTIN LINDNER (eds.), *Tempelprostitution im Altertum. Fakten und Fiktionen*, Verlag Antike, Berlin 2009 (Oikumene. Studien zur antiken Weltgeschichte, 6) p. 267–292, in part. p. 271; LOREDANA CAPPELLETTI, « Esclusive notizie locresi in Nosside (Anth. Pal. 6.132 E 265) », *Athenaeum*, 106/2 (2018), p. 474–490.

Probato consilio, quo et superstitioni et pudicitiae virginum consulebatur, certatim omnes feminae inpensius exornatae in templum Veneris conveniunt, quas omnes Dionysius inmissis militibus spoliat ornamentaque matronarum in praedam suam vertit. Quarundam viros ditiores interficit, quasdam ad prodendas virorum pecunias torquet. Cum his artibus per annos sex regnasset, conspiratione Locrorum civitate pulsus in Siciliam redit [...].

Dionigi, temendo l'assedio della rocca, fuggì di nascosto in Italia con tutto l'apparato regale. Esule, accolto dai Locresi suoi alleati, come se regnasse di diritto, occupò l'acropoli ed esercitò l'abituale crudeltà. Comandava di far stuprare le mogli dei più illustri, sottraeva le fanciulle prima delle nozze e le restituiva disonorate ai mariti, cacciava i cittadini più ricchi dalla città o ordinava di ucciderli e si appropriava delle loro ricchezze. Quindi, non trascurando occasione di rapina, raggiò tutta la cittadinanza con un ingegnoso disegno. I Locresi, essendo assediati dalla guerra di Leofrone, tiranno di Reggio, avevano fatto voto di prostituire le loro fanciulle nel giorno di festa di Venere, se fossero risultati vincitori. Ma avendo interrotto questo voto e poiché combattevano guerre sfavorevoli con i Lucani, Dionisio chiama i cittadini locresi in assemblea; li esorta a mandare nel tempio di Venere le proprie figlie e le proprie mogli,<sup>40</sup> ornate il più possibile; ed estrattene a sorte cento,<sup>41</sup> le esorta ad assolvere il voto pubblico e a rimanere un mese nel lupanare per dovere religioso, avendo fatto giurare a tutti gli uomini che nessuno di loro ne avrebbe violata una. Affinché ciò non recasse danno alle fanciulle che liberavano la città dal voto, li esortò ad approvare un decreto, secondo cui nessuna fanciulla si sarebbe sposata prima che quelle avessero trovato marito. Approvata la proposta, secondo cui si deliberava a favore della religione e dell'onore delle fanciulle, a gara tutte le donne, ornate con molta cura, convennero al tempio di Venere, dove Dionigi, avendo mandato i mercenari, le spogliò tutte e fece bottino dei gioielli delle matrone. Fece uccidere gli uomini più ricchi di alcune donne, ne torturò altre affinché rivelassero le ricchezze dei loro uomini. Poiché regnò con questi sistemi per sei anni,<sup>42</sup> espulso da una congiura cittadina, ritornò in Sicilia.

Sebbene in generale l'opera storica di Trogo-Giustino ponga problemi interpretativi di notevole entità soprattutto in merito all'identità dei due autori,

---

<sup>40</sup> La teoria del Graf secondo cui dietro il racconto di Giustino ci troveremmo di fronte ad un rituale di deflorazione è in realtà in contraddizione con lo stesso racconto, dove la proposta di Dionigi all'assemblea locrese non riguarda soltanto fanciulle, ma anche donne già sposate (*uxores filiasque*). Cfr. GRAF, « Culti e credenze religiose », p. 175–179.

<sup>41</sup> Il numero di donne estratte sembra suggerire un rapporto tra la nobiltà locrese e le donne, appartenenti alla 'cento casate' della madrepatria Locride, che parteciparono alla fondazione di Locri Epizefiri. Cfr. TORELLI, « I culti di Locri », p. 152; CAPPELLETTI, « Esclusive notizie », p. 488.

<sup>42</sup> Sulla durata del soggiorno locrese di Dionigi II cfr. PIERO MELONI, « Il soggiorno di Dionisio II a Locri », *Studi italiani di filologia classica*, 25 (1951), p. 149–168; MUSTI, « Problemi della storia », p. 99; IGNAZIO D'ANGELO, « Le tavolette di Locri e il regnum di Dionigi II », *Aevum*, 75/1 (2001), p. 9–24, in part. p. 19, n. 58; GIUSEPPE ZECCHINI, in JUSTIN, *Abrégé des Histoires Philippiques de Trogue Pompée*, t. II: *Livres XI–XXIII*, Les Belles Lettres, Paris, 2018, p. 232.

alla natura dell'epitome, al rapporto tra Giustino e Trogo e al problema delle fonti<sup>43</sup> e sebbene in questo passo siano state rilevate opportunamente una serie di incongruenze narrative e delle contraddizioni,<sup>44</sup> tuttavia non si può non tenere conto delle informazioni sui due voti contenute in Giustino soprattutto sulla base di un confronto-riscontro con la tradizione letteraria confluita in Clearco-Eliano<sup>45</sup> e in quella di Strabone.<sup>46</sup>

Secondo il racconto di Giustino, al tempo dell'attacco di Leofrone, tiranno di Reggio, i Locresi avevano pronunciato il voto di prostituire le loro fanciulle in occasione di una festa in onore di Venere, se avessero vinto il conflitto.

La struttura del *cum narrativum* stabilisce un nesso temporale-causale tra l'attacco reggino e il pronunciamento del voto e pertanto risulta importante riflettere sull'esito di questa guerra, che ebbe delle ripercussioni sulle relazioni tra la tirannide dinomenidea e le città italiote.<sup>47</sup>

<sup>43</sup> Per un quadro generale sull'epitome di Giustino cfr. CINZIA BEARZOT, FRANCA LANDUCCI (eds.), *Studi sull'Epitome di Giustino I. Dagli Assiri a Filippo II di Macedonia*, Vita e Pensiero, Milano 2014 (Contributi di storia antica, 12); EAD., *Studi sull'Epitome di Giustino II. Da Alessandro Magno a Filippo V di Macedonia*, Vita e Pensiero, Milano 2015 (Contributi di storia antica, 13); ALESSANDRO GALIMBERTI, GIUSEPPE ZECCHINI (ed.), *Studi sull'Epitome di Giustino III. Il tardo ellenismo. I Parti e i Romani*, Vita e Pensiero, Milano 2016 (Contributi di storia antica, 14); DAGMAR HOFMAN, *Griechische Weltgeschichte auf Latein. Iustins 'Epitoma historiarum Pompei Trogi' und die Geschichtskonzeption des Pompeius Trogus*, F. Steiner, Stuttgart 2018 (Hermes Einzelschriften, 114); ALICE BORGNA, *Ripensare la storia universale. Giustino e l'Epitome delle 'Storie Filippiche' di Pompeo Trogo*, Olms, Hildesheim-Zürich-New York 2018 (Spudasmata, 176).

<sup>44</sup> Cfr. GHEZZI, « I tiranni siracusani », p. 330-331.

<sup>45</sup> Clear. apud Athen. XII 541 C-E fr. 47 Wehrli; Ael. *Var. Hist.* IX, 8.

<sup>46</sup> Strab. VI 1 8 C 259.

<sup>47</sup> L'intervento del tiranno Ierone a favore di Locri faceva parte di un progetto politico-territoriale più ampio finalizzato ad ampliare la sfera d'influenza dei Dinomenidi nell'area italiota come rivelano alcuni provvedimenti attuati tra il 480 e il 470 a.C.: la costruzione di un edificio sacro chiamato corno di Amaltea nei pressi di Ipponion (colonia locrese) ad opera di Gelone (Athen. XII 542, a=FgrHist II A, 144), l'intervento militare di Ierone a fianco dei Sibariti, attaccati da Crotone (Diod. XI 48, 3-5; Schol. Pind. *Ol.* II 29 bcd); il sostegno siracusano dato ai Locresi nella conquista di Temesa (Strab. VI 1, 5 C 255) e della fascia ionica tra l'Halex e il Kaikinos; la vittoria siracusana sugli Etruschi a Cuma; l'allontanamento del reggino Micito, che aveva tentato di rilanciare la politica imperialistica di Reggio. Cfr. GIOVANNA DE SENSI SESTITO, « I Dinomenidi, nel basso e medio Tirreno fra Imera e Cuma », in *Mélanges de l'École française de Rome. Antiquité*, 93 (1981-1982), p. 617-642; NINO LURAGHI, *Tirannidi arcaiche in Sicilia e Magna Grecia. Da Panezio di Leontini alla caduta dei Dinomenidi*, Olschki, Firenze 1994 (Fondazione Luigi Firpo. Centro di studi sul pensiero politico. Studi e testi, 3), p. 273-373; GIOVANNI MILLINO, « Micito di Reggio e la symmachia con Taranto », *Hesperia*, 17 (2003), p. 207-221; IGNAZIO D'ANGELO, « La politica espansionistica di Locri Epizefirii negli anni compresi fra il 477 e il 467 a.C.: la versione locrese della conquista di Temesa (Strab. VI 1, 5 C 255) », *Polis. Studi interdisciplinari sul mondo antico*, 3 (2010), p. 27-34; GIOVANNA DE SENSI SESTITO, « Temesa: tradizioni e documentazioni a confronto », in LUCIA FERNANDA RUFFO (ed.), *Verso Temesa: Storia e prospettive di una ricerca. Atti del convegno, Campora San Giovanni-Amantea, 31 ottobre 2015*, Mariano Spina, San Giovanni in Fiore (CS) 2016, p. 9-32.

È *communis opinio* tra gli studiosi moderni che non vi sia stato alcun attacco reggino<sup>48</sup> ma solo una minaccia di guerra da parte di Reggio, risolta grazie all'intervento diplomatico del tiranno siracusano Ierone.

In un saggio del 2002<sup>49</sup> avevo proposto una lettura diversa di questo avvenimento sulla base di uno studio di entrambe le tradizioni relative agli scoli su Pindaro:<sup>50</sup> l'attacco di Reggio e di Messina ebbe come conseguenza la sconfitta di Locri, testimoniata dalle dediche votive di Olimpia,<sup>51</sup> e l'assedio della città.<sup>52</sup> Fu solo a questo punto che Ierone inviò come ambasciatore il cognato Cromio, minacciò una guerra contro Reggio e bloccò l'assedio e la conquista reggina della città di Locri: la precedente vittoria reggina venne vanificata così dal tempestivo intervento siracusano.

È il poeta Pindaro che ai versi 18-20 della seconda Pitica,<sup>53</sup> scritta in onore di Ierone, tiranno di Siracusa, ricorda il canto di gratitudine delle fanciulle locresi:<sup>54</sup>

κελαδέοντι μὲν ἀμφὶ Κινύραν πολλάκις / φᾶμαι Κυπρίων, τὸν ὁ χρυσοχαίτας /  
προφρόνως ἐφίλησ' Ἀπόλλων, / ἱερέα κτίλον Ἀφροδίτας· ἄγει δὲ χάρις / φίλων  
ποίημος ἀντὶ ἔργων ὀπιζομένα· σὲ δὲ, ὦ Δεινομένειε παῖ, Ζεφυρία, πρὸ δόμων /

<sup>48</sup> Sull'attacco di Reggio contro Locri nel 477 a.C. Cfr. GIOVANNA DE SENSI SESTITO, « La Calabria in età arcaica e classica », in SETTIS (ed.), *Storia della Calabria antica*, vol. I, p. 227-303, in part. p. 253, 259; EAD., « I Dinomenidi », p. 624, n. 26; MAURIZIO GIANGIULIO, « Aspetti di storia della Magna Grecia arcaica e classica fino alla guerra del Peloponneso », in GIOVANNI PUGLIESE CARRATELLI (ed.), *Magna Grecia. Lo sviluppo politico, sociale ed economico*, Electa, Milano 1987, p. 9-54, in part. p. 41; ID., « Le città di Magna Grecia e Olimpia in età arcaica », in ATTILIO MASTROCINQUE (ed.), *I grandi santuari della Grecia e l'Occidente*, Dipartimento di scienze filologiche e storiche, Trento 1993, p. 93-118, in part. p. 108, n. 45; LURAGHI, « Tirannidi arcaiche », p. 216-224; CORDIANO, « Espansione territoriale », p. 95-103; D'ANGELO, « L'attacco reggino », p. 9-15; GHEZZI, « I tiranni siracusani », p. 323-328; GIOVANNA DE SENSI SESTITO, « Siracusa, le guerre di confine tra Locri e Reggio e il 'trattato' di Eliano », in *Aiōnos. Miscellanea di studi storici*, 17 (2011-2012), p. 17-48.

<sup>49</sup> D'ANGELO, « L'attacco reggino », p. 9-15.

<sup>50</sup> Cfr. *Scholia Recentia in Pindari Epinicia*, ed. ABEL EUGEN, vol. I: *Scholia in Olympia et Pythia*, apud S. Calvary et Socios, Budapestini et Berolini 1891; *Scholia Vetera in Pindari Carmina*, ed. ANDREAS B. DRACHMANN, vol. II: *Scholia in Phythionicas*, Lipsiae 1910 (rist. Verlag Adolph M. Hakkert, Amsterdam 1964).

<sup>51</sup> Cfr. SEG, 24, n° 304; 305; 311; 312.

<sup>52</sup> Negli *Scholia Recentia* al verso 34 della seconda pitica lo scoliasta annota (schol. ad Pind. Pyth. II, 34a): « Locri Epizefiri era assediata (ἐπολιορκεῖτο) dai nemici. Dopo che quelli erano stati respinti dalla potenza di Ierone (ὄν ἀπελασθέντων τῇ δυνάμει Ἰέρωνος)... ».

<sup>53</sup> Per i problemi relativi alla natura, data e occasione di questo componimento rimando a PINDARO, *Le Pitiche*, ed. BRUNO GENTILI, commento a cura di PAOLA ANGELI BERNARDINI, ETTORE CINGANO, BRUNO GENTILI, PIETRO GIANNINI, Fondazione Lorenzo Valla, Arnoldo Mondadori Editore, Milano 1995, intr. p. XLV-LV; p. 43-54.

<sup>54</sup> Sulla natura del canto locrese cfr. ANGELA BELLIA, *Il canto delle vergini locresi. La musica a Locri Epizefirii nelle fonti scritte e nella documentazione archeologica (secoli VI-III a.C.)*, Serra: Pisa-Roma 2012 (Nuovi saggi, 116), p. 21-22.

Λοκρὶς παρθένος ἄπύει, / πολεμίων καμάτων ἐξ ἀμαχάνων / διὰ τεὰν δύναμιν  
δρακεῖς' ἀσφαλές [...].

Spesso la voce dei Ciprioti celebra Cinira che l'aureochiomato Apollo amò di gran cuore, sacerdote, ministro d'Afrodite; devota gratitudine li guida a compenso d'opere amiche; e te, figlio di Dinomene, celebra innanzi alle case la vergine di Locri Zefiria che dai travagli della guerra ineluttabili ha levato sicuro lo sguardo grazie al tuo potere [...].<sup>55</sup>

E lo scoliasta annota a Λοκρὶς παρθένος ἄπύει (Schol. 36 b):

ἀνυμνοῦσι μὲν τὸν Κινύραν οἱ Κύπριοι· σὲ δέ, ὦ Δεινομένους παῖ Ἰέρων, Ἐπιζεφυρία παρθένος προελθοῦσα λοιπὸν τῶν οἴκων ἀναφωνεῖ καὶ ἀνυμνεῖ, τῶν πολεμικῶν καμάτων ἐξ ἀπροσδοκίτου ἀπαλλαγείσα καὶ διὰ τὴν σὴν δύναμιν ἐλευθέρον βλέπουσα.

I Ciprioti celebrano Cinira; o Ierone, figlio di Dinomene, le fanciulle locresi, dunque, uscendo fuori dalle loro case ti chiamano e ti invocano, perché liberate inaspettatamente dalle sofferenze dei nemici, grazie alla tua potenza, vedono la libertà.

Nel passo di Pindaro e in quello dello scoliasta non vi sarebbe un'allusione al voto di prostituzione sacra ma solo un riferimento alle sofferenze della guerra: a mio avviso, le fanciulle locresi (che rappresentano probabilmente la comunità civica) vennero salvate dall'assedio di Anassila e di Leofrone, che, una volta concluso, avrebbe comportato sofferenze ben più atroci per Locri Epizefiri che non quelle derivanti da un voto di prostituzione.

Se si guarda la vicenda dalla prospettiva religiosa locrese, la dea Afrodite, a cui i Locresi si erano rivolti,<sup>56</sup> era intervenuta evitando la distruzione di Locri e, pertanto, bisognava da una parte ringraziare il tiranno siracusano, che era divenuto strumento della protezione della dea,<sup>57</sup> e dall'altra dare seguito al voto di prostituzione sacra.

---

<sup>55</sup> La traduzione dei versi è tratta da PINDARO, *Le Pitiche*, p. 63.

<sup>56</sup> D'altra parte, già altre volte, i Locresi avevano goduto dell'aiuto di una 'divinità' in un momento di estremo pericolo, ovvero in occasione della battaglia della Sagra quando, secondo la tradizione, i Locresi, in numero nettamente inferiore, erano riusciti a riportare una straordinaria vittoria sui Crotoniati grazie all'intervento dei Dioscuri, figli di Zeus. Sulla battaglia della Sagra cfr. VAN COMPERNOLLE, « Ajax et les Dioscures », p. 733-766; SORDI, « La leggenda dei Dioscuri », p. 47-70; MAURIZIO GIANGIULIO, « Locri, Sparta, Crotone e le tradizioni leggendarie intorno alla battaglia della Sagra », *Mélanges de l'École française de Rome. Antiquité*, 95 (1983), p. 473-521; DE SENSI SESTITO, « La Calabria in età arcaica », p. 243-246; LUISA MOSCATI CASTELNUOVO, « Sparta e le tradizioni crotoniate e locresi sulla battaglia della Sagra », *Quaderni Urbinati di Cultura Classica*, 51 (1995), p. 141-163; ALESSANDRO SGOBBI, « Stesicoro, Falaride e la battaglia della Sagra », *Acme*, 56/3 (2003), p. 3-38.

<sup>57</sup> Alla luce di ciò si comprende anche l'accostamento presente nell'ode pindarica tra Cinira e Ierone: le voci (φᾶμαι) di Cipro ringraziano Cinira, sacerdote devoto (κτίλον) ad Afrodite, che

L'intervento di Ierone, in definitiva, ebbe come conseguenza l'obbligo per i Locresi di prostituire le loro fanciulle in base alla formulazione del voto così come è riportata da Giustino (« Cum Reginorum tyranni Leophronis bello Locrenses premerentur, voverant, si victores forent, ut die festo Veneris virgines suas prostituerent »).

Che il voto fosse stato adempiuto lo rivela, a mio avviso, il sintagma 'Quo voto intermisso', che agli occhi della fonte di Trogo-Giustino o di Dionigi II appare come la causa all'origine dei *bella adversa*, a cui sono sottoposti i Locresi ad opera dei Lucani: l'espressione 'voto intermisso'<sup>58</sup> non va interpretata come *voto trascurato*, ma come *voto interrotto* nel senso che tale pratica rituale da parte delle fanciulle locresi ad un certo momento non venne più continuata.<sup>59</sup>

Anche il voto risalente alla metà del IV secolo a.C. è collegato ad un pericolo militare, ovvero ad una serie di guerre sfavorevoli che i Locresi stavano combattendo contro i Lucani: ciò diventa il pretesto, insieme al voto interrotto del V sec. a.C., per Dionigi II per ripristinare il voto di prostituzione sacra, che nel racconto di Giustino appare come *pro forma*, una sorta di rito, visto che tutti gli uomini dovevano giurare che nessun uomo avrebbe violato alcuna donna (« omnibus ante iuratis viris, ne quis ullam adtaminet »).

Fu veramente simbolico il voto di prostituzione sacra pronunciato durante il soggiorno locrese di Dionigi II? Dalla testimonianza di Giustino sembra proprio di sì, anche se le altre fonti letterarie, che ricordano il soggiorno locrese del tiranno, velatamente e implicitamente orientano verso altre direzioni.

Nel racconto di Clearco,<sup>60</sup> ripreso e rielaborato nei contenuti da Eliano<sup>61</sup>, Dionigi II, dopo aver cosparsa di rose e di serpilli la casa più grande della città (οἶκον τῶν ἐν τῇ πόλει τὸν μέγιστον), manda a chiamare le fanciulle (παρθένους) dei Locresi e nudo, insieme alle donne nude, si rotola (κυλινδούμενος)<sup>62</sup> sul tappeto di fiori.

---

ha procurato benefici e prosperità all'isola, così come le fanciulle locresi rendono grazie a Ierone, che ha liberato Locri dal pericolo della guerra. Le analogie tra Cinira e Ierone non sono solo di carattere politico ma anche di carattere religioso: Cinira è re dell'isola di Cipro ed è anche sacerdote di Afrodite, Ierone è il signore di Siracusa e anche ierofante delle dee Demetra e Kore. Sul rapporto tra Cinira e Ierone cfr. PINDARO, *Le Pitiche*, p. 370-373; GHEZZI, « I tiranni siracusani », p. 333-338.

<sup>58</sup> Cfr. LOSEHAND, « Votum (publicum) intermissum », p. 267-292.

<sup>59</sup> Sul significato dell'espressione 'quo voto intermitto', cfr. BRUNO CURRIE, *Pindar and the Cult of Heroes*, Oxford University Press, Oxford 2005, p. 265-266.

<sup>60</sup> Clear. apud Athen. XII 541 C-E fr. 47 Wehrli.

<sup>61</sup> Ael. *Var. Hist.* IX, 8.

<sup>62</sup> L'azione del *kylindesthai* andrebbe intesa come volteggiare o danzare. Cfr. BELLIA, *Il canto delle vergini locresi*, p. 22, n. 15.

Strabone<sup>63</sup> descrive un curioso quadro in cui il tiranno siracusano riunisce le fanciulle (παρθένους) più belle di Locri nei banchetti e le obbliga a inseguire nude, con sandali di diversa altezza, alcune colombe lasciate libere nella sala.

Questi giochi erotici potrebbero apparire agli occhi del lettore moderno come le fantasie di una mente perversa o come semplici particolari aneddotici delle fonti, interessate a mettere in evidenza la mollezza del tiranno (τρυφή), se non fosse per i tratti fortemente religiosi degli elementi che caratterizzano queste scene: rose, serpilli e colombe rimandano, infatti, al culto di Afrodite.<sup>64</sup>

È possibile, inoltre, che dietro ῥοῖκον τῶν ἐν τῇ πόλει τὸν μέγιστον, menzionato da Clearco, possa celarsi un riferimento al tempio di Venere, di cui parla Giustino.

Non c'è ombra di dubbio che i racconti di Giustino e di Clearco-Eliano appartengano a tradizioni letterarie autonome e fortemente tendenziose,<sup>65</sup> che evidentemente erano interessate a mettere in luce aspetti differenti del soggiorno locrese del tiranno siracusano:<sup>66</sup> nello specifico mentre la fonte di Trogo-Giustino (probabilmente Teopompo)<sup>67</sup> presenta il voto come un atto simbolico con cui il tiranno intende appropriarsi delle ricchezze dei Locresi, i racconti di Clearco-Eliano e di Strabone presentano scene aneddotiche a forti tinte religiose, in cui le *parthenoi* locresi vengono comunque violate.<sup>68</sup>

Infine un aspetto che accomuna i due voti secondo la tradizione trogiana è che entrambi siano messi in relazione con la dea Afrodite/Venere:<sup>69</sup> il voto del 477 a.C. è inserito in un *die festo Veneris*, quello dell'epoca dionigiana presenta due cornici, quella del *lupanar* e quella di un *templum Veneris*.

---

<sup>63</sup> Strab. VI 1 8 C 259.

<sup>64</sup> Cfr. TORELLI, « Considerazioni sugli aspetti », p. 96-97; GHEZZI, « I tiranni siracusani », p. 343-344.

<sup>65</sup> D'ANGELO, « La tradizione letteraria », p. 188-191, n. 40-41, 43-44.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid., p. 188; GHEZZI, « I tiranni siracusani », p. 345.

<sup>67</sup> Teopompo di Chio, vissuto intorno alla metà del IV secolo a.C., è la fonte di Trogo-Giustino per quanto riguarda il soggiorno locrese di Dionigi II: i frammenti, che ci sono rimasti di Teopompo su Dionigi II e sui suoi familiari, si avvicinano per contenuto ai racconti di Giustino e mostrano Dionigi e i suoi come degli ubriaconi e dei dissoluti, violatori di donne e di bambini. Il frammento di Teopompo (FgrHist 115 FF 283a-b) sulla malattia agli occhi, che aveva colpito Dionigi II a causa della sua smodatezza nel bere, trova un chiaro riscontro proprio in un altro passo di Giustino (XXI 2,1). Cfr. MARTA SORDI, in *Diodori Siculi Bibliothecae liber XVI*, ed. MARTA SORDI, La Nuova Italia, Firenze 1969 (Biblioteca di studi superiori, 56), p. 39 dell'introduzione; PAUL PÉDECH, *Trois historiens méconnus. Théopompe-Duris-Phylarque*, Les belles lettres, Paris 1989 (Collection d'études anciennes, 119), p. 164-169, n. 10; GIOVANNA DE SENSI SESTITO, « I due Dionisii e la nascita della confederazione Brettia », in GIOVANNA DE SENSI SESTITO (ed.), *I Brettii*, t. I: *Cultura, lingua, e documentazione storico-archeologica. Atti del I corso seminariale - Rossano, 20-26 Febbraio*, Rubbettino, Soveria Mannelli 1995, p. 33-71, in part. p. 46, n. 62; MUCCIOLI, *Dionigi II*, p. 89; D'ANGELO, « La tradizione letteraria », p. 182.

<sup>68</sup> Cfr. GHEZZI, « I tiranni siracusani », p. 346.

<sup>69</sup> Sul rapporto molto stretto tra il culto di Afrodite nel mondo greco e la pratica della prostituzione sacra cfr. TORELLI, « I culti di Locri », p. 152-154.

La tradizione letteraria relativa alla presenza di un culto ad Afrodite a Locri Epizefiri è stata confermata dalle esplorazioni archeologiche effettuate sia in località Marasà, dove sono stati trovati i resti di un tempio ionico, sia nell'area di Centocamere,<sup>70</sup> dove gli scavi hanno evidenziato una serie di *oikoi*, che costituiscono la cosiddetta Stoà a U e, a breve distanza da questa, un sacello,<sup>71</sup> che rappresentava il luogo di culto vero e proprio della divinità.<sup>72</sup>

La Stoà a U si sviluppava su tre lati ed era costituita da un cortile centrale, occupato da piccoli *bothroi*, da una sala sul fondo e da ambienti rettangolari ai lati<sup>73</sup>; proprio le stanze laterali presentano ambienti, che ben si adatterebbero alla pratica della prostituzione sacra (cfr. Fig. 1).<sup>74</sup>

Inoltre la presenza del culto di Afrodite a Locri è testimoniata anche da alcune iscrizioni, ritrovate a Locri,<sup>75</sup> che riportano il nome della dea:<sup>76</sup> la maggior parte di queste iscrizioni sono state reperite proprio nell'area di Centocamere-Marasa che probabilmente doveva essere il luogo principale del culto rivolto alla dea (cfr. Fig. 2).<sup>77</sup>

<sup>70</sup> La presenza di un culto ad Afrodite è attestata anche presso il santuario della Mannella dove era venerata la dea Persefone cfr. GUARDUCCI, « Due pezzi insigni », p. 4; BELLIA, *Il canto delle vergini locresi*, p. 58.

<sup>71</sup> La Bagnasco identifica in questo sacello il *templum Veneris*, di cui parla Giustino (XXI 3) o il *ναός* che compare nel già ricordato epigramma di Nosside (Anth. Pal. IX, 332). Cfr. MARCELLA BARRA BAGNASCO, « Nuovi documenti sul culto di Afrodite a Locri Epizefiri », *Parola del Passato*, 250 (1990), p. 42-53, in part. p. 51; MARIO TORELLI, *Dei e artigiani. Archeologie delle colonie greche d'Occidente*, GLF editori Laterza, Roma-Bari 2011, p. 77-88.

<sup>72</sup> Cfr. TORELLI, « I culti di Locri », p. 147-156; BARRA BAGNASCO, « Nuovi documenti sul culto », p. 42-53.

<sup>73</sup> Cfr. TORELLI, « I culti », p. 597-607; BELLIA, *Il canto delle vergini locresi*, p. 65-68.

<sup>74</sup> Per il Torelli la Stoà ad U potrebbe identificarsi con il *lupanar* di Giustino (XXI 3). Cfr. TORELLI, « I culti di Locri », p. 154-155; Id., « Considerazioni sugli aspetti », p. 98. Gli studiosi hanno interpretato gli *oikoi* in maniera diversa: sale di banchetto (Graf), celle adibite alla prostituzione sacra (Guarducci), ambienti dedicati a forme di culto connesse con pranzi iniziatici (Barra Bagnasco). Cfr. GRAF, « Culti e credenze », p. 178-179; GUARDUCCI, « Due pezzi insigni », p. 10. Cfr. BARRA BAGNASCO, « Nuovi documenti sul culto », p. 48, n. 14.

<sup>75</sup> Sempre a Locri è stata ritrovata una iscrizione presso Centocamere con dedica a Kybala, la Cibele microasiatica, che la tradizione ionica antica identificava con Afrodite. Cfr. MARGHERITA GUARDUCCI, « Cibele in un'epigrafe arcaica di Locri Epizefiri », *Klio*, 52 (1970), p. 133-138; TORELLI, « I culti di Locri », p. 150; AMANTINI, « Ancora sulla prostituzione sacra », p. 44; TORELLI, « I culti », p. 599; FELICE COSTABILE, « Defixiones da Locri Epizefiri: nuovi dati sui culti, sulla storia e sulle istituzioni », *Minima Epigraphica et Papyrologica*, 2 (1999), p. 22-76, in part. p. 25-29.

<sup>76</sup> BARRA BAGNASCO, « Nuovi documenti sul culto », p. 42-53; MARCELLA BARRA BAGNASCO, « Nuova dedica locrese ad Afrodite », *Parola del Passato*, 250 (1990), p. 62-63; LAVINIO DEL MONACO, *Iscrizioni greche d'Italia*, Quasar, Roma 2013, p. 110-122; ENZO LIPPOLIS, « Alcune osservazioni sull'uso e sulla diffusione della coroplastica rituale nei depositi dell'Italia meridionale: il caso di Locri Epizefiri », *Polymnia. Studi di archeologia*, 6 (2014), p. 55-93, in part. p. 74, n. 61.

<sup>77</sup> LIPPOLIS, « Alcune osservazioni sull'uso », p. 75.

Questi dati archeologici risultano molto interessanti se messi a confronto con la tradizione letteraria, con la quale presentano diversi punti di contatto: il tempio e il lupanare, ricordati da Giustino (XXI 3), potrebbero trovare una corrispondenza archeologica rispettivamente nel sacello e nella Stoà ad U dove erano presenti gli *oikoi* (le camerette), così come il *die festo Veneris*, menzionato dallo stesso Giustino, troverebbe una conferma nel culto di Afrodite, testimoniato da diverse iscrizioni religiose.

Inoltre la Stoà a U, posta fuori dalle mura della città e vicino al mare, poteva prestarsi bene all'attività delle sacre prostitute, che venivano lasciate libere ai primi capitati (ἄφειτοι οὐσαὶ τοῖς ἐντυχοῦσιν), secondo quanto riferito da Clearco di Soli nel frammento di Ateneo (XII 516 B).<sup>78</sup>

Dall'esame delle fonti letterarie e dalle rilevanze archeologiche possiamo trarre, a mio avviso, le seguenti conclusioni:

1. L'analisi delle fonti letterarie e archeologiche ci consente di affermare con certezza che a Locri Epizefiri esisteva la prostituzione sacra, legata al culto di Afrodite: la concisa testimonianza di Clearco, relativa alla presenza della prostituzione sacra in Lidia, a Locri e a Cipro,<sup>79</sup> può essere considerata attendibile<sup>80</sup> non solo perché Clearco, vivendo intorno alla metà del IV sec. a.C., poteva disporre di fonti di prima mano relative alla storia di Locri Epizefiri ma anche perché il resoconto di Clearco sul soggiorno locrese di Dionigi II, almeno nelle linee generali, sembra confermato dai resoconti di Strabone e di Trogo-Giustino. L'epigramma della poetessa Nosside sulla statua in oro di Afrodite, donata dall'etera Poliarchide, conferma, a mio avviso, che la pratica della prostituzione sacra fosse ancora in atto tra la fine del IV e l'inizio del III sec. a.C.
2. La tradizione letteraria sulle violenze sessuali di Dionigi II e sulla fine atroce che i Locresi destinarono alla famiglia del tiranno ha sicuramente preso spunto dai rituali collegati con la prostituzione sacra oltre che dai racconti in qualche modo ad essa connessi (Lycofr. Alex. 1155-1159; Tzetze Chil. 5 728-745).

---

<sup>78</sup> TORELLI, « I culti », p. 602-603.

<sup>79</sup> Secondo alcuni studiosi il testo di Clearco descrive il fenomeno della prostituzione come una pratica abituale, che probabilmente interessava gli elementi servili e gli strati bassi della popolazione, mentre i due voti del 477 e del 351-346, tramandati da Giustino, coinvolsero certamente anche la classe aristocratica. Cfr. MUSTI, « Problemi della storia », p. 67; AMANTINI, « Ancora sulla prostituzione sacra », p. 50; CAPPELLETTI, « Esclusive notizie », p. 488.

<sup>80</sup> Il valore documentario di Clearco di Soli è testimoniato dallo stesso Ateneo che, alla fine dei Deipnosofisti (XV 701 C), lo definisce οὐδενὸς ὦν δεύτερος τῶν τοῦ σοφοῦ Ἀριστοτέλους μαθητῶν. Cfr. GIUSEPPE ZECCHINI, *La cultura storica di Ateneo*, Vita e pensiero, Milano 1989, p. 198-208.

3. I due voti di prostituzione sacra, a cui fa riferimento in maniera esplicita il racconto di Trogo-Giustino e che coinvolsero le donne aristocratiche, ebbero un esito simile: quello del 477 a.C. non solo fu pronunciato, ma venne anche attuato e, dopo alcuni anni, evidentemente interrotto (così, a mio avviso, va interpretata l'espressione '*quo voto intermisso*'). Per quanto riguarda il voto risalente all'epoca del soggiorno locrese di Dionigi II, di cui ci sono giunti sia il racconto dettagliato, ma non sempre lineare di Giustino, sia gli echi presenti nelle altre fonti, la scena del tappeto cosparso di fiori e di serpilli, su cui si rotolano Dionigi II e le fanciulle locresi nella casa più grande della città,<sup>81</sup> lo *ius primae noctis* che il tiranno esercita a Locri, lo strano gioco in cui le fanciulle locresi sono costrette dal tiranno ad inseguire delle colombe,<sup>82</sup> l'uso della forma verbale *καταπορνεύω* per indicare la violenza a cui vennero sottoposte la moglie e le figlie del tiranno, prima di essere uccise,<sup>83</sup> sembrano orientare per una attuazione del voto della metà del IV secolo a.C., anche se i contorni e le circostanze, in cui tale voto venne adempiuto, non sono del tutto chiari.

---

<sup>81</sup> Clear. apud Athen. XII 541 C-E fr. 47 Wehrli; Ael. *Var. Hist.* IX, 8.

<sup>82</sup> Strab. VI 1 8 C 259.

<sup>83</sup> Ael. *Var. Hist.* IX, 8; Strab. VI 1 8 C 259; Plut. *Timol.* 13.

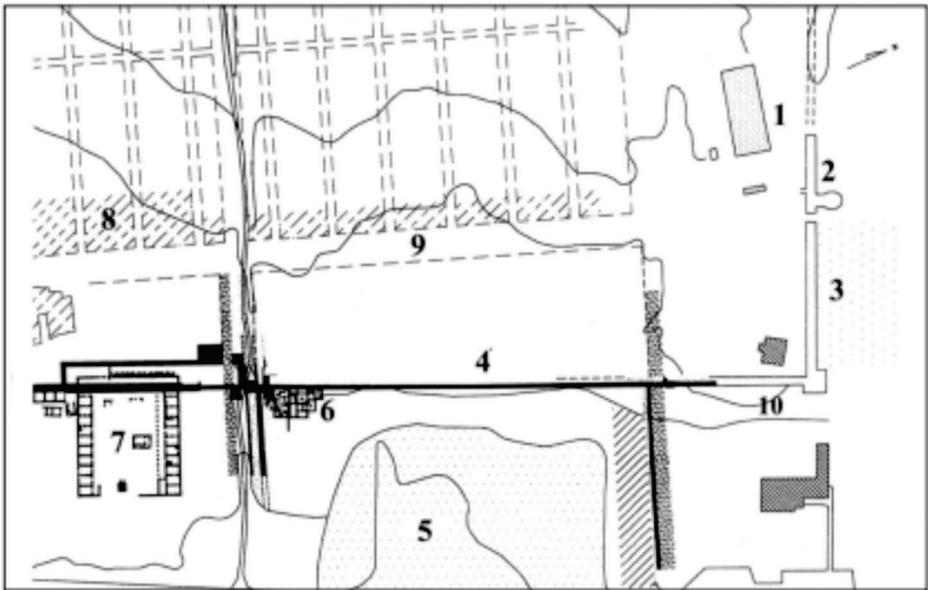


Fig. 1. Planimetria dell'area di Centocamere-Marasà. **1: Tempio ionico**; 2: Mura e torre; 3: Thesmophorion; 4: Mura; 5: Area portuale; **6: Sacello di Afrodite** e Casa dei leoni - Adonion; **7: 'Stoà a U'**; 8: Isolati di abitazione di Centocamere; 9: Plateia C; 10: Stipe di Zeus fulminante. (In MARIO TORELLI, *Dei e artigiani. Archeologie delle colonie greche d'Occidente*, GLF editori Laterza, Roma-Bari 2011, p. 79, fig. 46).

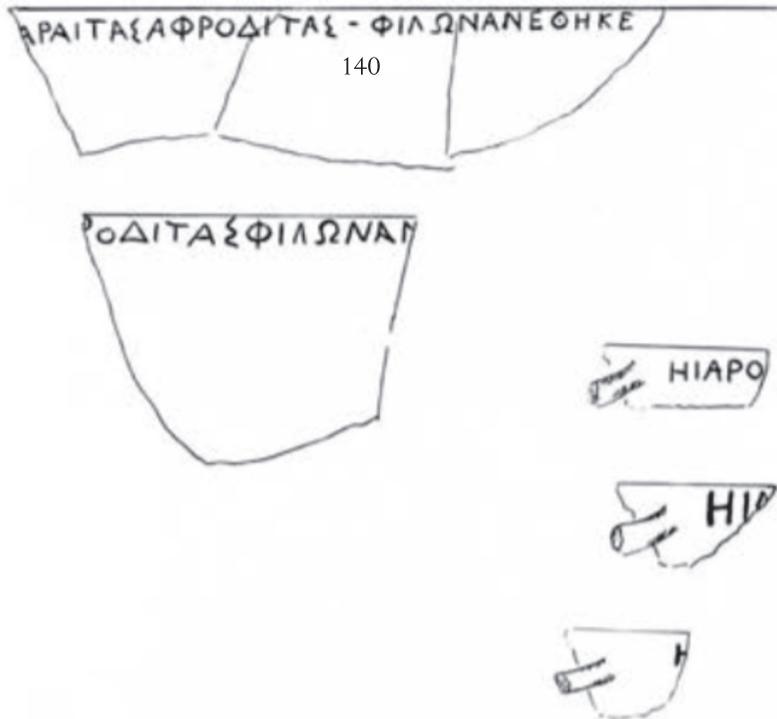


Fig. 2: Frammenti di skyphoi a vernice nera con iscrizioni dal bothros n. 24 di Locri, Centocamere. (In MARGHERITA GUARDUCCI, « Due pezzi insigni del museo nazionale romano: il 'Trono Ludovisi' e l'Acrolito Ludovisi' », *Bollettino d'arte*, 33-34 (1985), p. 4.).

CANTOS, CARTE, AND COLUMNS  
A HYPOTHESIS CONCERNING THE ORIGINAL MISE-EN-PAGE  
OF DANTE'S *COMEDY*\*

KEVIN WHITE  
THE CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY OF AMERICA



I. Introduction:

*John Ahern's Conjecture Concerning the Number and Format of the Pages  
on Which Dante Wrote Out the 'Comedy'*

Dante wrote out the lines of his *Comedy*, in keeping with standard practice, on pages that had been ruled with horizontal and vertical lines to guide the writing according to a predetermined format. He refers to the practice at the end of the *Purgatorio*, where he says he has no space left to describe the sweet taste of the waters of Eünoè because all the pages prepared – *tutte le carte ordite* – for the *Purgatorio* have been filled up.

S'io avessi, lettor, più lungo spazio  
da scrivere, i' pur cantere' in parte  
lo dolce ber che mai non m'avria sazio;  
ma perché piene son tutte le carte  
ordite a questa cantica seconda,  
non mi lascia più ir lo fren de l'arte. (*Purgatorio* 33.136–141)<sup>1</sup>

---

\* I am grateful to Robert Sokolowski and John Tomarchio for their helpful comments on a draft of this article.

<sup>1</sup> « If, reader, I had more ample space to write, / I should sing at least in part the sweetness / of the drink that never would have sated me, / but, since all the sheets / made ready for this second canticle are full, / the curb of art lets me proceed no farther ». Quotations from the *Comedy* and translations of quoted passages are taken from *Inferno, Purgatorio, Paradiso*, ed. ROBERT HOLLANDER, JEAN HOLLANDER,

*Ordite* is from the verb *ordire*, which was used as a technical term in the art of weaving. Dante is comparing the horizontal and vertical lines ruled onto his page to the warp and woof of threads on a loom.<sup>2</sup> « The curb of art » (*lo fren de l'arte*) that stops him from describing the taste of the waters is the limit set by the formatted pages that have been prepared for the *Purgatorio*, and that have now been filled.

What was the format of the pages on which Dante wrote out the *Comedy*? No known autograph of the *Comedy* has survived, and the oldest known surviving copies date from over a decade after his death in 1321. Any discussion of the earliest copies must therefore be highly conjectural. John Ahern begins by acknowledging as much in a study titled « What Did the First Copies of the *Comedy* Look Like? » (2003). Later in the study, he offers the following conjecture concerning the copies Dante produced:

[...] it is likely that he himself produced most of the copies he sent out [...]. He would have written in the widespread relatively rapid notarile script, *cancelleresca*, rather than a cumbersome Gothic book hand [...]. He would have written on parchment, not paper, and in the double columns long customary in legal and other texts because of their more economical use of page space. A double-column format with twelve tercets (or thirty-six verses) per column would produce a single sheet holding, on its two sides, a total of 144 verses, that is, one-hundredth of the total text, or a *canto per carta* [...]. For reasons of editorial economy and theological-aesthetic symmetry, his own bound author's copy [...] would have run to exactly 100 *chartae*. The fact that the three earliest surviving copies of the poem consist of about 100 *chartae* would tend to confirm this hypothesis [...].<sup>3</sup>

---

Doubleday, New York 2000–2007, which reproduces the text of *Dante Alighieri: La Commedia secondo l'antica vulgata*, ed. GIORGIO PETROCCHI, Le Lettere, Florence 1994 (1966–1967), vol. II–IV. The translation of the Hollanders is accompanied by a very helpful commentary by Robert Hollander.

<sup>2</sup> RONALD L. MARTINEZ, « Dante 'buon sartore' (*Paradiso* 32.140): Textile Arts, Rhetoric, and Metapoetics at the End of the *Commedia* », *Dante Studies* 136 (2018), p. 22–61: at p. 29.

<sup>3</sup> JOHN AHERN, « What Did the First Copies of the *Comedy* Look Like? » in TEODOLINDA BAROLINI, H. WAYNE STOREY (eds.), *Dante for the New Millennium*, Fordham University Press, New York 2003 (Fordham Series in Medieval Studies, 2), p. 1–15: at p. 12. At the beginning of his study (p. 1), Ahern says, somewhat self-mockingly, that it might fit under the heading « Immaterial Philology ». The same might be said of the present discussion. Ahern says Dante « may well never have actually seen » what Ahern calls « his own bound author's copy » (*ibid.*). I take it he means, not that Dante may not have seen a copy made by someone else, but rather that he may not have seen bound together pages he himself wrote out. As Ahern points out elsewhere, binding « required highly specialized skills and equipment, including a large press ». See JOHN AHERN, « Binding the Book: Hermeneutics and Manuscript Production in *Paradiso* 33 », *Proceedings of the Modern Language Association*, 97 (1982), p. 800–809: at p. 801.

In the following section, I will use this plausible and interesting conjecture as the basis for a hypothesis I would like to present concerning the way in which Dante distributed his lines over the four columns of a page.

## II. *Beyond Ahern's Conjecture: A Hypothesis Concerning Dante's Mise-en-page*

Recalling Dante's love of number, let us begin by considering the numbers in Ahern's conjectural description. The principle of a canto per page has a satisfying simplicity and comprehensiveness, making the elements of the 100-canto *Comedy* and those of the conjectured 100-page codex coincide perfectly, in a harmonious union of form and material. Ahern suggests that Dante settled on this arrangement « for reasons of editorial economy and theological-aesthetic symmetry », and a reader of such a codex could indeed take pleasure in the thought that its gathering of 100 pages, *legato con amore in un volume* (*Paradiso* 33.86), reflected the constitution of the poem out of 100 cantos.

More complex are the numbers Ahern specifies for the format of the individual canto-page. Each column would have thirty-six lines, allowing for twelve tercets, and the whole page would have 144 lines, allowing for forty-eight tercets. Ahern does not comment on the number 144. To a reader of scripture, the number would recall passages in the *Book of Revelation* that describe the New Jerusalem as having walls 144 cubits thick (21:17), and that put the number of the redeemed at 144,000 (7:3-8; 14:1,3-5). Might Dante have found symbolic resonance between his 144-line canto-page format and these numbers in the New Jerusalem?<sup>4</sup>

Incidentally, another sort of symbolic resonance involving the number 144 seems to be present in a passage in T. S. Eliot's *Four Quartets* that imitates the form of a canto in the *Comedy*.<sup>5</sup> The imitation is seventy-two lines long, half the length of the 144-line page format conjectured by Ahern, and Eliot does seem to have wanted the length of his imitation to suggest something like half the length of a canto, perhaps in order to suggest also that he is only half the poet Dante is. Did he make the same conjecture

---

<sup>4</sup> In his commentary on *Purgatorio* 29.145-150, Robert Hollander points out that 144 is the number of persons in the pageant described in *Purgatorio* 29.82-30.33. Hollander refers to « the mystical number (144,000) of the Church Triumphant », and to the verses in the *Book of Revelation*.

<sup>5</sup> THOMAS S. ELIOT, *The Poems of T. S. Eliot*, Vol. I: *Collected and Uncollected Poems*, ed. CHRISTOPHER RICKS, JIM McCUE, Faber and Faber, London 2015, p. 203-205, lines 25-96. The passage is in the second section of the last *Quartet*, « Little Gidding ». There is a speech in this passage that is thirty-six lines long, which is exactly half the length of the passage, and exactly the length of a column on the 144-line page described by Ahern.

Ahern did about Dante's 144-line page format? Or did he just round up to 144 the average number of lines in the 100 cantos, which is 142.33?

In any case, as this average number indicates, Ahern's description of Dante's page as « a single sheet holding, on its two sides, a total of 144 verses, that is, one-hundredth of the total text, or a *canto per carta* » cannot be entirely correct. As Eliot, Ahern himself, and indeed any reader of the *Comedy*, would know, none of the cantos is exactly 144 lines long, and in fact none could be. The *terza rima* rhyme scheme that Dante invented and used throughout the *Comedy* would not allow it. The scheme consists of three-line stanzas in which the first and third line rhyme (A – B – A). In each succeeding stanza, the first and third lines rhyme with the second line of the preceding stanza, and the second line introduces a new line-ending, with which the first and third lines of the following stanza rhyme (B – C – B, C – D – C, D – E – D [...]). This arrangement does not allow a canto to consist of exactly 144 lines, i.e., exactly forty-eight tercets. In fact, it does not allow a canto to consist of exactly any number of tercets, because that would leave the second line of the last tercet unrhymed, that is, lacking a rhyme in a subsequent tercet. As may be seen throughout the *Comedy*, a solitary extra line has to be added at the end of every canto, in order to provide the otherwise missing final rhyme, and so bring the rhyming, and the canto, to a close. The nearest to 144 lines this allows is 145, and thirteen of the one hundred cantos are indeed 145 lines long, but the rest are longer or shorter. As just noted, however, the average number of lines per canto is 142.33, which is just short of 144. Evidently, Dante worked with an eye on his format, looking ahead and calculating, *come quei ch'adopera ed estima, che sempre par che'nnanzi si proveggia* (*Inferno* 24.25–26), in order to ensure that each canto would fit onto its page.

If none of the cantos matches the 144-line format exactly, and canto lengths vary, how did Dante distribute the lines over the four columns in writing out a page? A natural way of proceeding would be to conform to the format for as much of the page as possible before having to deviate from it. That is, one would keep exactly to the 36-line column format in the first three columns, leaving the fourth column to fall short of or exceed thirty-six lines more or less, depending on the number of lines remaining in the canto after the first 108 lines had filled up the first three columns. Where the fourth column exceeded thirty-six lines, the additional lines would be written in the lower margin, the space left blank at the bottom of the page by the horizontal and vertical lines establishing the format.

I propose, as a hypothesis to be tested, that this is precisely what Dante did do, distributing the lines of a canto-page over the four columns as follows. (For illustration, an appendix at the end of this article presents the way in which, I am

suggesting, he would have distributed the lines over the four columns of the page in writing out the first canto of the *Inferno*.)

The first column, the left-hand column on the front of the page (*recto a*), would have thirty-six lines, making up a group of twelve tercets. These would be what we call lines 1 to 36, accustomed as we are to referring to modern editions of the *Comedy* that include marginal indications of line numbers in Arabic numerals.

The second column, the right-hand column on the front of the page (*recto b*), would have another thirty-six lines, lines 37 to 72, making up a second group of twelve tercets.

The third column, the left-hand column on the back of the page (*verso a*), would have another thirty-six lines, lines 73 to 108, making up a third group of twelve tercets.

The fourth column, the right-hand column on the back of the page (*verso b*), would always start at line 109, but it would vary in length from canto to canto.

- In the thirteen cantos of 145 lines, the fourth column would be just one line longer than each of the other three columns. It would have thirty-seven lines, lines 109 to 145, making up a fourth group of twelve tercets and the solitary closing line.
- In the sixteen cantos of 142 lines, the fourth column would be two lines shorter than each of the other three columns. It would have thirty-four lines, lines 109 to 142, making up eleven tercets and the closing line.
- In other cantos, the length of the fourth column would diverge more widely from the 36-line column format. In the shortest cantos, *Inferno* 6 and 11, the fourth column would have only seven lines, lines 109 to 115, making up just two tercets and the closing line. In the longest canto, *Purgatorio* 32, the fourth column would have fifty-two lines, lines 109 to 160, making up seventeen tercets and the closing line.

To a reader paging, *foglio a foglio*, through a copy of the *Comedy* in which all the cantos were written out in this way, the brief fourth columns of *Inferno* 6 and 15 and the long fourth column of *Purgatorio* 32 would stand out conspicuously. But even less drastically irregular fourth columns would stand out somewhat. The reader would recognise a recurring pattern of 3+1, that is, of three regular, 36-line columns, followed by a fourth shorter or longer column, on each canto-page. The reader might also notice a 3+1 pattern on a smaller scale in each canto's four last lines, which make up the final tercet and the solitary closing line. Like this closing line of the fourth column, the closing column itself would be an odd fourth, coming after a more regular threesome.

### III. Four Columns in the 'Paradiso'

If we read the *Comedy* on the assumption that this was indeed the way in which Dante distributed his lines on the page, with a new column always starting at lines 37, 73, and 109, what do we notice?

The first thing we notice is that breaks between columns sometimes coincide with junctures in the narrative. The second column of *Inferno* 1, for example, begins with the beginning of the morning (*Temp'era dal principio del mattino*, line 37). The first column of *Inferno* 2 ends with the end of Dante's speech expressing doubt about his worthiness to go on the journey proposed by Virgil; in the last line of his speech, and of the column, he says that Virgil, being wise, will understand what he leaves unsaid (*Se savio; intendi me'ch'i non ragiono*, line 36). At the end of the second column of *Inferno* 10, Cavalcante disappears (*supin ricadde e più non parve fora*, line 72). The fourth column of *Purgatorio* 1 begins with Cato's disappearance (*Così sparì [...]*, line 109). The third column of *Paradiso* 11 begins with Thomas Aquinas's revelation that his story of Francis's courtship of a lady is really about the love between Francis and Poverty (*Ma perch'io non proceda troppo chiuso [...]*, line 73). If these are just coincidences, they are interesting ones.

Even more interestingly, sometimes a column coincides with a distinct section of a canto. For example, the first column (lines 1–36) of *Paradiso* 1 is, as the *Epistle to Cangrande* calls it, a prologue to the *Paradiso*; the latter half of the *Epistle* is a commentary on this prologue.<sup>6</sup> Dante seems to have been guided by the format of his page in determining that the prologue to the *Paradiso* would be the length of the first column on the first canto-page of the *cantica*, with the result that, when Cangrande turned from the commentary to the text of the prologue, he would see the latter standing alone on the page as a column.

The second column of *Paradiso* 20 coincides with a distinct section of a speech made by the eagle Dante encounters in the sphere of Jupiter. The eagle is an apparition 'painted' by God, in a kind of pointillism, using the shining souls of just rulers as points of light. The eagle says that the greatest of the souls that make up its appearance are those representing the eye (20.31–36). These are the souls of David, who portrays the pupil, and of five others, who together portray the eyebrow, in a series going out from the beak: Trajan, Hezekiah, Constantine, William the Good, and Ripheus. In the thirty-six lines of the second column (37–72), the eagle describes each of these six just rulers,

---

<sup>6</sup> I take the *Epistle* to be authentic, but even if it is not, it correctly identifies *Paradiso* 1.1–36 (i.e. column *recto a*) as the prologue to the *Paradiso*.

allotting two tercets to each. In each case, the first tercet identifies the ruler, and the second tercet begins with the words *Ora conosce*, which introduce a remark about some knowledge the ruler has acquired in his blessed state. The division of the thirty-six lines into six double-tercet units, one unit for each of the rulers, together with the recurring phrase *Ora conosce*, gives these lines a formal unity that make them unlike any other passage in the *Comedy*. (The form is reminiscent of that of the sestina.) Again, as in the first column of Canto 1, Dante seems to have been guided by the 36-line per column format. When the eagle falls silent at the end of these lines, Dante compares him to a lark that first sings and then is silent (73–78). The second column of Canto 20 is the eagle’s ‘song’, visibly standing apart on the page.

The first column of *Paradiso* 30 is another prologue. In the previous canto, Beatrice had made a long speech that ended at the end of the canto (29.10–145). In Canto 30, she will resume speaking at the beginning of the second column (30.37). The first column of Canto 30 (1–36) describes what happens while she pauses. The column has two parts. In the first part (1–15), Beatrice and Dante ascend to the tenth heaven, the glittering angels fade in the presence of the divine light, and Dante turns to look at Beatrice. In the second part (16–36), he confesses to the reader that Beatrice’s now incomprehensible beauty defeats him as a poet. He has reached his limit as an artist, and he leaves her beauty to be trumpeted by others, as he begins to bring his difficult theme to an end:

ma or convien che mio seguir desista  
più dietro a sua bellezza, poetando,  
come a l’ultimo suo ciascuno artista.  
Cotal qual io la lascio a maggior bando  
che quel de la mia tuba, che deduce  
l’ardüa sua matera terminando. (31–36)<sup>7</sup>

The last two of these lines, coming at the end of the first column, indicate that the *Comedy* is now starting to approach its end. Accordingly, as Beatrice resumes speaking at the top of the second column, she does so as a guide whose duties are nearly finished (*con atto e voce di spedito duce / ricominciò [...]*, lines 37–38). As the first column of Canto

<sup>7</sup> « But now I must desist in my pursuit, / no longer following her beauty in my verse, / as every artist, having reached his limit, must. / Thus I leave her to more glorious trumpeting than that of my own music, as, laboring on, / I bring my difficult subject toward its close ». Following Petrocchi, Hollander and Hollander place a comma at the end of line 36 in their Italian text, although their English translation has a period at this point, as does the Hoepli edition of the Italian text. A period is evidently more in keeping with the view that lines 1–36 constitute a prologue as well as a column.

1 is a prologue to the whole of the *Paradiso*, so the first column of Canto 30 is a prologue to the concluding four cantos, set in the Empyrean.

The fourth column of *Paradiso* 33 is the *Comedy*'s famous concluding scene, Dante's allegorical vision of the Trinity and the Incarnation. The first three columns of Canto 33 describe St. Bernard's prayer to the Virgin and her response (1–43), Dante's looking up into the divine light (44–66), his prayer to be allowed to remember and tell a small part of what he saw (67–75), and his vision of all things united in the divine light (76–105). In the last tercet of the third column, he pauses:<sup>8</sup>

Omai sarà più corta mia favella,  
 pur a quel ch'io ricordo, che d'un fante  
 che bagni ancor la lingua a la mammella. (106–108)

« Now my words will come far short / of what I still remember, like a babe's / who at his mother's breast still wets his tongue ». This tercet introduces, and thereby sets apart, the fourth and final column. Formally speaking, the fourth column is an appropriately well-balanced conclusion to the canto, the *Paradiso*, and the *Comedy*. It is a modestly unobtrusive thirty-seven lines long, as close as a fourth column could be to the thirty-six lines prescribed by the format. And it divides into two parts of nearly equal length: a first part (109–126) describing the appearance, in the depth of the divine light, of three coextensive circles of different colors, representing the three persons of the Trinity; and a second part (127–145) describing first the depiction, in one of the circles, of « our likeness » (*la nostra effige*, line 131), representing the Incarnation of the second person, and then Dante's struggle to understand this depiction, and his final illumination.

It does not seem to be a matter of chance that each of these four columns in the *Paradiso* we have just considered is a formally separate part of its canto – a prologue (1.1–36, 30.1–36), a passage of lyric formality (20.37–72), or a conclusion (33.109–145). Rather, it seems clear that, when he composed these passages, Dante was consciously engaging with his format. One might say he was submitting to the format, by letting it determine the length of a passage; or, perhaps better, that he was allowing the format to suggest to him a way in which a passage might be given a limit, and so a form, indeed, a visible form. One might also say that he was conferring on the format the dignity of collaborating with him, and of leaving traces of itself in the text.

---

<sup>8</sup> PETER DRONKE, « The Conclusion of the *Commedia* », *Italian Studies*, 49 (1994), p. 21–39: at p. 33: « Now before the last movement <sc. of *Paradiso* 33> Dante pauses, collecting his strength and meditating once more on what is inexpressible, and why ».

IV. Columns in 'Purgatorio' 28-33

Columns coincide with narrative units several times in the final cantos of the *Purgatorio*, set in the earthly paradise.

In the first column of Canto 28, Dante walks into the earthly paradise (1-24), stops at a river (25-33), and looks across the river at blossoming trees (34-36). At the beginning of the second column (37-40), Matelda appears to him (*e là m'apparve [...] una donna soletta [...]*), and she will be present until the end of the *Purgatorio*. The first column is a prologue to her appearance, and to everything else that happens in these last cantos of the *Purgatorio*.

As, in Canto 28, the first column precedes the appearance of Matelda at the beginning of the second column, so likewise, in Canto 29, the first column precedes Dante's invocation of the Muses at the beginning of the second column. In the first column of Canto 29, Dante and Matelda walk in parallel, on the two sides of the river, until she says, « Look and listen » (15), at which point he begins to see a great brightness in the air and hear a sweet melody (16-36). After the invocation of the Muses at the start of the second column (37-42), the remainder of the canto is devoted to the procession representing the books of scripture, Christ, and the Church (43-154). The first column (1-36) is a prologue to the invocation and procession.

In Canto 30, Dante is moved by the sudden appearance of Beatrice (1-39) and weeps over the disappearance of Virgil (40-54). Beatrice chides him for weeping (55-81), and angels intercede for him, which causes him to weep again (82-99). In the last two tercets of the third column, Beatrice says to the angels that she is going to tell them something that she wants Dante to hear also (103-108). She thereby introduces an account of Dante's life from his birth to his current journey through the afterlife, and in particular of his infidelity to her after she died, that constitutes the fourth column (109-145).

The fourth column of Canto 30 is Beatrice's 'accusation'; the first column of Canto 31 is Dante's 'confession' (31.5-6). In the first column of Canto 31, Beatrice first tells him to confess (1-6), and he admits that her accusation is true (7-21). Then she asks what waylaid him (22-30), and he says present things distracted him when she died (31-36). Here, at the end of the first column, the confession ends, as Beatrice establishes at the beginning of the second column, when she says, « If you had kept silent about or denied what you confess (*ciò che confessi*) [...] » (37-38).

The fourth column of Canto 32 (109-160) describes the allegorical dramatisation of the history of attacks on the Church. This is the longest of the four hundred columns that make up the *Comedy*.

None of the four columns in *Purgatorio* 33 constitutes an obviously distinct narrative unit, but it seems worth noting that Beatrice begins her prophecy at the beginning of the second column (37ff.); that she says she sees Dante is not understanding her at the beginning of the third column (73ff.); and that her seven ladies, walking in the noonday sunlight, reach the edge of a shady area containing the source of the rivers Lethe and Eünoè at the beginning of the fourth column (109ff.). Like the coincidences between columns and narrative units just noted in Cantos 28–32, these breaks between columns in Canto 33, coinciding as they do with breaks in Beatrice's speech and Dante's narrative, would contribute to the air of almost liturgical formality in the action of these closing cantos of the *Purgatorio*.

V. *Cantos in Four Parts, a Column per Part: 'Inferno' 5 and 'Purgatorio' 11*

In a few cantos, every one of the four columns coincides with a narrative unit. In *Inferno* 5, for example, in the first column, Virgil and Dante descend to the second circle (1–3) and meet Minos (4–24). Dante hears cries of pain (25–27), and comes to a place where he sees that the cries are coming from souls blown about by strong winds (28–36). As yet, he does not know that he is where the lustful are punished; he only learns this at the start of the second column (37–39).<sup>9</sup>

In the second column, the souls of the lustful are compared to starlings and cranes driven on the wind (40–49). Virgil names over a thousand famous knights and ladies among them who died because of love (50–69), and Dante is overcome by pity (70–72).

So much for the *recto* side of the page. All this is prior to the meeting with Paolo and Francesca, to which the *verso* side is devoted (73–142). The two columns on the *verso* side describe, respectively, the two stages of the meeting. Both columns begin with a six-line exchange between Dante and Virgil, after which Dante addresses Francesca, who then makes a speech. Her two speeches are of almost the same length, twenty lines and seventeen and a half lines.

At the beginning of the third column, Dante tells Virgil he would like to speak with two of the souls that are moving together, « light on the wind »; Virgil says they will come if Dante asks them to in the name of the love that drives them (73–78). Dante does so, and they come like doves returning to their nest (79–87). Francesca makes her first speech, in which she expresses her gratitude to Dante, says where she is from, and

---

<sup>9</sup> Compare *Inferno* 6, in which it is only in the middle of the second column (53–57) that he learns he is in the circle of Hell that punishes gluttons; and *Purgatorio* 13, in which it is only at the start of the second column (37–39) that he learns he is on the terrace of Purgatory that purges the sin of envy.

tells how Love led her and Paolo to love one another, and eventually to be murdered together (88–108).

At the beginning of the fourth column, Virgil asks Dante what he is thinking, and Dante speaks of the sweet thoughts and great desire that brought these two to their sad state (109–114). Then he tells Francesca how moved he is by her suffering, and he asks her to say how Love brought them to know their desires (115–120). Francesca makes her second speech, in which she describes their reading of a book about Lancelot, and how this led them to their sin (121–138). While she speaks, Paolo weeps. As at the end of the *recto* side of the page, here at the end of the *verso* side, Dante is overcome by pity, but much greater pity here, and he falls to the ground like a dead body (139–142).

Thus the whole of the action in *Inferno* 5 has an articulation that reflects, and is reflected in, the sequence of columns on the page. There can be little doubt that Dante deliberately designed the canto so as to have four parts that would fit the four columns in just this way. The four columnar parts are like so many chapters, for which titles might be devised, for example: « Minos and the Third Circle » (1–36), « Illustrious Representatives of the Sin of Lust » (37–72), « Francesca, Part I: A Love that Led to Death » (73–108), and « Francesca, Part II: A Book that Led to Sin » (109–142).

Another canto in which the action divides into four parts in keeping with the columns is *Purgatorio* 11. This canto is set on the first terrace of the mountain of Purgatory, where the sin of pride is purged. The first column quotes a revised version of the Lord's Prayer that the penitents recite (1–24), and comments on the prayer (25–36). Each of the other three columns presents one of the penitents as exemplifying a distinctive kind of pride. In the second column, Virgil speaks with Umberto Aldobrandesco, who exemplifies family pride (37–72). In the third column, Dante speaks with Oderisi d'Agobbio, who exemplifies pride in artistic accomplishment (73–108). In the fourth column, Oderisi tells Dante about Provenzan Salvani, who exemplifies pride in political power (109–142).

Like that of *Inferno* 5, the drama of *Purgatorio* 11 reflects, and is reflected in, the sequence of columns. These cantos show an extraordinary adaptation of the poem to the format.

## VI. Turning the Page and Opening the Eyes

Like the written word itself, the format of the four-column page requires of the reader certain actions of the eyes and hands. The most continuous action is the left to right, top to bottom movement of the eyes in taking in the letters in a column. Four times in

the course of reading the two sides of a page, the reader has to go through a column in this way. Three times, the reader also has to perform the more elaborate action of lifting the eyes from the bottom of one column to the top of the next. One of these three times, the reader has to perform the even more elaborate action of turning the page with his or her hand, thereby uncovering to his or eyes the expanse of the *verso* side. I suggest that, in composing his cantos, Dante was highly aware of these actions his readers would perform in reading the pages he sent them.

In a number of cantos, the transition from the *recto* to the *verso* side of the page occurs at the beginning of some significant incident in the narrative. As we have seen, it is at the beginning of the *verso* side in *Inferno* 5 that Dante catches sight of Paolo and Francesca, and the rest of the *verso* side is devoted to his meeting with them. Similarly, the *verso* side of *Inferno* 29 begins with his catching sight of two other sinners together (73), and the rest of the *verso* side is devoted to his meeting with them. In *Inferno* 34, the transition from the *recto* to the *verso* side coincides with the start of Virgil's and Dante's climb down the side of Satan, which is also the start of their exit from Hell (70–75). The *verso* side of *Purgatorio* 9 begins with Virgil's and Dante's approach to the gate of Purgatory (73), where they will spend the remainder of the *verso* side in their meeting with the gatekeeper. The *recto* side of *Purgatorio* 32 ends with Dante being awakened by Matelda (70–72), a prelude to his exchanges with Matelda and Beatrice (73–108) and his vision of the allegory of attacks on the Church (109–160) on the *verso* side.

Each of the three *cantiche* includes at least one canto in which the transition from the front to the back of the page occurs at a point in the narrative where Dante's eyes are freed from some hindrance, allowing him to see someone.

VI.1 « Li occhi mi sciolse » (*Inferno* 9.73)

In *Inferno* 9, two columns, in fact, begin with reference to Dante's seeing. Since Canto 8, he and Virgil have been standing before the Gate of Dis, which is locked. In the latter half of the first column of Canto 9, Virgil speaks (19–33), but at one point Dante stops listening to him because he, Dante, has looked up to the top of the nearby tower:

E altro disse, ma non l'ho a mente ;  
però che l'occhio m'avea tutto tratto

ver' l'alta torre a la cima rovente [...]. (34-36)<sup>10</sup>

What he sees, as described at the beginning of the second column, is three Furies who have suddenly appeared at the top of the tower:

... dove in un punto furon dritte ratto  
tre furie infernal di sangue tinte,  
che membra feminine avieno e atto [...]. (37-39)<sup>11</sup>

The Furies call on Medusa to come so they can turn Dante to stone, and Virgil tells Dante that if he sees Medusa, he will never get out of Hell. He tells him to turn around and close his eyes; not trusting Dante's hands, he puts his own hands over Dante's eyes (52-60). At this point Dante addresses his more thoughtful readers, and asks them to consider a deeper meaning in these lines:

O voi ch'avete li 'ntelletti sani,  
Mirate la dottrina che s'asconde  
Sotto 'l velame de li versi strani. (61-63)<sup>12</sup>

In the last lines of the second column, his eyes still covered by Virgil's hands, Dante hears the sound of something approaching across the River Styx (64-72). At the start of the third column, Virgil frees Dante's eyes by removing his hands, and he tells him to look into the mist across the water:

Li occhi mi sciolse e disse : «Or drizza il nerbo  
del viso su per quella schiuma antica  
per indi ove quel fummo è più acerbo». (73-75)<sup>13</sup>

Dante looks out and sees souls fleeing before an angel who is coming across the water in order to open the gate for him and Virgil (76-84). His eyes are freed to see the angel

---

<sup>10</sup> « And he said more, but I do not remember, / for my eyes and thoughts were drawn / to the high tower's peak [...] ».

<sup>11</sup> « [...] where all at once, erect, had risen / three hellish, blood-stained Furies: / they had the limbs and shape of women [...] ».

<sup>12</sup> « O you who have sound intellects, / consider the teaching that is hidden / behind the veil of these strange verses ».

<sup>13</sup> « He freed my eyes and said: 'Now look / across the scum of that primeval swamp /to where the vapor is most dense and harsh' ».

at line 73, the point at which the reader, having just turned the page, first sees the *verso* side.

VI.2 « ch'io non levai al suo comando il mento » (*Purgatorio* 31.73)

In the second column of *Purgatorio* 31, Beatrice chides Dante for his infidelity to her after she died (49–63), and he looks down at the ground in shame, like a child scolded by his mother (64–67). When you find listening painful, she tells him, lift your beard and you will find looking even more so:

[...] « Quando  
per udir se' dolente, alza la barba,  
e prenderai più doglia riguardando ». (67–69)<sup>14</sup>

« Lift your beard », of course, means « Lift your face », « Look up », but Beatrice's mention of his beard also draws attention to the fact that he is a grown man behaving childishly. Dante says he raised his chin with more resistance than a strong oak tree has to being uprooted by either the north wind or the south wind, recognizing as he did the sarcasm in her reference to his beard. The two terms of this comparison – the oak tree and Dante – are presented in the last tercet at the bottom of the *recto* side of the page and the first tercet at the top of the *verso* side, respectively:

Con men di resistenza si dibarba  
robusto cerro, o vero al nostral vento  
o vero a quel de la terra di Iarba,  
ch'io non levai al suo comando il mento ;  
e quando per la barba il viso chiese,  
ben conobbi il velen de l'argomento. (70–75)<sup>15</sup>

What he sees when he looks up is Beatrice looking lovelier than ever (76–87). He looks up to see her in line 73, that is, just when a reader would have looked up in the act of turning the page, and of lifting his or her eyes from the bottom of column *recto* b to the top of column *verso* a. At that moment, the reader would seem to be performing

---

<sup>14</sup> « 'Now that / you are grieved by what you hear, lift up your beard / and you shall have more grief from what you see' ».

<sup>15</sup> « With less resistance is the sturdy oak / torn from the earth, whether by our northern wind / or by the one that blows from Iarbas' lands, / than was my chin nudged up by her command. / When by my beard she sought my face / I recognized the venom in her words ».

the action of the story he or she was reading, as perhaps would be more evident to an audience watching the reader than to the reader himself or herself. Taking advantage of the format of the page, Dante has carefully arranged this performance, in which a reader, knowingly or not, would dramatically enact Dante's lifting of his chin to look at Beatrice!

VI.3 « e lo svegliato ciò che vede aborre » (*Paradiso* 26.73)

Dante's eyes are opened at the turning of the page again in *Paradiso* 26. In the previous canto, St. John had come to examine him on the theological virtue of love, St. Peter and St. James having already examined him on faith and hope, respectively. The souls of the saints appear as blazing fires, and the fire representing the soul of St. John shines most brightly, to the point of blinding Dante at the end of Canto 25 (118 – 139). At the beginning of Canto 26 (1–12), St. John assures Dante that his blindness is temporary, and that Beatrice has power to heal it. The examination on love takes up most of the *recto* side of Canto 26, and Dante successfully, if blindly, passes. Then, in the transition from the *recto* to the *verso* side of the page, Beatrice heals his blindness by means of a ray coming from her own eyes, making him see better than he did before. He is stupefied to see, together with the fires of the three saints he has already met, a fourth fire, which will turn out to be the soul of Adam (70–81). As in *Purgatorio* 31, the transition from the *recto* to the *verso* side occurs as a comparison is being made. Dante likens the healing of his eyes by the ray from Beatrice's eyes, and his sudden sight of Adam, to the awakening of a man by a bright light, and the awakened man's sight of something from which he shrinks, because he sees it so suddenly, and is unable to take it in until his judgment comes to help him. The last tercet of the *recto* side describes the man being awakened by the bright light:

E come a lume acuto si disonna  
 per lo spirito visivo che ricorre  
 a lo splendor che va di gonna in gonna [...]. (70–72)<sup>16</sup>

The first tercet of the *verso* side describes the man, now awakened, shrinking from what he sees:

---

<sup>16</sup> « As sleep is broken by a piercing light / when the spirit of sight runs to meet the brightness / that passes through its filmy membranes [...] ».

[...] e lo svegliato ciò che vede aborre,  
sì nescia è la sùbita vigilia  
fin che la stimativa non soccorre [...]. (73–75)<sup>17</sup>

So the first thing the reader encounters on turning to the *verso* side of the page is the awakened man (*lo svegliato*) of the simile shrinking from what he sees (*ciò che vede*), that is, to translate the simile into non-figurative terms, Dante shrinking from the sight of Adam. The meeting between Dante and Adam will occupy the rest of the *verso* side.

These passages of transition from the *recto* to the *verso* side of the page, occurring just as Dante's eyes open onto the sight of someone, and just as the reader's eyes open onto the sight of the *verso* side of the page, bring the poem, the page, and the reader together in a striking way.<sup>18</sup>

## VII. *Parallel Passages*

In addition to breaks between columns that coincide with breaks in the narrative, columns that coincide with narrative units, and notable events at the transition from *recto* to *verso* sides of a page, our hypothesis draws attention to another interesting phenomenon, namely, the appearance of related passages at parallel places in different columns. These are parallel passages in an unusually literal sense of that term.

- At the beginning of the third column in *Inferno* 18 (73–81), for example, Dante and Virgil look down from a bridge at sinners in the first *bolgia* in the eighth circle of Hell. At the beginning of the fourth column (109–114), they look down from another bridge at sinners in the second *bolgia*.

---

<sup>17</sup> « [...] and the awakened man recoils from what he sees, / his senses stunned in that abrupt awakening / until his judgment rushes to his aid [...] ».

<sup>18</sup> I have not found any discussion of page turning with reference to medieval manuscripts. CRAIG FARRELL discusses some early printed texts in « The Poetics of Page-Turning: The Interactive Surfaces of Early Modern Printed Poetry », *Scrutinizing Surfaces* 8 (2017) [online]. ANDREW PIPER discusses successors to page-turning in electronic formats in « Turning the Page (Roaming, Zooming, Screaming) », in his *Book Was There: Reading in Electronic Times*, Chicago University Press, Chicago 2012, p. 45–61; excerpted in *The Broadview Reader in Book History*, MICHELLE LEVY, TOM MOLE (eds.), The Broadview Press, Toronto 2015, p. 511–524.

- The third tercet of the first column in *Purgatorio* 9 (7–9) says that over two hours of the night have passed. The third tercet of the second column (42–44) says that over two hours of the following morning have passed.
- At the end of the first column in *Paradiso* 15 (31–36), Dante turns (*rivolsi*) to Beatrice and sees a smile (*un riso*) in her eyes. At the end of the second column (70–72), he turns to her again (*volsi*), and she smiles at him again (*arrisemi*).<sup>19</sup>

In these instances, Dante seems to draw attention to pairs of passages by making them visibly ‘rhyme’, so to speak, thereby adding a pleasing visual detail to the reader’s contemplation of the page. Sometimes the parallel is between passages on the front and back of a page, and so engages the reader’s memory as well as his or her sense of sight.

- In *Purgatorio* 8, for example, the angels who guard the valley of negligent rulers against the serpent appear in the last four tercets of the first column (22–36). The serpent appears and is driven away by the angels in the last four tercets of the third column (94–108).
- In *Purgatorio* 21, Dante mentions his great thirst (*sete*) to know the cause of the trembling of the mountain in the first tercets of the first column (1–3), the second column (37–39), and the third column (73–75).
- In *Purgatorio* 29, in the final tercet of the *recto* side of the page (70–72), a tercet that begins with the word *Quando*, Dante stops at the riverbank to watch the procession on the other side. In the final tercet and concluding line on the *verso* side (151–154), lines that begin with the words *E quando*, the procession itself stops when the triumphal car is directly across from Dante.
- In *Paradiso* 2, Beatrice explains the dark spots on the moon with reference to formal principles, which she mentions twice: in the second last line on the *recto* side (71), and in the second last line on the *verso* side (147).
- In *Paradiso* 7, Beatrice, reading Dante’s mind, states three questions she knows he has. She states the questions in the seventh tercets of the first column (19–21), the second column (55–57), and the fourth column (127–129), respectively.
- In *Paradiso* 9, in the last two tercets of the first column (31–36), Cunizza explains why she is not unhappy at being in the sphere of Venus, that is, no higher. In

---

<sup>19</sup> Towards the end of the fourth column in the previous canto (130–139), *Paradiso* 14, Dante explains that he has not yet turned (*rivolto*) to look at Beatrice in the sphere of Mars. In a bound codex of a hundred canto-pages lying open between Cantos 14 and 15, these passages at the end of three consecutive columns (14.130–139, 15.131–136, 15.70–72) would all be visible simultaneously.

the last two tercets of the third column (103–108), Folco echoes, completes, and generalizes her explanation, speaking on behalf of all souls in the sphere of Venus.

- In *Paradiso* 23, which is set in the sphere of the stars, the second and third columns both begin with Beatrice saying *Quivi*, « Here ». In the first line of the second column (37), she indicates that Christ is here (« *Quivi è la sapienza e la possanza [...]* »). In the first line of the third column (73), she indicates that the Blessed Virgin is here (« *Quivi è la rosa in che'l verbo divino [...]* »).<sup>20</sup>

Sometimes parallel passages are still more distant from one another. For instance, the name *Cristo* occurs as a rhyme word, rhyming with itself, three times in the last two tercets of the third column (lines 103–108) in both *Paradiso* 14 and *Paradiso* 19.<sup>21</sup>

All these parallel passages illustrate what has aptly been called « Dante's Pervasive Symmetry », the title of a study of thematic resonances among the passages beginning at line 37 in *Inferno* 1, *Purgatorio* 1, and *Paradiso* 1, passages that are very distant from one another, but at parallel places in their respective *cantiche*.<sup>22</sup> Line 37, of course, is always the beginning of the second column on a canto-page.

Also parallel but widely separated from one another are two tercets in which it is announced that the *Purgatorio* and the *Paradiso*, respectively, are almost finished. In the tercet in the *Purgatorio*, quoted at the beginning of this article, Dante says the *cantica* is ending because the pages have been filled:

ma perché piene son tutte le carte  
ordite a questa cantica seconda,  
non mi lascia più ir lo fren de l'arte. (*Purgatorio* 33.139–141)<sup>23</sup>

---

<sup>20</sup> In the following line, she indicates that the apostles are here (*quivi son li gigli [...] [74]*). In the first line of the second last tercet of the fourth column, she speaks of the saved who rejoice here (*Quivi si vive e gode [...] [133]*). In the first line of the last tercet of the fourth column she says that St. Peter triumphs here (*Quivi triunfa [...] [136]*). *Paradiso* 23, set in the eighth sphere, the sphere of the stars, and of the triumph of Christ and the crowning of the Virgin, is evidently the canto of *quivi*, the canto in which being *there* is particularly emphasised.

<sup>21</sup> The name *Cristo* also rhymes with itself three times in *Paradiso* 12.71–75 (a passage of transition from the *recto* to the *verso* side of the page) and in *Paradiso* 32.83–97.

<sup>22</sup> ALDO S. BERNARDO, « Dante's Pervasive Symmetry », *Romance Notes* 12 (1971), p. 458–460.

<sup>23</sup> « [...] but, since all the sheets / made ready for this second canticle are full, / the curb of art lets me proceed no farther ».

In the parallel tercet in the *Paradiso*, St. Bernard says that time is running out, and so he and Dante must stop, like a good tailor, who makes the garment according to the cloth he has:

Ma perché 'l tempo fugge che t'assonna,  
qui farem punto, come buon sartore  
che com' elli ha del panno fa la gonna. (*Paradiso* 32.139–141)<sup>24</sup>

Behind Bernard's remark about time, Dante is noting that the *space* left to him for writing is running out. And behind Bernard's simile of the limitations imposed on the tailor by the available cloth, Dante is considering the limitations imposed on him by the number and format of his pages.<sup>25</sup> Did Dante expect that his first readers, at least some of them, would notice that these two tercets announcing an imminent ending of a *cantica*, so widely separated from one another, both begin with the words *ma perché*, and both are situated at exactly the same place in the fourth column of their respective canto-pages?

In making use of the possibilities for parallel passages between columns, the pervasive symmetry of the *Comedy* is fractal-like, appearing at different levels of scale, from that of adjacent columns on a page to that of columns separated by an entire *cantica*.

### VIII. Conclusion

If, then, our hypothesis, which presupposes the correctness of Ahern's conjecture, is itself correct, Dante sometimes made divisions in the narrative occur at divisions between columns; he sometimes made sections of the narrative coincide with columns; he sometimes situated significant events, such as the appearance of someone to him, at the point of transition from the *recto* to the *verso* side of a canto-page; and he sometimes placed similar passages at parallel places in different columns.

Dante was the most self-conscious of authors, and it is not surprising that he should have so carefully considered his placement of words on the page. If the material of his poem was primarily the sounds of Italian words, arranged according to groups of eleven syllables per line, it also included the representation of the words by letters on the two sides of the rectangular page, and the horizontal and vertical lines ruled onto

---

<sup>24</sup> « 'But since the time runs short that readies you for sleep, / let us stop here, as a good tailor would, / who cuts the cloak as he is stacked with cloth' ».

<sup>25</sup> See MARTINEZ, « Dante 'buon sartore' (*Paradiso* 32.140) », p. 25.

the page to set the format for writing out the text. Finally, it included the page itself, which Dante seems to have approached as a sort of canvas on which he could produce interesting visual effects by adapting his composition of the text to the format. He must have taken pleasure in making the format reflect the poem, and the poem the format, in instances such as those we have considered. In doing so, he embellished his pages in ways that allowed his poetic art to participate in the illuminator's art of making the pages 'smile' (cf. *Purgatorio* 11.82), although it would, of course, be his first readers, in fact, who would smile at the visual effects he produced, not in decorative marginal images, but in the text itself, on the pages he sent to them.

Did he think ahead to later readers of later copies? Did he expect future copyists to follow the format he had used, and so transmit his inventive exploitations of the format to future readers? Ahern is doubtful that he could even hope that his correlation of cantos and pages would always be preserved in future copies:

Dante [...] probably did not expect future copyists always to employ exactly 100 chartae. Copyists rarely if ever reproduced exactly such formats. Moreover, as an inveterate auto-commentator, he probably assumed – correctly, as it turned out – that his poem would soon elicit glosses and commentaries, which would then add many more pages to the book.<sup>26</sup>

Ahern implies that Dante probably did expect *some* future copyists to follow the formula of a canto per page. Did he also expect that some copyists would preserve the same formula of distribution of lines over the four columns of the page that, according to our hypothesis, he himself followed? Did he anticipate a distinction between a vulgar transmission of the text that would obliterate his careful arrangement of words on the page, and a better informed line of transmission that would preserve it? Or was he resigned to the thought that the original look of the *Comedy* on the page would inevitably be lost altogether at some point? Did he regard the visual effects in the text we have considered, over which he had taken such pains, as merely secondary features, thinking of his poem as something primarily to be heard, not seen?<sup>27</sup>

Was the original layout of the text ever reproduced again? No known manuscript copy or printed edition of the *Comedy* presents the text with the distribution of the lines of each canto over four columns described by our hypothesis. Nevertheless, it seems that traces of the original *mise-en-page* have permanently settled into the text, however the latter may be presented, whether in handwritten, printed, or digital form.

---

<sup>26</sup> AHERN, « What Did the First Copies of the *Comedy* Look Like? », p. 12–13.

<sup>27</sup> Cf. AHERN, « Singing the Book: Orality in the Reception of Dante's *Comedy* », in AMILCARE A. IANNUCCI (ed.), *Dante: Contemporary Perspectives*, University of Toronto Press, Toronto 1997, p. 214–239.

To borrow a metaphor from phenomenology, these traces have been sedimented, that is, covered over and forgotten, but also preserved; and they are capable of being recovered, at least in part, by patient excavation.<sup>28</sup> In the interest of understanding the vast architecture of the *Comedy* a bit better, such excavation seems worth pursuing further.

---

<sup>28</sup> See the discussion of 'Hiddenness and Truth', in ROBERT SOKOLOWSKI, *Introduction to Phenomenology*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge–New York 2000, p. 165–168.

APPENDIX

Conjectured distribution of lines in *Inferno*, Canto 1

**column recto a, lines 1–36:**

Nel mezzo del cammin di nostra vita  
mi ritrovai per una selva oscura,  
ché la diritta via era smarrita.  
Ahi quanto a dir qual era è cosa dura  
esta selva selvaggia e aspra e forte  
che nel pensier rinnova la paura!  
Tant' è amara che poco è più morte;  
ma per trattar del ben ch'i' vi trovai,  
dirò de l'altre cose ch'i' v'ho scorte.  
Io non so ben ridir com' i' v'intrai,  
tant' era pien di sonno a quel punto  
che la verace via abbandonai.  
Ma poi ch'i' fui al piè d'un colle giunto,  
là dove terminava quella valle  
che m'avea di paura il cor compunto,  
guardai in alto e vidi le sue spalle  
vestite già de' raggi del pianeta  
che mena dritto altrui per ogne calle.  
Allor fu la paura un poco queta,  
che nel lago del cor m'era durata  
la notte ch'i' passai con tanta pietà.  
E come quei che con lena affannata,  
uscito fuor del pelago a la riva,  
si volge a l'acqua perigliosa e guata,  
così l'animo mio, ch'ancor fuggiva,  
si volse a retro a rimirar lo passo  
che non lasciò già mai persona viva.  
Poi ch'èi posato un poco il corpo lasso,  
ripresi via per la piaggia diserta,  
sì che 'l piè fermo sempre era 'l più basso.  
Ed ecco, quasi al cominciar de l'erta,  
una lonza leggiera e presta molto,  
che di pel macolato era coverta;  
e non mi si partia dinanzi al volto,  
anzi 'mpediva tanto il mio cammino,  
ch'i' fui per ritornar più volte vòlto!

**column recto b, lines 37–72:**

Temp' era dal principio del mattino,  
e 'l sol montava 'n sù con quelle stelle  
ch'eran con lui quando l'amor divino  
mosse di prima quelle cose belle;  
sì ch'a bene sperar m'era cagione  
di quella fiera a la gatta pelle  
l'ora del tempo e la dolce stagione;  
ma non sì che paura non mi desse  
la vista che m'apparve d'un leone.  
Questi pareva che contra me venisse  
con la test' alta e con rabbiosa fame,  
sì che pareva che l'aere ne tremesse.  
Ed una lupa, che di tutte brame  
sembiava carca ne la sua magrezza,  
e molte genti fé già viver grame,  
questa mi porse tanto di gravezza  
con la paura ch'uscìa di sua vista,  
ch'io perdei la speranza de l'altezza.  
E qual è quei che volontieri acquista,  
e giugne 'l tempo che perder lo face,  
che 'n tutti suoi pensier piange e s'attrista;  
tal mi fece la bestia senza pace,  
che, venendomi 'ncontro, a poco a poco  
mi ripigeva là dove 'l sol tace.  
Mentre ch'i' rovinava in basso loco,  
dinanzi a li occhi mi si fu offerto  
chi per lungo silenzio pareva fioco.  
Quando vidi costui nel gran diserto,  
« Miserere di me », gridai a lui,  
« qual che tu sii, od ombra od omo certo! »  
Rispuosemi: « Non omo, omo già fui,  
e li parenti miei furon lombardi,  
mantoani per patria ambedui.  
Nacqui sub Iulio, ancor che fosse tardi,  
e vissi a Roma sotto 'l buono Augusto  
nel tempo de li dèi falsi e bugiardi.

*column verso a, lines 73–108:*

Poeta fui, e cantai di quel giusto  
figliuol d'Anchise che venne di Troia,  
poi che 'l superbo Ilión fu combusto.

Ma tu perché ritorni a tanta noia?  
perché non sali il dilettoso monte  
ch'è principio e cagion di tutta gioia? ».

« Or se' tu quel Virgilio e quella fonte  
che spandi di parlar sì largo fiume? »,  
rispuos' io lui con vergognosa fronte.

« O de li altri poeti onore e lume,  
vagliami 'l lungo studio e 'l grande amore  
che m'ha fatto cercar lo tuo volume.

Tu se' lo mio maestro e 'l mio autore,  
tu se' solo colui da cu' io tolsi  
lo bello stilo che m'ha fatto onore.

Vedi la bestia per cu' io mi volsi;  
aiutami da lei, famoso saggio,  
ch'ella mi fa tremar le vene e i polsi ».

« A te convien tenere altro viaggio »,  
rispuose, poi che lagrimar mi vide,  
« se vuot' campar d'esto loco selvaggio;

ché questa bestia, per la qual tu gride,  
non lascia altrui passar per la sua via,  
ma tanto lo 'mpedisce che l'uccide;

e ha natura sì malvagia e ria,  
che mai non empie la bramosa voglia,  
e dopo 'l pasto ha più fame che pria.

Molti son li animali a cui s'ammoglia,  
e più saranno ancora, infin che 'l veltro  
verrà, che la farà morir con doglia.

Questi non ciberà terra né peltro,  
ma sapienza, amore e virtute,  
e sua nazione sarà tra feltro e feltro.

Di quella umile Italia fia salute  
per cui morì la vergine Cammilla,  
Eurialo e Turno e Niso di ferute.

*column verso b, lines 109–139:*

Questi la cacerà per ogni villa,  
fin che l'avrà rimessa ne lo 'nferno,  
là onde 'nvidia prima dipartilla.

Ond' io per lo tuo me' penso e discerno  
che tu mi segui, e io sarò tua guida,  
e trarrotti di qui per loco eterno;

ove udirai le disperate strida,  
vedrai li antichi spiriti dolenti,  
ch'a la seconda morte ciascun grida;

e vederai color che son contenti  
nel foco, perché speran di venire  
quando che sia a le beate genti.

A le quai poi se tu vorrai salire,  
anima fia a ciò più di me degna:  
con lei ti lascerò nel mio partire;

ché quello imperador che là sù regna,  
perch' i' fu' ribellante a la sua legge,  
non vuol che 'n sua città per me si vegna.

In tutte parti impera e quivi regge;  
quivi è la sua città e l'alto seggio:  
oh felice colui cu' ivi elegge! ».

E io a lui: « Poeta, io ti richeggio  
per quello Dio che tu non conoscesti,  
a ciò ch'io fugga questo male e peggio,

che tu mi meni là dov' or dicesti,  
sì ch'io veggia la porta di san Pietro  
e color cui tu fai cotanto mesti ».

Allor si mosse, e io li tenni dietro.



# GREGORIO MAGNO Y LOS ERUDITOS PROTESTANTES EN LOS PRIMEROS 50 AÑOS DE LA REFORMA\*

GREGORY THE GREAT AND THE PROTESTANT SCHOLARS  
DURING THE FIRST FIFTY YEARS OF THE REFORMATION

JOEL VARELA RODRÍGUEZ  
UNIVERSITY OF SANTIAGO DE COMPOSTELA



Es bien conocida entre los estudiosos de la obra del papa Gregorio Magno la agria polémica que suscitaron dos volúmenes publicados en 1987 por Francis Clark con el objetivo de demostrar que Gregorio no había sido el autor de una de las obras más difundidas y leídas que circularon bajo su nombre: los *Dialogi*.<sup>1</sup> Según la argumentación de Clark, la obra fue escrita por un anónimo romano de la segunda mitad del siglo VII (the Dialogist), que se habría servido de fragmentos gregorianos originales conservados en la cancillería pontificia (Inserted Gregorian Passages = IGP), si bien habría sido él mismo el autor del contenido hagiográfico la obra y el que habría atribuido el conjunto al papa Gregorio para conferirle fama y autoridad. Más allá de los muchos y distintos argumentos de crítica externa e interna utilizados por el erudito inglés, los cuales han sido ampliamente debatidos en los últimos años, Clark confiesa en las primeras páginas de su trabajo concordar con la sospecha de inautenticidad de la obra que ya habían manifestado antiguos estudiosos, la mayoría protestantes, desde la

---

\* Este artículo es una derivación de la comunicación que pronuncié en la KU Leuven el 7 de noviembre de 2019, durante un seminario en honor del Prof. John Monfasani (*The Church Fathers in the Reformation and Early Modern Era*). Vuelvo a agradecer desde aquí a los responsables del grupo *Lectio* su excelente organización y acogida. La investigación se inscribe en el seno de las actividades del Grupo de Investigación 1908 («Estudios Clásicos y Medievales») de la Universidad de Santiago de Compostela.

<sup>1</sup> FRANCIS CLARK, *The Pseudo-Gregorian Dialogues*, 2 vols., Brill, Leiden, 1987 (Studies in the History of Christian Traditions, 37). Años antes, en 1982, había adelantado sus conclusiones en un coloquio celebrado en Chantilly: FRANCIS CLARK, «The Authenticity of Gregorian Dialogues: A Reopening of the Question?», en JACQUES FONTAINE, ROBERT GILLET, STAN PELLISTRANDI (eds.), *Grégoire le Grand. Chantilly, Centre culturel Les Fontaines, 15-19 septembre 1982 (Colloques internationaux du Centre National de la Recherche Scientifiques)*, Éditions du Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, Paris, 1986, p. 429–443.

segunda mitad del siglo XVI. El primero fue Huldreich Coccius, editor de los *Opera omnia* de Gregorio en la imprenta de Froben,<sup>2</sup> y los argumentos más refinados, que inspiraron las tesis de Clark, proceden de Robert Cooke y William Cave, ya en la siguiente centuria.<sup>3</sup> Varios críticos recientes han atribuido a Clark y a todos estos autores un idéntico prejuicio, propio de su aproximación a los padres de la Iglesia: como Gregorio es un autor profundo y en parte correcto en sus escritos teológicos, una obra como los *Dialogi* suscita tal contraste que cabe pensar que no haya salido de su pluma. Contra esto, la crítica moderna ha respondido aduciendo argumentos que prueban, entre otras cosas, una coherencia entre los *Dialogi* y el pensamiento que subyace a las otras obras de Gregorio.<sup>4</sup>

No obstante, esta aproximación no caracteriza a todos los lectores protestantes de Gregorio. En un trabajo reciente, Guazzelli<sup>5</sup> ha puesto de manifiesto el contraste existente entre la edición de Coccius, que conviene con la idea arriba mencionada, y otros dos hitos de la historiografía protestante del siglo XVI: el *Catalogus testium veritatis* de Matías Flacio Ilírico y las *Centurias de Magdeburgo*, que no se cuestionan la autenticidad de los *Dialogi* y los consideran fruto de una religiosidad supersticiosa que habría caracterizado a Gregorio y su época. La diferente apreciación de los *Dialogi*, según Guazzelli, sería el obstáculo que impide hablar de una unidad en la aproximación protestante a Gregorio.

En la presente contribución me gustaría trazar una historia más completa de la recepción protestante de Gregorio Magno en los primeros 50 años de la Reforma, aunque los límites de un trabajo de estas características me obligarán a

---

<sup>2</sup> *Opera divi Gregorii Papae huius nominis primi, cognomento Magni, omnia quae extant, nunc iterum accuracione diligentia a mentis multis, uti lector facile passim deprehendet, maxime in libris Epistolarum, repurgata. Quorum omnium elenchum pagina versa exhibebit. Cum Indice duplici, altero rerum, verborum, sententiarum altero locorum S. scripturae explicatorum utroque magne sedulitate conscripto*, Froben, Basileae 1551.

<sup>3</sup> ROBERTUS COCUS, *Censura quorundam scriptorum quae sub nominibus sanctorum et veterum auctorum, a pontificiis passim in eorum scriptis, sed potissimum in quaestionibus hodie controversis citari solent. In qua ostenditur scripta illa, vel esse supposita, vel dubiae saltem fidei*, Impensis Guilielmi Barret, Londini, 1614, p. 209–212; GUILIELMUS CAVE, *Scriptorum ecclesiasticorum Historia Literaria*, Typis T. H. et Impensis Richardi Chiswell ad insigne Rosa Coronatae in Coemeterio D. Pauli, Londini 1688, p. 304–305.

<sup>4</sup> De manera general pueden citarse los siguientes trabajos: ROBERT GODDING, « Les Dialogues... de Grégoire le Grand. A propos d'un livre récent », *Analecta Bollandiana*, 106 (1988), p. 201–229; PAUL MEYVAERT, « The Enigma of Gregory the Great's Dialogues: A Response to Francis Clark », *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, 39 (1988), p. 335–381; ADALBERT DE VOGÜÉ, « Grégoire le Grand et ses Dialogues: d'après des ouvrages récents », *Revue d'Histoire Écclésiastique*, 83 (1988), p. 281–348; ID., « Grégoire le Grand est-il l'auteur des Dialogues? », *Revue d'Histoire Écclésiastique*, 99 (2004), p. 158–161.

<sup>5</sup> GIUSEPPE ANTONIO GUAZZELLI, « Gregorio Magno nell'erudizione ecclesiastica della seconda metà del XVI secolo », en CLAUDIO LEONARDI (ed.), *Gregorio Magno e le origini dell'Europa*, SISMEL-Edizioni del Galluzzo, Firenze 2014 (Millennio Medievale, 100), p. 601–618.

ceñirme a los autores y testimonios más influyentes.<sup>6</sup> En los años comprendidos entre la década de 1520 y 1560 protestantes y católicos definen y defienden sus propios dogmas y creencias en un contexto de continua disputa, llegando a una posición de desentendimiento mutuo que afectó también al uso y lectura de Gregorio, y, como consecuencia, a una distinta apreciación de los *Dialogi*. Por otra parte, la lectura del papa abarca un espectro más amplio que la cuestión de la autoría de los *Dialogi*, que en el siglo XVI constituye todavía una anécdota en un contexto de disputas de otro calado. En este trabajo buscaré también, pues, dar cuenta de qué intereses encontraron los protestantes en las obras de Gregorio y qué evolución tuvieron éstos en el tiempo.

### I. Gregorio Magno entre el humanismo y la Reforma

La tradición manuscrita de las obras de Gregorio (con alguna notable excepción)<sup>7</sup> es inmensa. De los *Moralia in Iob*, su escrito más famoso, se conservan alrededor de 1500 testimonios; de las *Homiliae in Hiezechielem*, 650; otros varios cientos para las *Homiliae in Evangelia* y los *Dialogi*. Se conservan también varias decenas de incunables.<sup>8</sup> Hay asimismo una cantidad notable de florilegios de su obra, principalmente desde el siglo XII, la mayor parte de los cuales permanece sin estudiar. La tradición medieval le hizo parte de los cuatro grandes padres de la Iglesia latina, junto a Ambrosio, Agustín y Jerónimo. Aunque no siempre fue leído con el mismo interés en todas partes,<sup>9</sup> su influencia en la configuración de la espiritualidad cristiana está fuera de duda, y su carácter de autoridad permanece indiscutido durante la época medieval.

Se puede decir que, por lo general, los humanistas mantuvieron también una buena opinión de Gregorio. Por citar algunos ejemplos, Dante recomendó los

---

<sup>6</sup> Gregorio fue tradicionalmente considerado apóstol de Inglaterra y su recepción entre los protestantes ingleses de este período, por ejemplo, podría merecer atención, a pesar de su dependencia del protestantismo continental en los grandes temas donde Gregorio aparece (misas privadas, primado papal, purgatorio, culto a las imágenes, etc.): cf. STANLEY L. GREENSALADE, *The English Reformers and the Fathers of the Church. An Inaugural Lecture delivered before the University of Oxford on 10 May 1960*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1960, p. 1–20.

<sup>7</sup> Su tratado exegético sobre el primer libro de Samuel (*In I librum Regum*), que ha suscitado dudas de paternidad, se conserva en un único códice del siglo XII y en la tradición impresa.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. al respecto los capítulos consagrados al estudio de la tradición de las obras gregorianas por LUCIA CASTALDI, *La trasmissione dei testi latini del medioevo. Mediaeval Latin Texts and their Transmission. Te.Tra 5. Gregorius I papa*, SISMELE-Edizioni del Galluzzo, Firenze 2013 (Millennio Medievale, 98).

<sup>9</sup> A partir de un examen de los inventarios medievales, Anne Marie Turkan ofrece el dato de que Gregorio constituyó el referente de la edificación espiritual en el ámbito monástico, principalmente el cluniacense, más que Agustín, que fue referente para otra clase de asuntos: ANNE-MARIE TURKAN-VERLEK, « La place de Grégoire le Grand dans les inventaires de livres avant le XIII<sup>e</sup> siècle », en CLAUDIO LEONARDI (ed.), *Gregorio Magno e le origini dell'Europa*, SISMELE-Edizioni del Galluzzo, Firenze 2014 (Millennio Medievale, 100), p. 355–396.

*Dialogi* como lectura de edificación personal,<sup>10</sup> y la espiritualidad y las reminiscencias gregorianas son perceptibles a lo largo de su obra, lo mismo que con Petrarca.<sup>11</sup> Humanistas italianos como Lorenzo Valla, Federico da Montefeltro o Cosimo de' Medici leyeron y se interesaron por la obra y la persona de Gregorio, atraídos por la espiritualidad que emanaba de su historia humana como predicador y político y las reflexiones espirituales de sus escritos.<sup>12</sup> En España, el canciller Pedro López de Ayala, en su *Rimado de palacio*, declara hallar consuelo de la corrupción del mundo en la lectura de los *Moralia*, cuyo contenido parafrasea en gran medida en una extensa sección de la obra, sirviéndose, por lo que parece, de una traducción al castellano que él mismo había hecho.<sup>13</sup> Todavía Tomás Moro parece haber considerado a Gregorio un autor de mayor importancia que el mismo Agustín.<sup>14</sup>

Es, sin embargo, Erasmo de Rotterdam, el humanista que mayor impulso dio a las ideas reformadas, quien de forma más clara rompe este aparente consenso. Erasmo vio todavía en los Padres un remedio espiritual para la cristiandad y no sólo una fuente de inspiración para comprender la Escritura; sin embargo, no todos los Padres sirvieron a ese propósito.<sup>15</sup> Gregorio, desde luego, no estuvo entre ellos. A priori, Erasmo no parece haber sido un avezado lector del papa: las citas son pocas y, en alguna ocasión, de segunda mano.<sup>16</sup> Aunque no llega a las críticas abiertas contra Gregorio que veremos entre los protestantes, importa destacar que nunca editó sus obras, a diferencia de lo que hizo con Ambrosio

---

<sup>10</sup> Cf. al respecto MARIAROSSA CORTESSI, «Gregorio Magno e gli umanisti», en LEONARDI (ed.), *Gregorio Magno e le origini dell'Europa*, p. 577–599.

<sup>11</sup> Cf. CARMEN CARDELLE DE HARTMANN, «Petrarcas *Secretum* in den deutschen Klöstern – Die monastische Lektüre eines humanistischen Werkes», en MATHIAS DALL'ASTA (ed.), *Anwälte der Freiheit! Humanisten und Reformatoren im Dialog. Begleitband zur Ausstellung im Reuchlinhaus Pforzheim, 20. September bis 9. November 2015, im Auftrag der Stadt Pforzheim*, Winter, Heidelberg 2015, p. 81–89.

<sup>12</sup> Cf. CORTESSI, «Gregorio Magno e gli umanisti», p. 599.

<sup>13</sup> Cf. HUGO O. BIZZARRI, *Pedro López de Ayala. Rimado de Palacio. Edición, estudio y notas*, Real Academia Española, Madrid 2012 (Biblioteca de la Real Academia Española, 8), p. 364–371. Por lo demás, la influencia de Gregorio Magno en la Baja Edad Media y el Renacimiento en España permanece sin estudio específico.

<sup>14</sup> Así lo indica Anne Kuzdale, «The Reception of Gregory in the Renaissance and Reformation», en BROWNEN NEIL, MATTHEW J. DAL SANTO (eds.), *A Companion to Gregory the Great*, Brill, Leiden 2013 (Companions to the Christian Tradition, 47), p. 380.

<sup>15</sup> En su última obra, *el Ecclesiastes sive de ratione concionandi* (1535), los Padres aparecen como un modelo de predicación, pero no sin limitaciones. En esta obra cita los varios *doctores prophani et ecclesiastici* cuyos escritos debieran ser leídos por un predicador; los que llevan la peor parte son los Padres latinos. Cf. JAN DEN BOEFT, «Erasmus and the Church Fathers», en IRENA BACKUS (ed.), *The Reception of the Church Fathers in the West from the Carolingian to the Maurists*, Brill, Leiden 1997, p. 537–572.

<sup>16</sup> KUZDALE, «The Reception of Gregory», p. 379 alude a una cita en la *Paráfrasis de Marcos* referida a los *Moralia* que realmente procedería de la *Catena aurea* (1265) de Tomás de Aquino.

(1492), Agustín (1506) o Jerónimo (1516), y manifiesta cierta incredulidad sobre los fundamentos sobre los que dice construirse el canon de los cuatro doctores.<sup>17</sup> Erasmo tuvo interés por los padres de los primeros siglos, que podían ofrecer una interpretación más pura y correcta de la Escritura y las verdades cristianas, y no tuvo en buena estima los excesos de la interpretación alegórica (en los que pudo haber considerado que Gregorio hubiera caído) ni las vidas de santos e historias de milagros.<sup>18</sup> Todo ello habría alimentado cuando menos su desinterés por la figura y la obra del papa. Esta aproximación a Gregorio y a los padres será bien perceptible entre los primeros reformadores.

Cabe destacar, por otra parte, que desde el siglo XV la historiografía humanista considera la época de Gregorio como un período de decadencia en todos los factores, la puerta de las tinieblas medievales. Un significativo ejemplo es la *Historia ab inclinatione Romanorum imperii* de Flavio Biondo, escrita entre 1439 y 1453 y ampliamente leída por los humanistas, que considera el año 410, con el saqueo de Roma por Alarico, el punto de inflexión por el que la cultura occidental entra en una fase de decadencia que dura hasta el siglo XV.<sup>19</sup> El pontificado de Gregorio Magno queda de este modo inmerso en una época de oscuridad donde era perceptible la decadencia moral y material de la sociedad y los hombres. La visión protestante de la historia eclesiástica convendrá igualmente con esta perspectiva, en cuanto que entiende que la Iglesia vio progresivamente cómo se deturpaba su pureza original y entraban en ella creencias y costumbres contrarias al cristianismo primitivo: Gregorio, aunque se tratara de un hombre santo, no escapó a la corrupción religiosa de su mundo, como podremos ver afirmado en varios protestantes del siglo XVI.

---

<sup>17</sup> Cf. en su prefacio a la edición de Jerónimo: « Operae precium est audire censuram istorum, qui cuncta ad certum numerum redegerunt. Doctores ecclesiae quatuor esse libuit: et quatuor item scripturae divinae sensus, nimirum ut respondeant quatuor Evangelistis. Gregorio tribuunt tropologiam, Ambrosio allegoriam, Augustino anagogen, Hieronymo, ne nihil habeat, reliquunt literam, et sensum grammaticum » (cito por la reedición de 1553: *Eximii doctoris Hieronymi Stridonensis vita, ex ipsius potissimum scriptis contexta, per Des. Erasmus Roterodamum, in D. Hieronymi operum primus tomus. Epistolas ipsius in tres partes distinctas, ac Des. Erasmi Roterodami scholiis summa cura et diligentia explanatas atque castigatas complectens*, Froben, Basileae 1553). Sobre la práctica filológica de Erasmo, cf. ARNOUD VISSER, « Thirtieth Annual Erasmus Birthday Lecture: Erasmus, the Church Fathers and the Ideological Implications of Philology », *Erasmus Studies*, 31 (2011), p. 7–31.

<sup>18</sup> Cf. KUZDALE, « The Reception of Gregory », p. 378–379.

<sup>19</sup> Cf. WALLACE K. FERGUSON, *The Renaissance in Historical Thought*, Houghton Mifflin Company, Cambridge 1948, p. 11–14.

## II. Los padres de la Reforma

### II.1 Lutero

De entre todos los autores protestantes que mencionaré aquí, Lutero es el que mejor prueba da de conocer bien a Gregorio. Aquí y allá cita o alude a interpretaciones gregorianas de la Escritura, sacadas principalmente de los *Moralia*, una práctica que no veremos en ningún otro gran padre de la Reforma. Hay más de 15 citas o alusiones a Gregorio sólo hasta 1521.<sup>20</sup> Alguno de sus primeros sermones, como el pronunciado el día de la Epifanía del Señor de 1517, depende largamente de la interpretación gregoriana del oro, el incienso y la mirra que puede encontrarse en una de las homilías sobre Ezequiel.<sup>21</sup> En otras ocasiones, la mayoría, utiliza a Gregorio para reforzar determinadas interpretaciones de la Escritura que le sirven para argumentar sobre tal o cual materia.

En cualquier caso, la opinión de Lutero sobre Gregorio no estuvo falta de crítica, como hizo con los demás padres. En el plano teológico, podemos leer que Lutero considera que Gregorio « delira » en sus interpretaciones alegóricas de los sentidos ocultos de la Escritura (*mysteria*) y no presta atención a las verdades fundamentales del cristianismo: « Vide Gregorium, quando delyravit... de fide, nihil de charitate, cruce, semper mysteria tractat ». <sup>22</sup> Se trata de una crítica que, en mayor o menor grado, emerge también en otros padres de la Iglesia, como Cipriano, Agustín u Orígenes,<sup>23</sup> lo cual no significa, sin embargo, que su desprecio fuera absoluto, como podemos deducir del empleo de Gregorio en sus escritos.

Aunque no es muy común, leemos en Lutero algunas alusiones sinceras a la santidad y otras virtudes de Gregorio,<sup>24</sup> imagen que una larga tradición hagiográfica le había configurado. No obstante, le considera también un hombre extremadamente supersticioso: « Augustinus est aliquantum victus supersticione, Gregorius est quasi leprosus supersticione, Hieronimus sordet illa, ita et ego ». <sup>25</sup> Además, consciente de la gran autoridad de que había gozado, le tiene por responsable de incluir tradiciones « humanas » en la Iglesia: « Gregorius, vir sanctus, sed non uno tantum loco superstitiosus, arripuit

---

<sup>20</sup> He consultado las ocurrencias en *D. Martin Luthers Werke: Kritische Gessamtausgabe* [en adelante WA], Herman Böhlhaus, Weimar 1883–1993, 1, 2, 6, 7 y 8.

<sup>21</sup> WA 1, p. 122–125. Cf. Greg. M., *hom. Ez.* 2, 10, ed. MARCUS ADRIAEN, *Gregorius Magnus. Homiliae in Hiezechielem prophetam*, Brepols, Turnout 1971 (Corpus Christianorum. Series Latina, 142), p. 396–397.

<sup>22</sup> WA 16, p. 74.

<sup>23</sup> Cf. JOHANNES SCHILLING, « Luther un Gregor der Grosse », en LEIF GRANE, ALFRED SCHINDLER, MARKUS WRIEDT (eds.), *Auctoritas Patrum. Zur Rezeption der Kirchenväter im 15. und 16. Jahrhundert*, Institut für Europäische Geschichte, Mainz 1993, p. 180.

<sup>24</sup> Cf. WA 2, p. 643: « sicut dicit sanctus et humillimus Gregorius ».

<sup>25</sup> WA 31 II, p. 302.

occasionem pro terrendis conscientiiis et stabiliendis traditionibus hominum ».<sup>26</sup> Estas reflexiones aparecen cuando Gregorio podría servir para justificar la tradición de prácticas y creencias que él rechazaba como propias del cristianismo primitivo, como son las misas privadas, el purgatorio, la justificación a través de las obras o el culto a los santos. Gregorio, en efecto, es humano, y a pesar de su santidad no siempre interpretó correctamente la Escritura ni el mensaje evangélico. En alguna ocasión, los *Dialogi* parecen emerger como la cumbre del Gregorio más supersticioso: « Initium celebrationum venit ex apparitione animarum, quae tres, 30 petiverunt legi missas. Gregorius erravit et magnum librum de his rebus scripsit »;<sup>27</sup> sin embargo, no hay ningún lugar donde Lutero dude de la autenticidad de la obra.

Hay que destacar que Gregorio también acredita para Lutero la pervivencia de una cierta pureza en la Iglesia de su tiempo. Es a partir de él cuando se puede hablar realmente del fin de esa pureza primigenia.<sup>28</sup> Lutero presta singular atención al papel de Gregorio en la cuestión de la primacía papal, que se halla en el centro de sus primeras grandes polémicas después de 1518. Lutero, como hará el resto de protestantes interesados por esta materia, halla en las epístolas gregorianas firmes argumentos en contra de la existencia de una primacía del papa sobre los restantes obispos de la Iglesia. En efecto, Gregorio había criticado en varias de sus cartas el que Juan IV de Constantinopla se arrogara el título de patriarca ecuménico, una situación que, aunque no suponía gran novedad en la Iglesia de fines del siglo VI,<sup>29</sup> le valió a Gregorio palabras de condena contra la pretensión de erigirse como cabeza de la Iglesia sobre el conjunto de los obispos, considerando que era una potestad que sólo Cristo tenía. Ello le sirve a Lutero para argumentar que el primado universal del obispo de Roma no tenía fundamento en la tradición antigua de la Iglesia, y que aún en tiempos de Gregorio era un concepto que no se había desarrollado. Cita a Gregorio en este sentido tan pronto como en 1518: « Nam adhuc S. Gregorii tempore Romanus Pontifex, universalis Episcopus, acerrime persequitur nomen universalis Episcopi

---

<sup>26</sup> WA 8, p. 453.

<sup>27</sup> WA 11, p. 130.

<sup>28</sup> Cf. WA TR 4, p. 255: « Primum tempus conciliorum est a tempore apostolorum usque ad Gregorium Primum, ubi Ecclesia aliquatenus fuit purior, quamquam multum humani patiebatur, sed tamen tolerabilis fuit ». En línea con lo que se dirá inmediatamente, hay que destacar que al final de su vida, en su *Supputatio annorum mundi* (1541), escribe que Gregorio fue realmente el último « obispo de Roma », y que los que le siguieron son en realidad « pontífices de la curia romana », haciendo así de Gregorio – si interpretamos literalmente sus palabras – el último obispo romano en conservar la pureza de su auténtica dignidad apostólica: « Gregorius magnus ultimus Episcopus Romanae Ecclesiae, sequentes sunt Pape, id est Pontifices Romanae Curiae » (WA 53, p. 142).

<sup>29</sup> Cf. ANDRÉ TULLIER, « Grégoire le Grand et le titre de patriarche oecuménique », en FONTAINE, GILLET, PELLISTRANDI (eds.), *Grégoire le Grand. Chantilly*, p. 69–82.

et totius Ecclesiae pontificis plus fere sex epistolis, etc. ».<sup>30</sup> Y el de Gregorio será un argumento relevante en este sentido en la disputa con Johann Eck sobre la primacía del papa el año siguiente.<sup>31</sup> A partir de aquí, la consideración de Gregorio sobre la primacía universal de la Iglesia será aducida sistemáticamente por los protestantes en contra del papado.

En conclusión, podemos decir que, para Lutero, Gregorio era un hombre santo y piadoso, si bien también afectado por creencias humanas ajenas a la realidad de la Revelación (*superstitiosus*), en la línea de la decadencia de su tiempo, aunque su interpretación de la Escritura, pese a su tendencia alegorista, no siempre le resulta despreciable. Además, las cartas de Gregorio sobre la polémica con Juan de Constantinopla son para Lutero una fuente de importancia para sostener su polémica sobre la cuestión de la primacía papal.

## II.2 Zwinglio

Aparentemente, la opinión de Zwinglio sobre Gregorio como autoridad teológica se inscribe en la línea de su percepción de los demás padres de la Iglesia, que no diverge de la de un humanista de influencia erasmiana. El 29 de enero de 1523, preguntado por un ciudadano en una controversia de Zurich si era lícito leer a Ambrosio o a Gregorio, Zwinglio respondió que ambos son autores que se podían leer, pero en cuanto ayudan a la comprensión de la Escritura, a través de la cual se califica su valor.<sup>32</sup>

Sin embargo, sus citas de Gregorio no son muchas, y ni mucho menos parece que Zwinglio tuviera el mismo interés que Lutero por la obra del papa.<sup>33</sup> A diferencia de lo que ocurre con otros Padres de la Iglesia, no conocemos ningún ejemplar de obra alguna de Gregorio que hubiera sido ante todo por él.<sup>34</sup> En algún lugar alude a Gregorio y sus *Moralia* como ejemplo de un alegorismo excesivo empleado cuando falla la verdadera comprensión de la Escritura,<sup>35</sup> si bien esto no sería un problema si hubiera aprovechado lo que en Gregorio pudidera hallar de correcto, como hizo Lutero; no obstante, es claro que Zwinglio prefirió a otros

---

<sup>30</sup> WA 2, p. 20.

<sup>31</sup> Cf. WA 2, p. 280.

<sup>32</sup> Cf. *Huldreich Zwinglis sämtliche Werke*, vol. I, Schwetschke, Berlin 1905, p. 564.

<sup>33</sup> ALFRED SCHINDLER, *Zwingli und die Kirchenväter*, Beer, Zürich 1984 (Neujahrsblatt zum Besten des Waisenhauses Zürich, 147), p. 94 cuenta 30 citas o alusiones a Gregorio, frente a las más de 1500 de Jerónimo o las 1000 de Agustín; además, varias de ellas son dudosas, pues pueden referirse a otros papas del mismo nombre.

<sup>34</sup> Cf. IRENA BACKUS, « Uldrich Zwingli, Martin Bucer and the Church Fathers », en EAD. (ed.), *The Reception of the Church Fathers*, p. 635.

<sup>35</sup> *Huldrici Zuinglii Opera. Completa editio prima*, ed. Melchior Schuleri et Io. Schulthessii, vol. V, Ex officina Schultessiana, Turici 1835, p. 594: « Qui quicquid non intelligunt, allegoriam faciunt, profitentes interim divinorum librorum enarrationem. Cuius farinae sunt ferme omnes quos hactenus videre licuit, in Psalmorum librum commentarii, et Gregorii in Iob moralia ».

padres como Agustín o Jerónimo. En el mismo sentido, Zwinglio considera que las reformas litúrgicas de Gregorio enfatizaron el culto supersticioso de los santos; Gregorio es el representante de una época de ruptura respecto a la pureza de la cristiandad anterior.<sup>36</sup>

Sea como fuere, Gregorio era una autoridad consolidada y Zwinglio no deja de dar muestras de un cierto respeto por ella. En un tratado sobre el canon de la misa escrito en 1523, considera posible certificar la paternidad gregoriana de una plegaria del misal que se le venía atribuyendo de antiguo (« Diesque nostros in tua pace disponas, atque ab aeterna damnatione nos eripi et in electorum tuorum iubeas grege numerari »), en razón de su elegancia, que considera propia del autor, en contraposición a las demás partes del canon.<sup>37</sup>

También cabe dar cuenta de lo que parece una cita de segunda mano, que es además una de las pocas veces en las que se citarían literalmente palabras del autor. La presencia de una cita de Gregorio acreditaría en este caso un conocimiento antológico para un uso esporádico, no tanto una reflexión y maduración del contenido leído en el autor, como parece ser por el contrario el caso de Lutero. Se halla en unas notas al Evangelio de Mateo (en concreto, Mt 12, 30), publicadas póstumamente por Leo Jud en 1539:

Tracta autem est metaphora a messis tempore, ubi omnes currunt et colligunt futuram tempestatem metuentes; qui hoc non faciunt, si quid perit aut dispergitur, culpa eorum perditur. Sic in negotiis divinis, qui bonum non promovet, malum promoveat necesse est. **Sic Gregorius dicebat: 'In via Dei stare retrogradi est'**. Hac ergo sententia admonet Christus vehementer et simul eorum malitiam protrahit.<sup>38</sup>

En realidad, la cita no es de Gregorio, sino de Bernardo de Claraval (*serm. II in festo Purif.* n. 3), y está bastante difundida desde la Baja Edad Media. La primera atribución de un *adagio* semejante a Gregorio se halla, por lo que he podido

---

<sup>36</sup> Cf. Huldreich Zwingli's sämtliche Werke, vol. I, p. 515.

<sup>37</sup> Huldrici Zuinglii Opera. Completa editio prima, ed. Melchior Schuleri et Io. Schulthessii, vol. III: Didactica et apologetica, Ex officina Schultessiana, Turici 1832 p. 103: « Diesque nostros in tua pace disponas, atque ab aeterna damnatione nos eripi et in electorum tuorum iubeas grege numerari ». Hanc tandem huius precationis partem Gregorio, ut diximus, adscribunt, nos totam. Hic autem videre licet quam stilus canonis totus a veterum dictione abhorreat: nam non alibi per omnem canonem orationem elegantiore invenies quam sit ista, meliusque expensam, quamquam utrumque mediocriter. Sive Gregorii sit, sive non sit, nos eius esse propter elegantiam solummodo permittimus, numquam alioqui credituri quod homo tam pius et doctus ad tam barbarum canona quicquam additurus fuerit ». La atribución a Gregorio de esta plegaria procede de la biografía de Juan Diácono (*Vita s. Gregorii Magni* 2, 17: PL 75, col. 94A).

<sup>38</sup> *In evangelicam historiam de Domino nostro Iesu Christo, per Mattheaem, Marcum, Lucam, et Ioanem conscriptam, Epistolasque aliquot Pauli, Annotationes D. Huldrychi Zwinglii, per Leonem Iudae exceptae et editae*, Excudebat Christophorus, Tiguri 1539, p. 65. El subrayado es mío.

encontrar, en Tomás de Aquino.<sup>39</sup> La confusión debe de provenir, a mi juicio, de un pasaje de la *Regula pastoralis* donde Gregorio compara la vida presente con un río, donde el que no busca hacer progresos necesariamente retrocede.<sup>40</sup> Desconozco cuál pudo haber sido la fuente concreta aquí. Ahora bien, hay que apuntar que la frase con la cita de Gregorio está ausente en la versión de este texto del manuscrito Zürich, Zentralbibliothek, Z V 370, fechado en 1535, que es aparentemente copia de unos apuntes de Zwinglio sobre el Evangelio de Mateo, realizada por una mano desconocida.<sup>41</sup> Con esto podría quedar en entredicho el que realmente Zwinglio hubiera incorporado la cita.

En conclusión, tomando por base lo que tenemos, cabe deducir que, si bien Zwinglio considera, al menos en apariencia, que Gregorio es susceptible de explicar la verdad de la Escritura, lo cierto es que la presencia gregoriana en la obra del reformador suizo es marginal. Gregorio es una autoridad que, con sus errores (culto a los santos, alegorismo excesivo), sigue siendo reconocida por él, pero en realidad su exégesis y teología no parecen haberse visto inspiradas por el pensamiento del papa, y sólo muy raramente se le cita.

### II.3 Melanchthon y las *Confesiones de Augsburgo*

Entre los primeros reformados, fue quien más se preocupó de trazar una historia de la Iglesia que refleja la pureza de su estado primitivo y la larga decadencia que va desde la caída del Imperio romano hasta el fin de la Edad Media. Llegó a escribir, de hecho, algunas monografías sobre esta cuestión (así el *De ecclesia et autoritate Verbi Dei*, publicado en 1539, o el *De Luthero et aetatibus Ecclesiae*, en 1548). La idea, como sabemos, no es nueva, está muy engarzada en la visión humanista de la historia, pero a Melanchthon le cupo no pocas reflexiones, que se remontan como mínimo a su discurso inaugural como profesor en Wittenberg en 1518.<sup>42</sup>

Su visión de los Padres es similar a la de los demás eruditos de la Reforma: tienen autoridad para mejor comprender la Escritura, pero deben juzgarse a

---

<sup>39</sup> THOMAS DE AQUINO, *Summa theologiae*, II-II, q. 19, a.6, ob. 3: « Praeterea, Gregorius dicit quod in via Dei stare retrocedere est ».

<sup>40</sup> GREGORIUS MAGNUS, *Regula pastoralis*, 3, 34 (PL 77, 119A): « Si anima quod mortuum in nobis est, ad vitam non accenditur, hoc etiam extinguitur quod quasi adhuc vivum tenetur. In hoc mundo humana anima quasi more navis est contra ictum fluminis conscendentis, uno in loco stare non permittitur, quia ad ima relabatur, nisi ad summa conetur ».

<sup>41</sup> En lugar de la frase subrayada encontramos: « Sic in re divina, qui bonum non facit et promovet, hic et malum facit et promovet »; cf. Huldreich Zwingli's *Sämtliche Werke*, vol. XX: *Exegetische Schriften 8: Neues Testament. Evangelium nach Matthäum (die andere Parallelüberlieferung zu den Bänden XVII und XIX) nach dem Manuskript in den Zentralbibliothek Zürich: Ms Z V 370*, ed. M. Lienhard, D. Bolligen, Tübingen 2013, p. 97.

<sup>42</sup> Cf. al respecto PETER FRAENKEL, *Testimonia patrum. The Function of the Patristic Argument in the Theology of Philip Melanchthon*, Librarie E. Droz, Genève 1961, p. 15-24.

partir de ésta. Por lo que a Gregorio se refiere, Melanchton repite a las mismas críticas en lo doctrinal que Lutero: es culpable de haber importado a la Iglesia tradiciones humanas vindicadas por el catolicismo romano, como el celibato, las misas de difuntos o las misas privadas, y en definitiva corrompió la doctrina de la salvación por la fe.<sup>43</sup> Gregorio no parece haber influido positivamente en su pensamiento doctrinal.<sup>44</sup> Como señaló Fraenkel, Gregorio supone para Melanchton una figura de transición que consolida el ‘pelagianismo’ en la Iglesia de forma definitiva, con duras consecuencias para la vida cristiana hasta los tiempos recientes.

No obstante, Melanchton no duda de su piedad ni de su capacidad para el buen gobierno de la Iglesia: llega a lamentarse en una carta (15 de marzo de 1550) que no quede en su tiempo ningún Gregorio capaz de tratar con los temas políticos en que se ve envuelto.<sup>45</sup> Desde el punto de vista de su formación, Gregorio sería un hombre de excepción, más propio de la ‘tercera edad’ de la Iglesia que tuvo a su mejor representante en Agustín que de los tiempos en que realmente vivió, una figura ya fuera de lugar en las tinieblas de una época que se alargaron hasta el advenimiento de Lutero.<sup>46</sup> La razón de los errores de Gregorio parecen ser más bien fruto de la decadencia de los tiempos, a las que ni siquiera él escapó, pues las invasiones bárbaras que terminaron con el poder político del Imperio romano lo hicieron también con la cultura antigua. Los bárbaros incluso trajeron consigo costumbres paganas que, de alguna manera, y en cierto modo sustentadas por la autoridad de Gregorio, pervivieron en el catolicismo romano.<sup>47</sup>

En 1530, con el fin de presentar una exposición de sus posturas en la Dieta de Augsburgo convocada por Carlos I, los protestantes redactan una profesión de fe, conocida hoy como *Confesión de Augsburgo* (*Confessio Augustana*), redactada tanto en latín como en alemán. La *Confesión* viene con un largo apéndice donde se enuncian y refutan los ‘abusos’ en que había incurrido la Iglesia católica en numerosas materias, y es claramente dependiente de la teología de Lutero. Melanchthon debió de tomar parte activa en la redacción del texto, en cuya

---

<sup>43</sup> Análisis y convenientes citas al respecto en FRAENKEL, *Testimonia patrum*, p. 96–97.

<sup>44</sup> Ni una sola cita de Gregorio a este respecto recoge EGINHARD PETER MEIJERING, *Melanchton and Patristic Thought. The Doctrine of the Grace, The Trinity and the Creation*, Brill, Leiden, 1983.

<sup>45</sup> Cf. CAROLUS GOTTLIEBT BRETSCHEIDER (ed.), *Philippi Melanthonis opera quae supersunt omnia*, Apud C. A. Schwetschck et filium, Halis Saxonum, 1840 (Corpus Reformatorum, 7), col. 561.

<sup>46</sup> Cf. *De Lutero et aetatibus Ecclesiae*, in *Philippi Melanthonis opera quae supersunt omnia*, ed. CAROLUS GOTTLIEBT BRETSCHEIDER, Apud C. A. Schwetschck et filium, Halis Saxonum 1843 (Corpus Reformatorum, 11), col. 783–788.

<sup>47</sup> Cf. FRAENKEL, *Testimonia patrum*, p. 96–100. Ejemplos de esas supersticiones paganas son la popularidad del monacato, el sistema escolástico (traído por los escotos al continente), e incluso el sistema de satisfacciones: « Olim erant quaedam homidarum et aliorum pollutorum signa, ut Orestes, Oedipi. Ex hac disciplina veteri et civili mos ortus est satisfactionum, de quo non intellecto quam futiles opiniones finxerunt Monachi? », del segundo párrafo a los *Loci communes* de 1541, citado por FRAENKEL, *Testimonia patrum*, p. 100, nota 247.

versión latina (pero no en la alemana) se alude a Gregorio como el primer testimonio de la realización de misas privadas (« nam ante Gregorium non faciunt mentionem privatae Missae »).<sup>48</sup> Ese mismo año, tras recibir la respuesta católica (*Confutatio pontificia*) a la *Confesión*, el propio Melanchthon redacta una nueva versión del texto (*Apologia confessionis Augustanae*) donde, tras aclarar que Cipriano y Jerónimo no hablaron nunca de la invocación de los santos, se alude a Gregorio nuevamente como el primero de los antiguos escritores que hace referencia a dicha práctica (« neque reliqui veteres Scriptorum ante Gregorium fecerunt mentionem invocationis »),<sup>49</sup> una afirmación que tiene con seguridad su base en los *Dialogi*. Asimismo, se especifica que aunque Gregorio pueda ser tomado como autoridad para sustentar determinadas prácticas defendidas por los católicos – como en efecto se hizo en la *Confutatio pontificia* –,<sup>50</sup> las Escrituras van en su contra, las cuales ciertamente a veces contradicen a los padres:

Quod vero allegant adversarii Patres de oblatione pro mortuis. Scimus veteres loqui de oratione pro mortuis, quam nos prohibemus, sed applicationem Coenae Domini pro mortuis ex opere operato, improbamus. Nec patrocinantur adversariis Veteres de opere operato. Et ut maxime Gregorii aut recentiorum testimonia habeant, nos opponimus clarissimas et certissimas scripturas. Et patrum magna dissimilitudo est. Homines erant et labi ac decipi poterant.<sup>51</sup>

En 1540 Melanchthon escribió una profunda revisión del texto, hoy conocida como la *Variata*, donde introdujo cambios teológicos relevantes, el más notable en el artículo que corresponde a la Eucaristía, donde se elimina la referencia explícita a la presencia real del cuerpo y la sangre de Cristo. La modificación estaba encaminada a la reconciliación con las tesis de Calvino, que de hecho suscribió esta nueva profesión de fe. Por lo que se refiere a Gregorio, no se produce ningún cambio respecto de la *Apologia*.

Como podemos comprobar, pues, en las Confesiones toma carta de naturaleza el papel de Gregorio como introductor de prácticas religiosas ajenas a la pureza original de la Iglesia. A diferencia de otros autores como Agustín, no hay ninguna referencia al papa para justificar los dogmas protestantes. Puede defenderse que se alude a Gregorio entre los demás padres, de modo que implícitamente se le

---

<sup>48</sup> *Confessio Augustanae*, xxiv, in *Die Bekenntnisschriften der Evangelisch-Lutherischen Kirche. Vollständige Neuedition*, ed. IRENE DINGEL, Vadenhoeck & Ruprecht, Göttingen 2014, p. 147. La misma idea figura en la *Apologia confessionis Augustanae*, xxiv, ed. DINGEL, p. 617, donde la versión alemana recoge esta vez sí la referencia a Gregorio (*ibid.*, p. 618).

<sup>49</sup> *Apologia confessionis Augustanae*, xxi, ed. DINGEL, p. 561. Esta vez sí, la misma idea se recoge en la versión alemana (*ibid.*, p. 560).

<sup>50</sup> Cf. HERBERT IMMENKÖTTER, *Die Confutatio der Confessio Augustana vom 3. August 1530*, Aschendorff, Münster 1979 (CCath, 33), p. 73-207. Gregorio Magno aparece citado tres veces en este texto.

<sup>51</sup> *Apologia confessionis Augustanae*, xxiv, ed. DINGEL, p. 659-661.

reconoce una cierta autoridad, si bien habremos de esperar a una obra como las *Centurias de Magdeburgo* para hallar una valoración de conjunto de la persona y la obra de Gregorio bajo una óptica protestante.

#### II.4 Calvino

La evolución de la apreciación de Gregorio por Calvino fue objeto de estudio en un trabajo de Lester Little,<sup>52</sup> el cual puso de manifiesto que, si bien las ediciones de la *Institutio christianae religionis* posteriores a 1543 tenían en Gregorio al padre de la Iglesia más citado después de Agustín, las dos ediciones previas, de 1536 y 1539 respectivamente (la definitiva no sería publicada hasta 1559), carecían de la mayor parte de citas gregorianas. Parece, pues, que durante su exilio en Estrasburgo, donde recaló tras su primer período en Ginebra en 1538, Calvino pudo leer y meditar ampliamente a Gregorio. Ahora bien, hay que indicar que las citas y referencias incorporadas en 1543 son de orden relativo a la historia de la Iglesia y están sacadas en su mayoría del magno conjunto de epístolas de nuestro autor, que parece el texto gregoriano que mejor conoció y meditó Calvino.

En este sentido, podría sospecharse también de que Calvino no llegara a leer todas las obras de Gregorio. Little apunta cómo alguna cita sobre el deber de predicación del clérigo debiera estar sacada antes de la *Regula pastoralis* que de las cartas o las *Homiliae in Hiezechielem*, como es el caso.<sup>53</sup> La cuestión me parece tanto más curiosa cuanto que ya para cuando Calvino estudiaba en París existían ediciones de los *opera omnia* de Gregorio, incluso publicados en la misma ciudad. Se han localizado también fuentes de las *Homiliae in Evangelia*, alguna de segunda mano, indicada por el propio Calvino.<sup>54</sup> Lane contabiliza un total de 29 citas en la *Institutio* y 30 en otras obras.<sup>55</sup>

Parece que la visión que Calvino tuvo de Gregorio en su madurez fue de admiración hacia su desempeño como pastor y guía de almas, tanto más cuanto que, según deja ver en su *Institutio*, concibe la época en que el papa vivió como un período en que la pureza de la Iglesia primitiva había entrado en decadencia,

---

<sup>52</sup> LESTER K. LITTLE, « Calvin's Appretiation of Gregory the Great », *The Harvard Theological Review*, 56 (1963), p. 145-157. El autor considera que la inspiración de la eclesiología de Gregorio tuvo un papel fundamental en la organización de la vida religiosa y política que Calvino implantó en Ginebra: « First, of course, there was Augustine - his ideological mentor; (...). Finally, there was Gregory, the Roman scholar, who had designed the institutional structure of early Christianity without violating its integrity, and who gave courage thereby to the reluctant architect of the Reformed Church at Geneva » (p. 157).

<sup>53</sup> LITTLE, « Calvin's Appretiation of Gregory the Great », p. 148.

<sup>54</sup> Se trata de *Inst.* III, IV, 1, donde Calvino cita *hom. Ev.* 14, 15, referida a través de Pedro Lombardo. Cf. ERIK A. DE BOER, *John Calvin on the Visions of Ezekiel. Historical and Hermeneutical Studies in John Calvin's 'sermons inédits', Especially on Ezek. 36-48*, Brill, Leiden-Boston 2004 (Kerkhistorische Bijdragen, 21), p. 25.

<sup>55</sup> ANTHONY N. S. LANE, *John Calvin Student of Church Fathers*, T&T Clark, Edimburg 1999, p. 62-66.

como ya había hecho Lutero. Según su visión de la historia, fue la decadencia de los reinos en esta época lo que facilitó el acrecentamiento del poder del obispo de Roma, con el consecuente desvío moral de su estado originario,<sup>56</sup> si bien Gregorio parece preservar la pureza primitiva en lo que se refiere a la administración de los asuntos eclesiásticos.<sup>57</sup> En efecto, el desempeño de Gregorio como obispo parece corresponderse, según Calvino, con el propio del estadio puro de la Iglesia: una suerte de cabeza escogido por los presbíteros para guardar de la disensión que es consecuencia de la igualdad, pero sin mayores potestades espirituales, ni un poder especial sobre ellos.<sup>58</sup> Gregorio se habría arrogado poderes terrenales sobre el poder civil; antes bien, se habría comportado como un fiel súbdito del emperador.<sup>59</sup> Por otra parte, la eclesiología gregoriana, fundamentada en categorías que ciertamente van más allá de la ordenación de la Iglesia de su tiempo y buscan una vinculación trascendente con la mística evangélica (Gregorio habla de *pastores* y *rectores*, no de *clerici* o *episcopi*, por ejemplo),<sup>60</sup> parece haber sido percibida por Calvino como prueba de que el papa concebía todavía la ordenación eclesiástica en su forma primitiva y pura. Gregorio entiende que la función principal de todos los *pastores* es la predicación de la Palabra de Dios, una función que para Calvino la Iglesia católica no había conservado, y que considera necesario restituir.<sup>61</sup>

---

<sup>56</sup> *Inst.* IV, VII, 12: «Gregorii tempore iam multum mutata erat prisca illa ratio. Convulso enim lacerato imperio, cum Galliae et Hispaniae multis subinde acceptis cladibus afflictae essent, vastatum Illyricum, vexata esset Italia, Africa vero assiduis calamitatibus fere perdita: quo in tanta rerum civilium convulsione fidei saltem integritas maneret, aut certe non prorsus interiret, omnes undique Episcopi se ad Romanum Pontificem magis adiunxerunt. Eo factum est ut sedis non modo dignitas, sed etiam potentia vehementer cresceret » (cita de la edición de 1559, *Joannis Calvinii Opera selecta*, vol. V: *Institutionis Christianae religionis 1559 librum IV. continens. Editio secunda emendata*, reimpressa en Wipf & Stock, Eugene 2018, p. 115). Cf. también *Inst.* IV, XI, 14.

<sup>57</sup> En este sentido, Calvino llega a contraponer la situación de la sede romana con Gregorio, todavía en un estado de pureza, a la de tiempos de San Bernardo, donde la decadencia sería ya similar a la de su propia época. Cf. *Inst.* IV, VII, 22.

<sup>58</sup> Cf. *Inst.* IV, IV, 13 y 15.

<sup>59</sup> Cf. *Inst.* IV, XIX, 10. Nótese además que Calvino dice expresamente que Gregorio no citó nunca la Donación de Constantino (*Inst.* IV, XI, 12), aportando un argumento más en prueba de su falsedad.

<sup>60</sup> Cf. BRUNO JUDIC, « Il vescovo secondo Gregorio Magno », en CLAUDIO LEONARDI (ed.), *Gregorio Magno e le origini dell'Europa*, SISMEL-Edizioni del Galluzzo, Firenze 2014 (Millennio Medievale, 100), p. 269.

<sup>61</sup> *Inst.* IV, IV, 3: «Ea igitur fuit temporum illorum severitas, quale ab ipsis Dominus requirit, adigerentur. Nec unius tantum aetatis morem refero: siquidem ne Gregorii quidem tempore, quo Ecclesia iam fere collapsa erat (certe multum ab antiqua puritate degeneraverat) tolerabile fuisset episcopum aliquem a concionibus abstinere » (*Joannis Calvinii Opera selecta*, p. 60). Y cita como ejemplo pasajes de las cartas y las *Homiliae in Hiezechielem*. En el mismo sentido *Inst.* IV, IV, 5. Cf. la interpretación de LITTLE, « Calvin's Appretiation of Gregory the Great », p. 151-152.

Gregorio sirve a Calvino también como fuente para otras cuestiones de correcta disciplina y ordenación eclesiástica que habrían sido deturpadas y corrompidas en la historia de la Iglesia. Calvino cita ampliamente, como otros antes que él, la disputa de Gregorio con Juan de Constantinopla como fuente para el rechazo de la primacía universal del obispo de Roma.<sup>62</sup> Además, cita a Gregorio como prueba de que en la Iglesia primitiva se administraba el vino a los fieles en la Eucaristía.<sup>63</sup>

La visión que Calvino tuvo de Gregorio parece, pues, un tanto más positiva que la de otros reformados, en cuanto que ve en él un hombre que había conservado la pureza primitiva de su dignidad sacerdotal en un tiempo donde la corrupción había ya penetrado en la Iglesia. No quiere esto decir, por supuesto, que viera en él a un hombre sin mancha de esa corrupción: hay una cita del libro I de la *Institutio* donde, aun sin citar fuente alguna, apunta que defendió el culto a las imágenes (denostada por Calvino, cuya iconoclastia es conocida), contra el precepto del Espíritu Santo,<sup>64</sup> una apreciación crítica que aparece en otras obras suyas;<sup>65</sup> no obstante, parece intuirse que la espiritualidad gregoriana le resultó agradable e inspiradora, al menos en lo que respecta a la visión de la Iglesia y el ejercicio de la cura de almas, una visión basada en la lectura de las cartas y las homilías.<sup>66</sup> Por lo que podemos deducir, la percepción que Calvino tuvo de Gregorio fue original y muy personal, sin verse condicionada por la autoridad que Gregorio podía tener en el plano exegético o teológico.

---

<sup>62</sup> Cf. *Inst.* IV, VII, 4-22.

<sup>63</sup> Cf. *Inst.* IV, XVII, 49.

<sup>64</sup> *Inst.* I, XI, 5: « Scio quidem illud vulgo esse plusquam tritum, libros idiotarum esse imagines. Dixit hoc Gregorius, at longe aliter pronuntiat Spiritus Dei, in cuius schola si edoctus fuisset hac in parte, nunquam ita loquutus foret ».

<sup>65</sup> Cf. por ejemplo *In Ieremiam* 10, 8, esta vez sí citando su fuente: « Celebris est illa sententia Gregorii ad Serenum episcopum Massiliensem: nam bonus ille vir deicerat imagines, quas videbat prostare ad impium cultum, et purgaverat etiam omnia Massiliae templa illis inquinamentis: Gregorius quamvis esset pius vir, tamen rescriptsit nimis stulte, recte fecisse et prudenter Serenum quod vetuisset imagines coli: sed tamen hoc fecisse inconsiderate, quod templa vacuasset: nam sunt, inquit, libri idiotarum: haec est clausula epistolae » (EDUARDUS REUSS, ALFREDUS ERICHSON, GUILIELMUS BALDENSPERGER [eds.], *Ioannis Calvini opera exegetica et homiletica ad fidem editionum authenticarum cum prolegomnis literariis, annotationibus criticis et indicibus*, vol. XVI, Apud C. A. Schwetscheke et filium, Brunsvigae 1888 [Corpus Reformatorum, 66], p. 68-69). En el mismo sentido *In Habacuc* 2, 19.

<sup>66</sup> LITTLE « Calvin's Appretiation of Gregory the Great », p. 157 apunta que, en su prefacio al comentario de los Salmos, Calvino se lamenta de que la Providencia no le hubiera permitido permanecer tranquilo en un único lugar como le pedía su natural temperamento, en lo que podría haber un eco del prefacio de los *Dialogi*, donde Gregorio se lamenta de tener que ocuparse de los tumultos del siglo, mientras en su interior anhela la vida contemplativa del monasterio. Sin negar que Calvino pudiera haber leído los *Dialogi*, una obra que desde luego no le habría inspirado en mayor medida, lo cierto es que esta clase de ideas pueden hallarse también en otros lugares de la obra gregoriana: cf. por ejemplo Greg. M., *Epist.* 1, 5.

### III. La edición de *Huldreich Coccius*

Entre los últimos años del siglo XV y las dos primeras décadas del XVI las obras de Gregorio Magno fueron publicadas en multitud de imprentas diferentes; no obstante, parece que a partir de 1520 se produce un descenso, acaso producido por la publicación y difusión de *opera omnia* en lugar de las obras separadas del autor. La primera edición en tal formato vino a cargo de la imprenta de Bertold Rembolt en París, y se reimprimió en 1533 y 1542. Entre 1520 y 1550, el catálogo provisional elaborado por Kuzdale da dos ediciones de los *Moralia in Iob* (1521 y 1530) y seis *opera omnia* (1521, 1523 [reeditado en 1533], 1539, dos de 1540 y 1542), todos ellos salidos de imprentas en París o Lyon.<sup>67</sup> Ninguna nueva edición aparece localizada en ámbito protestante.

En 1550, la prestigiosa imprenta de Froben en Basilea (donde Erasmo había publicado sus ediciones de los restantes «doctores de la Iglesia latina», como vimos más atrás) publica un segundo tomo de los *opera omnia* de Gregorio.<sup>68</sup> El primer tomo, con las obras restantes, aparece el año siguiente,<sup>69</sup> incluyendo una carta preliminar del principal responsable de la edición, el profesor Huldreich Coccius, fechada a 15 de marzo de 1551.<sup>70</sup> El destinatario de la carta fue Wolfgang Waidner, teólogo protestante de Worms. Coccius fue un personaje relevante de la vida cultural suiza de estos años, profesor de griego y teología, y varias veces rector de la Universidad de Basilea.<sup>71</sup> Por lo que dice en la carta, su principal labor parece haber sido la de preparar los índices que se contienen en el tomo de 1551, a petición de los impresores.<sup>72</sup> Aunque el título de la edición afirma que el texto fue sometido a corrección («a mendis multis... repurgata»), Coccius no da ninguna indicación en ese sentido. La edición viene introducida además por una colección de textos relativos a la persona y la obra de Gregorio Magno: las

---

<sup>67</sup> KUZDALE, «The Reception of Gregory», p. 383–386.

<sup>68</sup> *B. Gregorii papae operum secundus tomus complectens aliquot sacrae scripturae expositiones: tum homiliae super Ezechielem, et in Evangelia: tum eiusdem Epistolas, cum quibusdam aliis, uti verba facie apparebit*, Froben, Basiliae 1550.

<sup>69</sup> *Opera divi Gregorii papae huius nominis primi, cognomento Magni, omnia quae extant, nunc iterum accuratissime diligentia a mendis multis, uti lector facile passim deprehendet, maxime in libris Epistolarum, repurgata. Quorum omnium elenchum pagina versa exhibebit. Cum Indice duplici, altero rerum, verborum, sententiarumque, altero locorum S. scripturae explicatorum, utroque magna sedulitate conscripto*, Froben, Basileae 1551.

<sup>70</sup> Kuzdale pone como fecha original de la edición de Froben el año de 1544, pero no he conseguido certificarlo.

<sup>71</sup> Sobre la vida y trabajos de este personaje puede consultarse RUDOLF THOMMEN, *Geschichte der Universität Basel, 1532–1632*, C. Detloffs Buchhandlung, Basel, 1889, p. 353–354.

<sup>72</sup> Así lo admite de pasada cuando le recuerda a Waidner el encuentro que ambos habían tenido el año anterior, en el que acabaron hablando de Gregorio Magno: «Porro in ea quae dixi collatione inter caetera perventum est et ad B. Gregorii cognomento Magni opera, quae tum in manibus versabam ob indicem concinnatum, efflagitantibus id typographis nostris...» (cf. *Opera divi Gregorii papae huius nomine primi*, p. B2).

biografías de Juan Stella, Platina, Juan Laziardo y otra anónima, un epitafio del autor, un símbolo de fe a él atribuido y un *Miraculum de inventione librorum Moraliū beati Gregorio* (una de las versiones de la *Visio Taionis*); no obstante, estos textos parecen ya figurar en la tradición previa de los *opera omnia* anteriores,<sup>73</sup> por lo que Coccius o los impresores se habrían limitado a reproducir el corpus introductorio de un modelo anterior. Lo mismo ocurre con los índices: es bastante posible que Coccius hubiera trabajado sobre alguno de los preexistentes, introduciendo los cambios o ampliaciones que considerara convenientes.<sup>74</sup>

Es interesante comprobar que la edición es lo suficientemente precavida para no suscitar demasiados desaires en el mundo católico, donde también circuló y fue leída. La inclusión del *Miraculum*, por ejemplo, es bastante significativa, y puede deberse más al interés de la imprenta o de sus financiadores que al del propio Coccius, que, como veremos, no parece tener en buena estima este tipo de textos. En cualquier caso, Coccius, que alaba el juicio crítico sin extremismos de Waidner,<sup>75</sup> no explicita ningún error doctrinal de Gregorio, por más que asuma que – como con todos los padres – su lectura pueda suscitar escrúpulos o precauciones.<sup>76</sup> Menciona algunos puntos de la obra de Gregorio donde pueden leerse reflexiones piadosas sobre la pastoral,<sup>77</sup> la fe,<sup>78</sup> la escatología<sup>79</sup> y otros

<sup>73</sup> Puedo certificar que dicho corpus aparece en *Divi Gregorii Papae, huius nomini primi, cognomento Magni, Omnia quae extant opera*, Hugues de La Porte, Lyon 1542. No me ha sido posible consultar el resto de ediciones previas de los *Opera omnia*.

<sup>74</sup> Los *opera omnia* publicados en Lyon en 1542, citados en la nota anterior, presentan los mismos tipos de índices, aunque su contenido no es siempre el mismo.

<sup>75</sup> *Opera divi Gregorii papae huius nomine primi*, p. B2: « ...ut de scriptorum veterum ac recentiorum monumentis disputares, non eo sane modo, quo hodie solent plerique, temere vel reicientes, vel approbantes [...]; nec eo etiam quo quidam vetera novis, aut contra haec illis, sine ulla ratione certa praeferunt ».

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*: « Constare enim vel huius lectione poterat, quod multa praeveniri ac caveri potuerint, quae alioqui qui in Ecclesiam ingenti innumerabilium animarum dispendio irreperunt, quamvis ex eo ut et reliquis orthodoxis patribus quidam impietatum et seductionum prodigiōssimarum patrocinia quaeſiverint ».

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*: « Oculos porro ad ministerii sacri institutionem undequaque intentos habet, ad quod ille non iniuria requirit doctos et exercitatos, atque cum primis eos, qui sint gregis exemplaria, factoque praestent quod doceant, et doceant quod vivant ».

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*: « Iustitiam per fidem in Christum contingere sic opere toto docet, ut totus Christum sapiat. Depingit autem fidem non mortuam sed ornatam fructibus bonorum operum et efficacem, ut tamen fateamur interim, nos esse inutiles servos, exigitque non quaevis opera, quae rationis instinctu constituuntur, verum ea tantumque quae a domino praecepta sunt, et ex scripturarum hauriuntur oraculis ».

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*: « De redemptione nostra sic loquitur, ut ostendat nullum quantumvis sanctum eam peragere potuisse, cum deus mundam consummatamque hostiam pro summa iustitia sua exegerit, unde Christus homo factus mediatorque Dei et hominum constitutus, sanguinis sui interventu nos ex potestate diaboli, mortis ac peccati liberavit, propterque nostram iustitiam ut Paulus loquitur, resurrexit, nobis simul conresuscitatis collocatisque in coelibus ».

temas,<sup>80</sup> sin polemizar en ningún momento; destaca que Gregorio combatió a herejes<sup>81</sup> y que habla de otras ciencias desde la filosofía,<sup>82</sup> y alaba su capacidad para concitar lugares diversos de la Escritura y atener a ella sus explicaciones.<sup>83</sup> Tiene el mismo tono para con sus obras al describirlas por separado, excepto por lo que se refiere al epistolario, que dice requiere un lector prudente (sin llegar a explicitar la razón),<sup>84</sup> y, sobre todo, los *Dialogi*, de los que no hará sino admitir que duda de la autoría de Gregorio, en virtud del estilo, el espíritu, la gravedad y el cuidado de la obra: « De Dialogis in quibus patrum Italiae miracula recenset, vix habeo quid pronunciem, nisi quod Gregorii esse dubitem, adeo et genio, et serie orationis, gravitate et industria distant a reliquis eius scriptis ómnibus ».

Puede decirse, pues, que la lectura de Coccius diverge un tanto de la de los padres de la Reforma. Si éstos vieron que Gregorio introdujo elementos humanos en su pensamiento y los divulgó, corrompiendo así la pureza originaria de la religión cristiana, e incluso parecieron ver los *Dialogi* como la cumbre de esa intrusión de lo humano, Coccius, en su aproximación filológica al autor, va más allá y ve en el exceso de los *Dialogi* una contradicción con sus restantes escritos: para él, en efecto, parece resultar contradictorio que un teólogo que tan fielmente se somete a las Escrituras pueda escribir una obra de santos y milagros en un estilo bajo que contradice el de sus obras exegéticas. Hay que decir, eso sí, que Coccius tiene una visión mucho más favorable que otros protestantes de la exégesis de Gregorio, ya que cuando aquéllos consideraron que el alegorismo del autor implicaba alejarse de la verdadera comprensión de la Escritura, Coccius ni siquiera describe la interpretación alegórica como la claramente dominante y representativa de Gregorio, antes bien, sólo alude al método interpretativo de Gregorio al hablar de los *Moralia*, diciendo que en esta obra el autor ofrece distintos sentidos de interpretación, de modo que el lector pueda tomar el que le sea más apropiado.<sup>85</sup> Ni que decir tiene que realmente es el sentido alegórico el

---

<sup>80</sup> Ibid.: « Neque enim tractat quaestiones quales in nonnullis scolasticorum reperias, frivolas et aniles, sed pias atque utiles geniumque habentes... ». Y cita algunos pasajes sobre el sentido de los sueños o la ira de Dios, que explica « non rationibus e carnis sapientia, sed scripturae auctoritate depromptis ».

<sup>81</sup> Ibid.: « Haereticos praeterea refutat, Pelagium, Manichaeum, Celestinum, acalios, errores ipsorum detegens ».

<sup>82</sup> Ibid.: « Naturalia themata, ex quae ab humana sapientia sunt petita, ex Philosophia discutit ».

<sup>83</sup> Ibid.: « Conciliat locos scripturae in speciem pugnantes mira industria... Locis communibus inhaeret multis, ut est Fides, Charitas, Patientia, quos sacrarum literarum auctoritatibus digerit, ac illustrat exemplis. Ac ut summam dicam, non solum susceptos libros exponit, verum et totius scripturae considerationem depromit ».

<sup>84</sup> Ibid.: « Epistolarum liber magnus sane, et qui multa eaque varia continet, sed requirit lectorem circumspexit ac prudentem, et qui non careat iudicio ».

<sup>85</sup> Ibid.: « Adhibuit autem in eo libro singularem quandam diligentiam, ut non tantum genuinam sententiam secundum litteram, verum et allegorias, interpretatione nominum Hebraicorum,

predominante, y el casi exclusivo a partir del libro IV. Esta visión contrasta con Lutero hablando de los delirios de Gregorio o con la apreciación de Zwinglio de que los *Moralia* eran uno de los exponentes de la errada interpretación alegórica de la Escritura. Coccius, en definitiva, presenta una imagen claramente más benévola del Gregorio exegeta que sus predecesores, en detrimento principalmente de sus *Dialogi*.

#### IV. *El Catalogus testium veritatis* y las Centurias de Magdeburgo

No fue hasta la década de 1550 que la difusión de las ideas reformadas vino acompañada de una proyección propiamente historiográfica. En 1556, el teólogo luterano Matías Flacio Ilírico publica en Basilea una obra con el propósito de reunir textos de la tradición cristiana que acrediten la preservación de la verdad revelada en el Evangelio contra las doctrinas de los papas: el *Catalogus testium veritatis*. La obra fue revisada y vuelta a publicar en 1562 en Estrasburgo, edición que usaré aquí.<sup>86</sup> Gregorio figura entre los testigos de la verdad, y de él se dice que «vehementer pugnavit contra primatum papae», mencionando las epístolas sobre el caso de Juan de Constantinopla y citando algunos fragmentos. También cita los *Dialogi* en atención a la doctrina del Purgatorio, apuntando que, contra lo defendido por los católicos, para Gregorio se trata de un fuego que quema sólo los pecados más leves. También dice que Gregorio fue el primer obispo de Roma en emplear el título de «servus servorum Dei», el cual sus sucesores, ávidos de poder, habrían interpretado falsamente como título del primado universal.

Hasta aquí, es evidente la coincidencia con Lutero en lo que respecta al uso de Gregorio en la polémica contra el papado: el interés de la obra, en este sentido, está en que proporciona una visión sistemática del asunto. Hay que apuntar, eso sí, que Flacio Ilírico recupera un episodio narrado en las biografías de Gregorio según el cual el pueblo romano habría quemado sus obras tras morir, y considera

---

naturam rerum figurarum ostendat. Nec una declaratione, quamlibet scripturae consentanea, contentus, plerumque et diversas adducit, relinquens lectori iudicium ut potioem eligat ».

<sup>86</sup> MATTHIA FLACIUS ILLYRICUS, *Catalogus testium veritatis, qui ante nostram aetatem Pontifici Romano, eiusque erroribus reclamarunt: iamque denuo longe quam antea, et emendatior et auctior editus*, Johannes Oporinus, Argentinae 1562, p. 47-51. Hubo otra reedición publicada en Francia dos tomos en 1597, mucho más ampliada, donde, por lo que respecta a nuestro autor, se recogen citas de Gregorio que, tomadas fuera de contexto, parecen concordar con las doctrinas teológicas protestantes. Por alguna de estas citas podría deducirse, por ejemplo, que Gregorio defendió la justificación exclusivamente por la fe, cosa que ninguno de los autores de la época que aquí estamos viendo le atribuyó. Es evidente el todavía mayor tono de polémica antipapal de esta reedición póstuma. La obra, de todos modos, queda fuera de la cronología a que este artículo se circunscribe: *Catalogus testium veritatis, qui ante nostram aetatem Pontifici Romano atque Papismi erroribus reclamarunt. Postrema hac editione emendatior et duplo auctior redditus, ordine dispositus, in libros XX tributus, atque ita renovatus, ut plane novus videri possit*, t. I, Ex typographia Antonii Candidi, Lugduni 1597, p. 503-519.

que tal hecho se debió a una respuesta contra la religión deturpada y los muchos elementos fabulosos (« multa fabulosa ») de sus escritos.<sup>87</sup> Es bastante verosímil que en este último aspecto el autor tuviera en mente los relatos de santos y milagros que en realidad se hallan sólo en los *Dialogi*. El mismo término, *fabulosa*, será el empleado por las *Centurias de Magdeburgo* precisamente para definir el contenido de esta obra. No obstante, Flacio Ilírico entiende también, en la línea de Lutero, que la religiosidad de Gregorio ya no sería pura, por lo que los *Dialogi*, pese a su impiedad, no serían la única obra controvertida del autor.

El propio Flacio Ilírico coordinó la redacción de un proyecto historiográfico más amplio que pretendía dar lugar a una historia de la Iglesia desprendida de los errores católicos, de lo cual el *Catalogus testium veritatis* sería, según el autor declara en el prólogo, sólo una mirada preliminar. El resultado fue la *Ecclesiastica historia* o *Centurias de Magdeburgo*, como la vengo llamando aquí, cuyos tomos se publicaron en Basilea entre 1559 y 1574. Cada tomo está dedicado a un siglo de la historia de la Iglesia, de ahí el nombre de *Centurias*. El tomo VI, donde se realiza el principal examen de Gregorio y sus obras, se publicó en 1562.<sup>88</sup> El trabajo de búsqueda e interpretación de las fuentes incluyó a más personas que Flacio Ilírico, por lo que las conclusiones no son siempre idénticas a las del *Catalogus*.

El realizado por este tomo de las *Centurias* es el primer estudio sistemático de la persona y la producción de Gregorio desde una óptica protestante. Entre sus fuentes, además de las propias obras del autor, pueden reconocerse la *Vita* de Juan Diácono (a la que se cita en varias ocasiones), las *Expositiones in Vetus Testamentum* de Isidoro de Sevilla<sup>89</sup> y las biografías publicadas en los *opera omnia* de Coccius,<sup>90</sup> que quizá fueran la edición empleada por los centuriadores. En el análisis de la vida de Gregorio se localizan ya elementos que acreditarían el carácter supersticioso del autor: el episodio tomado como ejemplo pertenece a la *Vita* de Juan Diácono, donde se narra que Gregorio condenó a un monje a muerte por ocultar tres monedas de oro contra lo prescrito en su regla monástica, ello a

---

<sup>87</sup> MATTHIA FLACIUS ILLYRICUS, *Catalogus testium veritatis*, p. 51: « Post eius mortem voluit populus et clerus Romanus eius libros exurere. Credo propterea, quia viderunt nimis multa fabulosa inserta esse, et religionem non parum per eum contaminatam esse ».

<sup>88</sup> *Sexta Centuria Ecclesiasticae Historiae, continens descriptionem amplissimarum rerum in regno Christi, quae Sexto post eius nativitatem seculo acciderunt: cum Imperium Romanum gubernarent, Anastasius, Iustinus senior, Iustinianus, Iustinus iunior, Tiberius et Mauricius: et Doctores in Ecclesia praecipui eminent, Fulgentius, Ferrandus, Avitus Alcimius, Maxentius, Hosmida, Boetius, Evodius, Iustus Origelitanus, Fortunatus, Cassiodorus, Gregorius Magnus, Olympiodorus, Andreas Hierosolymitanus, Gildas, Rusticus, et alii quidam: eodem ordine, diligentia et fide, quo superiores Centuriae, ex vetustis et probatis historicis, patribus et aliis scriptoribus*, Per Ioannem Oporinum, Basileae 1562.

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*, col. 680: « Isidorus tamen Hispalensis urbis episcopus, in expositione Geneseos, Gregorium insigniter eloquentem pronunciat ».

<sup>90</sup> *Ibid.*, col. 678: « ...ut Iohannes Stella, Diaconus, Platina et alii scriptores testantur ». Se copia asimismo el epitafio de Gregorio que editó Coccius (*ibid.*, col. 687–688).

pesar del arrepentimiento del monje.<sup>91</sup> Aunque se alaban su santidad y su doctrina, se advierte de que ésta se halla corrompida en algunos aspectos, y añade específicamente que escribió los *Dialogi* para que el vulgo aceptara con mayor facilidad sus propias tradiciones y ceremonias humanas. Del contenido de la obra se dice expresamente que « pleraque aut fabulosa sunt, aut manifeste impia, nec obscure falsam speciem religionis prae se ferunt ».<sup>92</sup>

Los centuriadores llevan a cabo una extensa valoración de la doctrina gregoriana, citando numerosos fragmentos de sus obras. Lo que tiene que ver con la cristología, la doctrina trinitaria y otros dogmas de fe son ortodoxos. Las críticas se dirigen hacia la penitencia, que se considera contaminada por la idea de que los pecados pueden borrarse no exclusivamente por la gracia divina, sino mediante la acción misma de la penitencia (« ex opere operato »); también, en el mismo sentido, hacia el excesivo valor concedido a las obras frente a la gracia, y a la defensa del libre albedrío, si bien se apunta que ello viene dado por influjo de la situación de las creencias de su tiempo. Además, se añade que Gregorio justifica el culto a las estatuas y el celibato sacerdotal, y se recupera la idea de que el sentido del título de « servus servorum Dei » por él empleado fue deturpado por los papas siguientes. Hay asimismo un apartado en que se habla de su lucha contra los herejes y sus innovaciones litúrgicas.<sup>93</sup> Respecto al episodio de la quema de sus libros tras su muerte, en este caso se atribuye a una mentira de sus émulos, y no a un acto de respuesta popular contra sus doctrinas.<sup>94</sup>

En líneas generales, pues, se trata de una visión de Gregorio muy cercana a la que parecía tener Lutero. Llama la atención, eso sí, que, al igual que hizo Coccius, los centuriadores no mencionen el método de interpretación alegórico de Gregorio a las Escrituras, que los humanistas y los primeros padres de la Reforma claramente despreciaron. El interés predominante aquí es el de hallar y señalar lo que hay de correcto o de incorrecto en Gregorio en virtud de unos principios dogmáticos ya establecidos. En su aproximación a Gregorio buscan la confirmación de una doctrina, o, por el contrario, los errores que van contra ella; no leen a Gregorio críticamente en busca de la correcta interpretación de la

---

<sup>91</sup> Ibid., col. 677: « Fratribus quoque regulam tradidit, ut omnes communiter viverent, nec quisquam propria possideret: eamque adeo superstitio se observavit, ut aliquando iustum monachum, cuius ope medica antea saepe fuerat adiutus, cum contra regulam tres aureos occultasset, in mortis agone (quod tamen magnam Magni illius Gregorii pietatem parum commendat) sine consolatione relinqueret: vivum diabolo, quantumvis poenitentem, et peccatum illud anxie deplorantem, traderet ».

<sup>92</sup> Ibid., col. 678.

<sup>93</sup> Para todo ello, cf. Ibid., col. 679–687.

<sup>94</sup> Ibid., col. 688: « Post mortem eius ingrente fame, aemuli prodigium et dilapidatorem omnis thesauri eum dixerunt, et parum abfuisset quin libros eius omnes combussissent: nisi se Petrus Diaconus, qui afferebat se Spiritum S. in specie columbae super Gregorii caput vidisse, interposuisset ».

verdad revelada. La diferencia puede parecer sutil, pero parte de un dogmatismo que acentúa la visión de Gregorio como *auctoritas* contra el catolicismo. Dicha tendencia, consecuencia de la consolidación de los dogmas y supuestos sobre los que se asentaba la irreconciliable disputa entre católicos y protestantes, no hará sino intensificarse en las décadas siguientes.

#### V. Conclusiones y visión posterior de Gregorio

Según hemos visto aquí, las líneas generales de la percepción protestante de Gregorio en el primer medio siglo de la Reforma consisten en ver en él a un hombre santo, cuya doctrina conserva puras determinadas verdades de la revelación evangélica que los papas habrían deturpado, pero que también fue un hombre que vivió en un tiempo de corrupción, y que él mismo, como hombre, cedió a la superstición y le dio autoridad en la Iglesia: así ocurre con la doctrina del purgatorio, el culto a los santos, las misas privadas y otros. Si bien su influencia en la configuración de la doctrina protestante parece haber sido escasa, las cartas de Gregorio concernientes a la disputa con Juan de Constantinopla fueron un argumento recurrente desde las primeras polémicas de Lutero para sostener que el primado universal no era una institución de derecho divino. Por lo demás, entre los primeros padres de la Reforma, el alegorismo de Gregorio les valió el mismo desprecio que había tenido Erasmo; aun así, es perceptible que con más o menos frecuencia citan a Gregorio cuando su interpretación les parece válida: tal es la postura humanista propia de estas décadas. Más allá de esto, podemos hallar diferencias sutiles en la aproximación a Gregorio, destacando la inspiración que el espíritu pastoral del papa ejerció sobre Calvino. Por lo demás, los *Dialogi* emergen aparentemente en Lutero como la obra más representativa del carácter supersticioso de Gregorio, si bien dicha superstición es bien perceptible en otras ideas defendidas por él.

A partir de 1550, leemos valoraciones de Gregorio procedentes de quienes lo leyeron desde la perspectiva de unos supuestos, ideas y dogmas ya configurados, y en un contexto de polémica contra el catolicismo donde eran irreales las perspectivas de reconciliación. A partir de este momento podemos decir que la recepción de Gregorio en ámbito protestante entra en una fase diversa. Frente a la aproximación de espíritu humanista de Lutero, Zwinglio o Calvino, eruditos como Coccius o los centuriadores de Magdeburgo leen a Gregorio buscando sistematizar lo que hay de correcto o de incorrecto. Si bien Coccius no tuvo una motivación polémica, lo cierto es que leyó a Gregorio buscando también una síntesis de lo aprovechable de su doctrina. En su caso, además, su aproximación filológica a Gregorio le permitió hallar diferencias de estilo y « gravedad » entre los *Dialogi* y las obras exegéticas, a las que valoraba especialmente, sospechando por ello que los *Dialogi* podrían no ser una obra del papa.

Esta nueva postura respecto a Gregorio será la que hereden los eruditos posteriores, que protagonizaron las polémicas más agudas sobre la autoría de los *Dialogi*. La evolución de la concepción de Gregorio dependerá entonces de los prejuicios o las de inclinaciones más o menos espurias de los estudiosos. Es digno de nota el que Robert Cooke vea contradicciones dogmáticas entre los *Dialogi* y el resto de obras de Gregorio donde Coccius había visto sólo una inapropiada diferencia de *gravitas*.<sup>95</sup> Pero esta etapa de la historia es ya mejor conocida.

---

<sup>95</sup> Obsérvese que Cave apunta que aquel extremo aún no había sido probado: « Litem his Dialogis intentant Reformatorem haud pauci. Strenue reclamantibus Romanae Ecclesiae Scriptoribus. Varia utrinque proferuntur argumenta... Tertio, reperiuntur in his Dialogis, quae doctrinae Gregorianae in operibus eius indubitatis traditae liquido adversantur, quorum omnium non unum exemplum, profert Rob. Coccius Nostras, Censur. script. vec. p. 209 » (GUILIELMUS CAVE, *Scriptorum ecclesiasticorum Historia Literaria*, p. 431).



# REVIEWS



RUEDI IMBACH, *MINIMA MEDIAEVALIA. SAGGI DI FILOSOFIA MEDIEVALE*, ARACNE, CANTERANO (RM) 2019 (FLUMEN SAPIENTIAE. STUDI SUL PENSIERO MEDIEVALE, 10), PP. 352, ISBN 9788825523386.

DRAGOS CALMA  
UNIVERSITY COLLEGE DUBLIN



PAR-DELA LES TEXTES, LES TRAITS DE L'HISTORIEN: DE LA PHILOSOPHIE AVEC RUEDI IMBACH, *MINIMA MEDIAEVALIA*\*

Écrire sur le dixième livre de la belle collection *Flumen sapientiae*, le *Minima mediaevalia. Saggi di filosofia medievale* de Ruedi Imbach, me tient particulièrement à cœur: sous sa direction j'ai rédigé ce que l'on appelait jadis un 'mémoire de master 2', et puis la thèse de doctorat. J'ai suivi ses cours à la Sorbonne pendant plusieurs années (à partir de 2002), ensuite j'ai travaillé à ses côtés sur divers projets communs, notamment sur Heymeric de Campo. Plusieurs de ses élèves reconnaissent sans difficulté que l'on s'imprègne de sa méthode, de ses auteurs, de ses lectures. Puis, naturellement, on cherche sa propre voie. Et puis, tout aussi naturellement, on revient sur ses pas pour revoir, pour mieux comprendre, pour répéter et ajuster les gestes d'une nouvelle révérence que l'on suppose plus adéquate. Il m'est difficile de comprendre si l'étonnement que j'ai éprouvé en lisant les chapitres de ce volume était biaisé par ces retrouvailles. Mais avant toute chose, ces *minima mediaevalia* sont une redécouverte.

Le volume reflète partiellement les intérêts et les méthodes de Ruedi Imbach. Ce « partiellement » n'est pas une critique des limites du recueil, mais indique plutôt la diversité des thèmes explorés durant une longue carrière qu'un volume de 350 pages ne peut refléter qu'imparfaitement. *Minima mediaevalia* fait évidemment penser à *Minima moralia*. L'argumentation de Ruedi Imbach dans l'introduction fait clairement savoir que ce n'est pas un clin d'œil à l'ouvrage d'Adorno qui avait comme programme de reconsidérer l'éthique en tant que manière de vivre à partir de la critique du capitalisme. C'était, pour Adorno, une

---

\* Texte présenté à l'occasion de la journée d'étude *Divine Ideas* organisée à Dublin le 7 décembre 2019 au sein du projet ERC CoG\_771640. Je remercie Odile Gilon pour ses remarques.

interprétation libre des *Magna moralia*, un ouvrage attribué à Aristote, composé en réalité des chapitres de l'*Éthique à Nicomaque* et de l'*Éthique à Eudème*, et qui a eu un certain succès durant le Moyen Âge.

On saura facilement reconnaître quelques traits essentiels de l'auteur, à partir du titre déjà: Ruedi Imbach explique le *minima* du titre en citant une belle phrase de Borges qui note que la plupart des intellectuels se vantent généralement avec le nombre d'ouvrages qu'ils ont écrit, alors que lui préfère se vanter avec le nombre d'ouvrages qu'il a lus. Et Ruedi Imbach considère ces chapitres comme des notes prises en marge de ses lectures des médiévaux. Mais, en contredisant presque Borges, ce qui impressionne dans les *Minima medievalia* c'est la fidélité et l'attachement à quelques textes et auteurs médiévaux. Fidélité, en effet, car tout au long de sa longue carrière Ruedi Imbach a travaillé ces mêmes textes avec la patience du chasseur, l'ingénuité du montagnard et l'obstination du navigateur.

Quiconque est familier de ses travaux sait bien que ni *minima* du titre ni les « *testi minori* » et « *residuo delle lettura* » de l'introduction ne feignent la vaine modestie. Quiconque est familier de ses travaux y reconnaîtra les 'note', 'notules', 'remarques', 'quelques remarques', 'observations', 'quelques observations' qui parsèment ses autres publications. Le titre de l'un des chapitres de ce volume comporte également: « *appunti* ». Le choix de ces mots peut surprendre celui qui, pour donner raison à Borges, n'a pas encore l'expérience de la lecture assidue. Les titres, les thèmes et les travaux de Ruedi font note discordante dans le paysage académique actuel surpeuplé de *groundbreaking*, *outstanding*, *fascinating*, *astounding*, *innovative*. Ne serait-ce que pour cette raison aussi, lire ou relire Ruedi Imbach est un exercice qui facilite le retour au bon sens. De surcroît, avant les modes (ou précisément: parce qu'avant les modes), il a écrit sur Christine de Pisan et Hildegard von Bingen, sur Dante et la philosophie.

Le volume *Minima moralia* reprend en italien dix articles publiés ailleurs: six sont traduits de l'allemand, les autres (originellement écrits en allemand ou en français) ont été publiés ailleurs en italien. Cinq chapitres sont entièrement dédiés à Dante, et trois autres l'analysent généreusement. On serait tenté de le considérer comme un livre sur Dante, mais une description aussi brève donnerait l'impression d'un ouvrage beaucoup moins varié qu'il ne l'est en réalité.

Dans l'introduction, Ruedi Imbach présente lui-même cinq thèmes principaux du livre, et le premier qu'il choisit de présenter est le rapport maître – élève, qui correspond au sixième chapitre du livre, le chapitre du milieu. Il faut donc comprendre que l'ensemble du livre est construit autour de ce chapitre, qui, au fond, est très personnel et rend explicitement un très bel hommage aux élèves qui se sont formés auprès de lui lors de son enseignement fribourgeois. On devine d'ailleurs des références autobiographiques dans le choix des thèmes et des auteurs commentés tout au long de ce volume. Il y a une certaine connivence – nous la connaissons aussi – entre Ruedi Imbach et les textes anciens comme s'il

pensait par les autres et comme si dans les autres il retrouvait des bribes de ses pensées ou vécus. Je me permets de citer la première note de ce sixième chapitre:

Non considero il presente capitolo come un contributo originale alla ricerca su Dante, quanto piuttosto come una riflessione dedicata al rapporto tra maestro e allievo, svolta in connessione con la lettura di alcuni testi di Dante. In questa direzione Dante dà voce ad alcuni pensieri che mi sembrano significativi. Per questo motivo i lettori più critici – tra cui, di certo, i migliori tra i miei ex studenti – considereranno queste righe solo come un accostamento di banalità dantesche o di note ovvietà. Ciò nondimeno vorrei dedicare questo contributo alle persone con le quali ho realizzato l'edizione dei cosiddetti *Scritti filosofici* di Dante: Francis Cheneval, Christoph Flüeler, Dominik Perler, Thomas Ricklin e Tiziana Suarez-Nani. L'incontro con loro mi ha fatto comprendere una verità irrinunciabile, la quale – a mio avviso – non è stata esplicitamente tematizzata né da Tommaso d'Aquino, né da Dante nei loro scritti sull'insegnamento: il principio per cui è l'allievo a insegnare al maestro. (p. 197)

Une note qui fait écho à la première phrase du même chapitre: « i rapporti dell'allievo con il maestro e del maestro con l'allievo appartengono necessariamente, o almeno così dovrebbe essere, a quei rapporti che portano gradualmente a formare l'uomo come tale » (p. 197). Une fois assimilée la dimension confessionnelle (partiellement dévoilé, partiellement caché) de l'approche exégétique, la beauté du chapitre (plutôt: des chapitres) se déploie devant nos yeux comme se déploie la beauté d'une sonate aux oreilles de ceux qui ont acquis les bases de l'éducation musicale. Maintenant, le renvoi aux versets de Matthieu 23,8-10 s'entend autrement, tout comme les citations du *De magistro* de Thomas d'Aquin qui, en commentant ces versets bibliques, s'interroge sur son propre rôle en tant que maître de l'université parisienne.

Dans la transmission et l'acquisition du savoir, le maître doit porter ou amener l'élève à la connaissance de telle sorte que la spontanéité de la découverte du savoir soit entièrement préservée (*De magistro*, q. 11, a. 1). L'expérience de la spontanéité éveillée chez l'élève doit être similaire à celui qui arrive en solitaire au savoir, le maître doit causer le savoir (*causare scientiam*) dans l'élève, donc il doit stimuler l'activité rationnelle autonome (synonyme avec 'spontanée') de celui qui apprend (p. 199). Enseigner signifie réitérer chez l'autre le geste que le maître a précédemment effectué sur soi-même, celui par lequel il se porte à la rencontre de l'objet du savoir. Le maître n'est crédible, donc efficace, que dans la mesure où il se porte lui-même spontanément et constamment vers le savoir, il ne peut répéter ce geste sur l'élève que s'il le met en pratique d'abord et davantage sur lui-même. L'enseignement comme répétition de la spontanéité est une coïncidence des opposées plus qu'une contradiction, dans la mesure où ce geste de la découverte du savoir n'a pas lieu seulement entre le maître et un

élève, mais entre le maître et tous ses élèves. Avec chaque élève, l'un après l'autre, génération après génération, le maître *doit* parcourir le même chemin de la découverte, avec la même attention accrue pour susciter dans l'autre la même tension causatrice du savoir. Le cheminement et le guide sont les éléments centraux de cette réflexion sur l'enseignement, peut-être plus que l'élève.

Le formalisme de l'enseignement médiéval reconnaît le statut de *magister* grâce aux *determinationes magistrales* (p. 213) qui sont des prises de position personnelles à la suite d'un dialogue sur arguments et autorités *pro et contra*. Tout comme dans un rite d'initiation auquel se résume l'examen venant au terme du chemin d'apprentissage, Dante est interrogé (*Paradis*, c. XXIV à XXVI) par les apôtres Pierre, Jacques et Jean. Il peut alors exprimer ce qu'il pense à la première personne du singulier (« e io; per filosofici argomenti // e per autorità che quinci scende »), notamment sur l'amour. Un raisonnement que Ruedi Imbach reconstitue sous forme de syllogisme, en insistant sur la concordance que Dante voit entre arguments et autorités philosophiques et théologiques, notamment entre l'Ancien et le Nouveau Testament puisque les uns et les autres enseignent que l'amour est le principe ultime de la réalité (p. 215), la *Métaphysique* d'Aristote, l'Exode 33.19 et le début de l'Évangile de Jean (l'Évangile de Jean fait également l'objet d'un beau chapitre). Le chemin accompli par Dante dans la *Commedia* est interprété par Ruedi Imbach comme un parcours le menant à la dignité de *magister theologiae*, et ce que l'on lit dans ces lignes du chant XXVI du *Paradis* serait précisément la clé permettant la compréhension même du chemin parcouru. Le « on lit » désigne manifestement les lecteurs de Dante, mais sont en réalité plus que des lecteurs, ce sont des élèves (« e descrive comme un insegnamento rivolto a noi, suoi discepoli », p. 216). Ruedi Imbach reconnaît au-delà du chef-d'œuvre poétique de la *Commedia* un programme didactique à travers lequel, en assumant le rôle de professeur, de maître en philosophie et en théologie, Dante enseigne sur la prééminence du bien, en exhortant ses lecteurs-disciples d'agir en vue du bien (p. 216). L'amour du bien, comme premier moteur, est ce qui nous fait agir, et ce qui constitue le fondement même de toute philosophie. C'est pour cette raison que Dante considère l'éthique, et non pas la métaphysique, comme la philosophie première (p. 203).

Dans ce contexte, les figures de Virgile et de Béatrice (magnifiquement décrite comme « la *magistra* », p. 212) comme maîtres de Dante, viennent tout naturellement à l'esprit, mais il faut aussi penser à Brunetto Latini décrit dans des beaux vers, discutés par Ruedi (p. 200-201), dans le chant XV de l'*Enfer* (v. 85-87):

m'insegnavate come l'uom s'eterna:  
 e quant' io l'abbia in grado, mentr' io vivo  
 convien che ne la mia lingua si scerna.

La gratitude (« io l'abbia in grado, mentr'io vivo ») est une conséquence du cheminement, mais aussi la séparation: « compito del maestro è far sì che l'allievo sia in grado di trovare e percorrere la propria via » (p. 213).

L'amour, le bien et la philosophie pratique sont d'ailleurs discutés dans d'autres chapitres du volume, en compagnie avec quelques autres thèmes phares: les images de la philosophie, le rapport entre Bible et philosophie et la lumière de la raison.

Les deux premiers chapitres du volume livrent les analyses des diverses expressions métaphoriques ou symboliques de la philosophie surtout au Moyen Âge, mais plusieurs références et exemples sont pris de l'Antiquité à Wittgenstein, en passant par Montaigne. Ces manières imagées de réfléchir sur le propre de la philosophie peuvent ou doivent faire l'objet de l'historien de la philosophie.

(1) La première métaphore analysée est celle de la chasse, en comptant aussi la pêche, présente tant dans le *Sophiste* et le *Phédon* de Platon que dans le *De venatione sapientiae* de Nicolas de Cues et dans les *Eroici furori* de Giordano Bruno. Elle renseigne que la philosophie est un processus à travers lequel l'intellect cherche quelque chose qui n'est pas immédiatement donné ou perceptible, il cherche un objet qui doit être poursuivi. La philosophie est une chasse de la sagesse comme dans le génitif objet dans l'expression latine *venatio sapientiae* (p. 20). La recherche est un processus à la fois long et difficile qui présuppose effort, fatigue et exige une stratégie adéquate. La méthode et le résultat sont étroitement liés. Quand la proie est finalement saisie, celui qui pratique la philosophie connaît sa satisfaction comme un mouvement de nostalgie qui est le résultat d'une exigence naturelle et qui pousse au renouvellement constant de la chasse.

(2) Les métaphores de la montagne et du miroir sont considérés ensemble, dans la mesure où le début (mais aussi le propre) de la philosophie est un retour sur soi, un retour à soi compris comme une ascension spirituelle (p. 25). Le thème de la montée ou de l'ascension est souvent utilisé pour parler de la pensée. On le trouve chez Richard de St. Victor et surtout chez Pétrarque dans une belle lettre *Des familières* qui relate l'ascension au Mont Ventoux (dans le Vaucluse). Arrivé au sommet, Pétrarque, voyant la province de Lyon à sa droite et le golfe de Marseille à sa gauche, se met à lire dans une édition de poche des *Confession* d'Augustin un remarquable passage du livre X. Augustin y oppose les hommes qui s'émerveille de la beauté du monde sans connaître la beauté de leur propre âme. Pétrarque saisit l'occasion pour montrer que le début et le propre de la philosophie est le retour sur soi. La montée du Mont Ventoux est donc une magnifique mise en scène pour introduire à la fois le passage d'Augustin et sa propre réflexion sur le but ultime de l'homme: la connaissance de soi. Le miroir est la métaphore évidente de cette même connaissance réflexive, mais l'exemple discuté par Ruedi

est loin d'être banal. Il se réfère à la huitième nouvelle de la sixième journée du *Décameron* de Boccace (p. 28–29). Le personnage de cette nouvelle, la nièce de Fresco da Celatico, une belle et jeune dame, se plaint constamment des autres, sans cesser de les critiquer. Lorsque vint le jour où, de retour de la liturgie, elle émit une fois de plus des nouvelles critiques sur les nombreuses personnes répugnantes qu'elle a vues. Et Fresco lui réplique: si les personnes répugnantes te répugnent autant, pour que tu puisses trouver la paix et vivre heureuse, ne te regarde plus dans le miroir. Ruedi Imbach ajoute alors: la réflexion critique sur soi-même n'exclut pas la bienveillance et l'ouverture amicale vers les autres, bien au contraire, elle les stimule (p. 29).

(3) La troisième métaphore est celle du navigateur, et ici Ruedi Imbach consacre des pages remarquables à l'interprétation du Chant XXVI de l'*Enfer* de Dante sur Ulysse. Ce même Ulysse de Dante est le personnage sur lequel portait l'une des dernières conférences publiques de Ruedi Imbach en tant que professeur à la Sorbonne, peu avant son retour en Suisse.

Lorsque Virgile demande à Ulysse de présenter la raison de son arrivée dans l'*Enfer*, celui-ci raconte son voyage de cinq mois au terme duquel une terre nouvelle (*nuova terra*), qui est l'île du Purgatoire, est aperçue par les marins. Ulysse n'a pas la nostalgie d'Ithaque, Pénélope et son fils ne lui manquent pas. La seule chose qui le meut est le désir de connaître (« devenir del mondo esperto »). Ruedi Imbach distingue entre la présence d'Ulysse dans l'*Enfer* et son naufrage (p. 36–37). Plusieurs interprétations possibles sont discutées, notamment Sebastian Neumeister, Bruno Nardi, Ernst Bloch et Maria Corti. Ruedi Imbach suit la lecture de Kurt Flasch et identifie les trois gestes de tromperie qui renvoient Ulysse dans le huitième cercle de l'*Enfer*: le cheval de Troie, le meurtre d'Achille et le vol de la statue de la déesse Athènes (le *Palladium*) protectrice de la ville de Troie. Cependant, le naufrage est interprété non pas comme une condamnation du désir de connaître, mais de l'absence de limite dans le savoir humain (p. 41). Le désir d'Ulysse est excessif: il veut acquérir un savoir qui va au-delà des limites de la raison naturelle, au-delà de ce qu'il est donné à l'homme de connaître.

En lisant les vers de l'*Enfer* avec des passages parallèles dans le *Convivio* et de la *Questio de aqua et terra*, Ruedi Imbach propose de voir dans Ulysse une personnification de la raison humaine, au même titre que Virgile et Siger de Brabant (dans le Chant X du *Paradis*). La réflexion de Dante sur Ulysse est aussi une réflexion sur le rapport entre théologie et philosophie: ce qui relève de l'ordre de la raison naturelle est un objet d'étude, ayant des limites et des méthodes d'analyse différentes de ce qui relève de la théologie. Dans le troisième traité du *Convivio*, Dante développe une théorie de l'auto-limitation du savoir humain, unique au Moyen Âge (p. 41–42, voir aussi p. 233–235), selon laquelle, d'une part, l'intellect humain n'est pas en mesure de connaître certains objets et, d'autre part, le désir naturel des hommes de connaître (évoqué au début de la

*Métaphysique* d'Aristote) dépend de la possibilité naturelle de connaître. Dante en conclut que, par nature, l'homme ne désire pas connaître ce que l'on ne peut pas connaître (*Convivio*, III, xv, 10). On désire naturellement connaître, comme dit Aristote, seulement ce qui est proportionné à notre intellect. Précisément, la faute d'Ulysse consiste dans ce désir dénaturé de transgresser les limites de l'homme, dès lors qu'il veut connaître ce qui, naturellement, ne nous est pas donné à connaître. Cette réflexion sur la limitation du savoir par la raison naturelle est aussi une réflexion sur le rapport entre philosophie et théologie (p. 43). La question du rapport entre théologie et philosophie fait l'objet des chapitres III et IV, que je présente plus bas.

Ruedi Imbach ajoute à cette lecture une autre dimension caractéristique du projet intellectuel de Dante: la forme la plus digne de philosophie est la philosophie pratique. En ce sens, *prima philosophia* n'est pas la métaphysique, mais l'éthique (p. 43; voir aussi p. 203). Or Ulysse est aussi damnable de ce point de vue, puisqu'il a trompé ses compagnons en les menant vers un type de savoir théorique et contemplatif au-delà des limites de la raison négligeant la dimension pratique de la vie: la prudence, le conseil juste, l'agir dans ce monde.

(4) La quatrième métaphore, celle de la chute, souligne le mieux la dimension pratique de la philosophie. En partant d'une citation de Heidegger au sujet de la célèbre chute de Thalès de Milet (racontée par Platon dans le *Théétète*), Ruedi Imbach passe en revue les interprétations données par Cicéron, Tertulien et Pierre Damien. Les divers sens révélés par ces interprétations sont autant de manières de comprendre ou de parler de la philosophie: à l'idée particulièrement répandue du philosophe incapable de regarder le côté pratique de la vie, on oppose l'idée que la philosophie ramène dans le quotidien des sujets nobles ou même que la philosophie incite à une vaine curiosité. Avec Montaigne, l'accent est mis sur la servante de Thalès qui lui enseignerait une leçon plus importante: le but du philosophe est « de regarder plustost à soy qu'au ciel » (p. 49).

Revenons à la question du rapport entre théologie et philosophie discuté plus largement dans deux des chapitres du volume. Le chapitre III traite principalement de l'influence de la Bible sur les textes philosophiques du Moyen Âge, isolant avec clarté une différence majeure entre Anselme et Thomas. En effet, pour Anselme, celui qui, d'après les paroles du Psalmiste, dit dans son cœur *Deus non est* ne peut réellement penser ces mots. Pour Thomas, en revanche, l'existence de Dieu devient disputable, pensable, elle devient donc un problème philosophique (p. 109). Ce chapitre contient également des belles pages sur l'ignorance condamnable et l'ignorance acceptable, et qui, au détour d'une brève exégèse sur la connaissance réflexive (p. 94) laisse entendre que celui qui s'ignore vit une forme d'aliénation, dans la mesure où il ne vit pas pleinement sa similitude avec Dieu qui Se connaît.

Le chapitre IV, présente trois approches différentes de la philosophie (notamment) dans les commentaires à l'Évangile de Jean par Augustin, Thomas d'Aquin et Meister Eckhart. Augustin insiste sur le fait que des pêcheurs ont pu connaître par les paroles du Christ ce que les plus doués des disciples de Platon aurait tant souhaité savoir: que « le Verbe était au commencement et que le Verbe était auprès de Dieu et que le Verbe était Dieu ». Certes, Augustin insiste sur les convergences entre la philosophie (platonicienne) et la doctrine révélée, mais il montre aussi que les philosophes ne voient cette vérité que de loin, parce qu'ils manquent d'humilité dans leur approche (p. 135–137). Thomas, quant à lui, considère que les disciplines philosophiques (*rationalis, moralis, naturalis*) sont contenues dans l'Évangile de Jean dans la mesure où chacune des trois mène d'une manière imparfaite à l'un des modes de contemplation décrits dans le texte révélé. La philosophie est donc une discipline adjacente à l'interprétation théologique du texte biblique, et les similitudes que l'on observe entre les deux (les philosophes ayant acquis un certain nombre de vérités) sont moins importantes que les différences (p. 149). Enfin, Eckhart atténue d'une manière programmatique ces différences entre théologie et raison naturelle, en montrant que l'Évangile, et même plus largement les deux Testaments, sont la quintessence de la philosophie. Deux thèses majeures sont défendues par Eckhart: le contenu de la Bible est pleinement philosophique et les philosophes sont arrivés à connaître pleinement la vérité transmise par la révélation, compris les mystères de la Trinité et l'Incarnation (p. 150–151). Dans un beau texte du *Commentaire de l'Évangile de Jean*, Eckhart énonce: « Idem ergo est quod docet Moyses, Christus et Philosophus, solum quantum ad modum differens, scilicet ut credibile, probabil sive verisimile et veritas ». Ni l'une ni l'autre de ces deux thèses n'est soutenue par Augustin ou Thomas.

Rappelons encore que Ruedi Imbach a beaucoup travaillé sur la question de l'amour, qu'il situe ici au sein de l'histoire de la philosophie, il la présente dans ces termes:

In tempi recenti, soprattutto in Francia, si è ampiamente discusso sulla misura in cui il pensiero medievale sarebbe un prodotto originale dell'Occidente latino, e su quanto invece esso dipenderebbe (o non dipenderebbe) da fonti ebraiche e arabe. La mia personale convinzione è che l'elaborazione del concetto di amore rientri tra le conquiste più originali della cultura cristiana del Medioevo (p. 180).

En rappelant le (trop fréquemment discuté) thème de l'influence de la pensée judéo-arabe sur l'Occident latin, Ruedi Imbach insiste sur le fait que l'une des réflexions les plus originales développées en terre chrétienne est celle de l'amour. Il consacre à ce sujet les chapitres V et VIII. On peut le lire successivement, et on apercevra non seulement l'importance que ce thème occupe dans le parcours intellectuel de l'auteur, mais aussi la constance avec

laquelle il revient sur les mêmes textes de Thomas d'Aquin, de Meister Eckhart, de Guillaume de Saint-Thierry, de Bernard le Clairvaux et, encore et toujours, de Dante. Ruedi Imbach distingue trois traits essentiels de la réflexion occidentale sur l'amour comme thème philosophique.

(1) En premier, ce que Guillaume de Saint Thierry développe à partir d'un syntagme utilisé par Grégoire le Grand: *amor ipse intellectus*. L'amour est une forme de connaissance; amour et raison sont toutes les deux nécessaires pour aller vers Dieu. Cet 'aller vers' doit être compris aussi au sens de la *Métaphysique* XII d'Aristote, *movet autem ut amatum*. Selon Guillaume de Saint Thierry, la raison avance vers Dieu par la négation et connaît de Dieu ce qu'Il n'est pas, alors que l'amour suit le chemin inverse et se réjouit de l'être de Dieu. L'amour et la raison ensemble donnent une connaissance complémentaire et complète de ce qu'est Dieu (p. 180–183).

(2) Le deuxième trait: l'amour est une forme de connaissance limitative. Bernard de Clairvaux, Héloïse dans ses lettres et Meister Eckhart ont souligné ce même principe: l'amoureux connaît seulement ce qu'il aime, il veut aimer afin qu'il aime. Le vrai amoureux et le vrai amour ne savent rien d'autre qu'aimer (*amans vere et verus amor nisi amare nescit*, dit Eckhart) (p. 183–187).

(3) Le troisième trait, et pour moi le plus intéressant, ramène le lecteur au thème de la connaissance réflexive qui a été déjà mentionné à propos de la métaphore de la montagne. L'amour de soi est le fondement de l'amour pour le prochain et pour Dieu. Certes, l'origine de cette thèse est la fameuse parole christique: « aime ton prochain comme toi-même » (Matthieu 22, 39). Selon Ruedi, aucun auteur de l'histoire de la pensée occidentale – et il faut entendre: aucun auteur de l'histoire de la pensée tout court, parce que la question de l'amour est propre à la pensée occidentale – n'a traité ce thème d'une manière plus pénétrante et adéquate que Thomas d'Aquin. Il est difficile de résister à la tentation de reproduire ici toute la démonstration enthousiaste de Ruedi Imbach, mais donnons-en l'essentiel: pour Thomas d'Aquin, contrairement à Augustin, *amor sui* n'est pas la racine du tout péché, mais l'unique manière de sortir de soi et d'aimer son prochain. De ce point de vue, le syntagme *debet homo magis se diligere, post Deum, quam quemcumque alium* (ST, II-II, q. 26, art. 4 / p. 190–191) est représentatif pour Thomas.

Meister Eckhart, en revanche, ne distingue plus entre l'amour de Dieu et l'amour de soi: l'amour est compris comme une forme de solidarité universelle fondé dans l'amour qu'a Dieu pour l'homme, et exprimée dans l'incarnation continue. L'amour est universel dans la mesure où il signifie suppression et effacement de ce que lui est propre, au fond de ce qui est limitatif et contraignant. L'oubli de soi est la manifestation suprême de l'amour, et c'est en s'oubliant absolument pour l'objet le plus digne d'amour, Dieu, que l'on atteint une forme d'universalisme philosophique, en dépassant même les conditions

déterminatives des étants de tout genre. « Aimer comme soi-même » est alors une formule paradoxale, parce que tout ce qui est propre au moi, tout ce qui différencie le moi de l'autre, disparaît, s'efface. Aimer (tout autre) comme soi-même est à la fois un dépassement du moi *et* de l'autre vers une union dans l'objet même de l'amour premier, qui est Dieu (p. 188-194).

Dante occupe une position singulière dans ce schéma médiéval de l'amour en raison de insistance sur la dimension éthique de l'amour. L'homme peut, par sa liberté, agir contre l'amour, non seulement contre l'amour de l'autre, mais aussi contre l'amour de Dieu. L'expression suprême de l'amour de Dieu pour l'homme consiste dans le libre agir de celui-ci. Mais l'amour est aussi, d'autre part, l'unique critère permettant de mesurer le degré de moralité dans l'agir de l'homme. Ruedi Imbach insiste sur le fait que, pour Dante, l'amour n'est pas seulement le moteur d'un dynamisme ontologique qui consiste dans le dépassement de la condition humaine dans un élan vers un être supérieur, idée que l'on peut lire aussi chez Thomas, mais aussi la clé de voute de son éthique (p. 253), et cette dernière idée ne se lit pas chez Thomas. Le projet même de la *Divina Commedia* consiste, selon Ruedi Imbach, à offrir une vision de l'homme libre, à savoir de de l'homme qui peut maîtriser son amour et peut agir librement uniquement par cet amour maîtrisé. Ruedi conclut sur le but de la *Commedia*:

Per comprendere l'uomo bisogna considerare l'ordine dell'essere e la contingenza delle storie individuali; e tuttavia ciò che innalza l'esistenza dell'uomo alla dignità è la libertà, che conferisce all'essere umano un posto unico nella realtà: l'uomo libero è il soggetto della *Commedia*, e l'uomo libero è il destinatario della *Commedia*. (p. 258)

Il est manifeste que ce livre de Ruedi Imbach parle des métaphores et de l'amour, mais il à travers ces métaphores il parle essentiellement de ce qu'est l'homme et de ce que la philosophie révèle de l'homme. Pour lui, comme pour les médiévaux, la philosophie a une incidence pratique, car elle change la vie de celui qui s'y consacre, sans être pour autant un exercice spirituel à proprement parler. Il n'est pas nécessaire, en effet, qu'elle soit pratiquée comme un exercice spirituel pour changer la vie. Elle n'est pas non plus une thérapie du succès, puisqu'elle parle de ce qui est faible dans l'homme: de son ignorance, de sa chute, de son naufrage, de sa fatigue, des limites de sa raison. Ce livre rappelle inlassablement qu'on ne peut pas échapper à ce qui est le cœur battant de la philosophie: la connaissance de soi à laquelle chacun doit se livrer. En vérité, par soi et en soi l'homme connaît plus que lui-même. Je laisse à Dante la fin de cette confession de la redécouverte, qui pourrait en être le début:

Però, se 'l mondo presente disvia,  
in voi è la cagione, in voi si cheggi;

e io te ne sarò or vera spia. » (*Purgatorio*, XVI, v. 82-84)

Donc, si le monde présent est dévoyé,

la cause est en vous-mêmes, il faut chercher en vous;

et je te montrerai à présent pourquoi (trad. J. Risset).

Dublin / Oradea,  
le 6 juillet 2020



FERNANDO JOSÉ PANCORBO, *JOSEPH PENSO DE VEGA. LA CREACIÓN DE UN PERFIL CULTURAL Y LITERARIO ENTRE ÁMSTERDAM Y LIVORNO*, LEO S. OLSCHKI, FIRENZE 2019 (STORIA DELL'EBRAISMO IN ITALIA. STUDI E TESTI, 31), PP. XII + 198, ISBN 9788822266651.

SANDRINE ELMALEH  
UNIVERSITÉ LIBRE DE BRUXELLES



Aborder l'ensemble de l'œuvre de Joseph Penso de la Vega (1650–1692), écrivain et négociant international sépharade du Siècle d'Or amstellodamois, est une gageure à plus d'un titre. L'éclectisme de son œuvre – des poèmes religieux, des panégyriques à la gloire de souverains favorables à ses coreligionnaires, un fameux traité de bourse, des ouvrages de littérature érudite – ainsi que la diversité des influences des milieux et des pays dans lesquels il a évolué, ont certainement constitué des obstacles majeurs pour parvenir à dégager un portrait cohérent de l'homme et de son œuvre. Si l'on ajoute à cela des sources éparpillées sur plusieurs continents, on comprend l'ampleur d'une tâche que nul ne s'était aventuré à entreprendre.

C'est cette gageure que José Fernando Pancorbo a acceptée dans son ouvrage *Joseph Penso de la Vega. La creación de un perfil cultural y literario entre Amsterdam y Livorno*. Sa recherche met en lumière l'œuvre de Penso dans les contextes historiques, philologiques, académiques et culturels des pérégrinations de sa famille à travers l'Europe de la fin de Renaissance. Par une analyse intertextuelle d'une finesse et d'une rigueur remarquables, il démontre l'influence de ces contextes dans chaque strate de son œuvre littéraire. Avec cette analyse, il met au jour de nombreuses données inédites sur ces influences littéraires. Son apport le plus novateur est sans doute la mise en lumière de l'influence des auteurs vénitiens de *l'Accademia degli Incogniti*, qui lui permet de dresser un profil littéraire dépassant le cadre baroque espagnol auquel il avait été assigné.

Sa démonstration éclaire non seulement la cohérence littéraire du seul ouvrage de Penso retenu par la postérité, *Confusión de confusiones*, que l'absence d'étude littéraire approfondie avait relégué au rang de curiosité – tout de même reconnu comme le premier du genre, à telle enseigne que la *Federation of European Securities Exchange* attribue chaque année un prix qui porte son nom. Elle éclaire l'ensemble de son œuvre littéraire.

Ainsi, le mérite de son ouvrage va au-delà de la tâche déjà difficile de rendre à Penso la cohérence de son parcours littéraire en l'inscrivant dans son chemin de vie et de négoce, entre Sud et Nord de l'Europe. A travers un portrait en quatre parties de Penso, Pancorbo offre une ouverture à une compréhension plus fine de l'esprit si particulier de la 'Nation'.

C'est sous la forme d'une symphonie que Pancorbo déploie les quatre mouvements de la vie de Penso dans la première des quatre parties de son ouvrage. Dans le premier mouvement, Pancorbo s'intéresse au parcours familial de Penso, et retrace la chronologie des migrations familiales. Si Pancorbo s'appuie sur les travaux réalisés par Charles Mackay (1852) et M. F. J. Smith (1939) pour établir les lieux de naissance de Joseph Penso et de son père, il mène une enquête dressant un tableau exhaustif de toutes les recherches qui ont alimenté la controverse sur ces sujets, tout en déployant les fruits inédits de ses propres recherches pour étayer ses thèses. Ainsi, cette vaste et rigoureuse enquête offre à ses confrères un panorama inestimable de sources et de ressources, et aux lecteurs profanes une compréhension impressionniste, à travers l'histoire singulière de la famille de Penso, de celle de nombreux conversos. Pancorbo déplie les différentes étapes qui les ont conduits de la péninsule ibérique, où leur statut de nouveaux chrétiens ne les protégeait plus des affres de l'inquisition, vers les terres de liberté, ces 'cités juives' qu'étaient Hambourg, Anvers, Middelburg, Amsterdam et Livourne, avant un retour à Amsterdam, où les Penso et leurs compagnons d'infortune renouaient avec leur religion d'origine. Avec ce tableau, Pancorbo éclaire l'un des défis auquel étaient confrontés ces nouveaux chrétiens devenus nouveaux juifs, celui de surmonter la fragilité de leur éducation juive, mise à mal par deux siècles de persécutions et d'autodafés, ces actes de foi qui ont réduit en cendres un pan entier de leur patrimoine culturel et intellectuel. Pancorbo mène dans son deuxième mouvement, une riche enquête sur le nouveau système d'éducation, mis en place par le rabbin vénitien Saul Levi Morteira et dont Penso fut l'un des premiers à bénéficier. Pancorbo souligne l'impératif catégorique de pourvoir à l'éducation des enfants comme « unos de los pilares fundamentales de la tradición judía » (p.18). Cet enseignement, loin de se limiter aux études juives, comprenait également une formation complète aux sept arts libéraux de la *Schola Latina*. Pancorbo voit dans la première œuvre de jeunesse écrite par Penso, *Asîré ha-Tikwâ* (*Les prisonniers de l'espérance*, 1673), allégorie théâtrale écrite en hébreu, une première expression du tissage de genres et d'influences. C'est là une première prémisse importante de la réflexion de Pancorbo. Il établit en effet l'entrelacs des enseignements et des savoirs du monde juif avec ceux du monde chrétien, et plus particulièrement avec la littérature baroque du Siècle d'Or espagnol, au service de la création d'une élite, à laquelle Penso était destiné, ouverte sur le monde, et non repliée sur elle-même.

Pancorbo confirme cette ouverture dans le troisième mouvement marqué par l'arrivée de Penso à Livourne. Il mène tout d'abord une enquête approfondie sur sa vie familiale et ses charges communautaires. Cette enquête est nourrie de documents inédits, dont l'auteur propose des reproductions, et qui contribue au plaisir de ses lecteurs. Il commence aussi à dresser un portrait plus complexe de Joseph Penso, entre activité mercantile et activité littéraire, notamment au sein de l'*Academia de los Sitibundos*. C'est dans ce cadre que Pancorbo situe la découverte par Penso des œuvres des membres de l'*Accademia degli Incogniti*, et plus particulièrement celle de son fondateur, Gian Francesco Loredano.

C'est là l'une des prémisses les plus profondes et les plus novatrices de la réflexion de Pancorbo. En identifiant et en analysant de nombreuses sources oubliées ou ignorées, il reconstitue les étapes qui ont amené Penso à maîtriser la langue d'auteurs dont l'influence a induit un tournant dans son œuvre.

C'est aussi l'expression de cette influence, notamment italienne, au moment du retour à Amsterdam, que Pancorbo souligne dans le dernier mouvement de la vie de Penso. Pancorbo consacre sa deuxième partie à la constitution des Académies littéraires juives, l'*Academia de los Sitibundos*, dans la diaspora amstellodamoise à Livourne, et celle des *Floridos* à Amsterdam. Il apporte des données nouvelles sur celle, moins connue, qui a précédé cette dernière, l'*Academia del Temor Divino*. Il établit le rôle remarquable de Penso et de son ami, le célèbre écrivain Miguel de Barrios, au sein de ces académies, dans la création d'un profil littéraire international alimenté par les liens qu'il tisse avec les cercles juifs et chrétiens, au-delà du cadre ibérique. On comprend combien ces liens littéraires sont intimement liés aux liens commerciaux internationaux engagés par la Nation, dans l'ancien et le nouveau monde.

Il démontre avec force documents la volonté de situer ces académies à un niveau littéraire qui dépasse largement, sans l'exclure, le cadre religieux, et à les faire reconnaître auprès d'autorités politiques de premier plan et bénéficier ainsi de leur protection.

Ce qui émane en filigranes du portrait qu'il dresse de ces académies ouvertes sur le monde littéraire et intellectuel, est leur contribution à la constitution de ce qu'il nomme l'exception des Provinces Unies, comme remarquable nœud d'échanges commerciaux et de transfert de connaissances, en cette fin de Renaissance.

Les académies apparaissent ainsi comme la quintessence de cet esprit international et Penso comme la remarquable intelligence qui en a été le moteur, défaisant ainsi le préjugé tenace d'une culture imperméable aux différentes strates qui pourtant la constituent.

Ouvert sur le monde littéraire chrétien, Penso n'en était pas moins intensément lié à l'académisme talmudique et à son art dialectique et philosophique que tentait de restituer le milieu de conversos revenus à leur

religion d'origine. Dans la troisième partie, Pancorbo analyse les fondements des exercices théoriques promus par les académies, fondés tout autant sur la logique talmudique et les textes sacrés que sur la rhétorique d'auteurs antiques grecs, latins ou chrétiens. Il met en lumière la complexité des influences chez ces marranes, assimilés à des degrés divers, et dont il dénoue un à un tous les fils. Il montre comment leur transmission s'est enrichie et transformée au contact d'œuvres dont l'origine géographique dépasse celle des pays dont ils ont été chassés ou des pays dans lesquels ils se sont établis. Il en donne pour preuve la variété des ouvrages et de leurs langues dans les bibliothèques sépharades, dans une longue et passionnante note (p. 79) qui aurait peut-être mérité d'être intégrée dans le fil du récit, tout comme nombre d'autres notes tout aussi profitables à son argumentation. Pancorbo explique comment chaque strate d'influence est destinée à un usage bien particulier, dans chacune des œuvres de Penso, dont il propose une classification selon deux genres de publics. Sa signature, de son nom juif ou de son nom chrétien, pratique qu'il partageait avec son ami Barrios, indiquait celui auquel elles étaient destinées, religieux ou profane, érudit dans tous les cas. Il éclaire ainsi l'éclectisme de Penso et de son milieu, tout autant nourri d'académisme talmudique que de littérature baroque espagnole et italienne.

Pancorbo met en œuvre dans sa quatrième et dernière partie les fruits des analyses des chapitres précédents dans une analyse intertextuelle rigoureuse de ses œuvres les plus emblématiques et réussit une démonstration magistrale de leur complexité.

Il souligne la nouveauté introduite par Penso dans sa première œuvre d'importance, *Asîré ha-Tikwâ*, œuvre morale à destination de sa communauté mais usant d'un style ludique plus accessible à un jeune public. Pancorbo déploie les arguments qui lui permettent de la formuler comme la première adaptation sépharade d'un auto sacramental chrétien, inspirée de Lope de Vega et de Calderón de la Barca.

Il enrichit considérablement les recherches sur les influences de *Rumbos peligrosos*, recueil de nouvelles que Penso écrivit à Livourne et publia à son retour à Amsterdam, en apportant des données nouvelles sur des influences déjà connues – son analyse comparée de la dédicace de Penso à celle de Cervantes dans son *Quijote* est éblouissante – et en démontrant les influences, ignorées jusqu'alors, d'autres auteurs du baroque espagnol et surtout du Seicento vénitien. Sa démonstration trouve son expression la plus accomplie dans l'analyse de l'œuvre la plus connue de Penso, *Confusión de confusiones*.

Les chapitres précédents dessinent ainsi les prémisses qui permettent à Pancorbo de faire surgir la cohérence d'un puzzle demeuré largement énigmatique avant son entreprise. En plongeant dans les œuvres principales de Penso, il donne à voir que les lignes inspirées par les grands auteurs baroques du Siècle d'Or

espagnol poursuivaient des fins différentes de celles inspirées des auteurs du Seicento vénitien. Il dégage les autres lignes d'inspiration qui s'y mêlent et il en déploie les sources, les théories et leurs modes d'expression, avec une analyse particulièrement fine des différents genres dialogiques dont Penso faisait usage.

Le 'Penso' de Pancorbo est un ouvrage qui fera date pour le panorama historique, culturel, littéraire, philologique exceptionnel qu'il explore et auquel il donne vie, et qui constituera sans nul doute une source inépuisable pour ses confrères et pour les traducteurs qui s'aventureront au défrichage d'un patrimoine qui reste à explorer.

Dans cet ouvrage riche et érudit, on aurait peut-être aimé comprendre la réception par Penso, et sa perception, de trois événements intellectuels majeurs qui agitèrent sa communauté, si toutefois de telles sources le permettent: l'éclosion philosophique de Spinoza, l'hérésie sabbataïste et la traduction du *Kuzari* de Juda Hallévi, ouvrage emblématique de la littérature juive médiévale.

On peut comprendre l'évocation elliptique à Spinoza, par la mise au ban de ce dernier. Aîné de Penso dans la communauté amstellodamoise, Spinoza est élève comme lui de Saul Levi Morteira. Morteira a fait partie du conseil qui vota son *Herem*, sa mise au ban de la communauté, quand Penso n'était encore qu'un enfant. Si ce *Herem* n'impliquait pas une exclusion du judaïsme, et en ce sens se distingue de l'excommunication chrétienne, qui exclut de l'Église, entendue comme *Corpus Christi*, il impliquait en effet l'interdiction de tout contact avec Spinoza et ses écrits, non encore publiés au moment de la décision de son *Herem*. La seule mention directe de Pancorbo à Spinoza est en page 86, quand il présente Morteira comme figure de la lutte contre les hétérodoxies, et la philosophie de Spinoza comme l'une d'entre elles. Il me semble utile de préciser quelques points généraux avant d'aborder les points doctrinaux qui furent, semble-t-il, les piliers du *Herem* à son encontre. Ils ne manquent pas d'étonner, et de ce fait me semblent justifier l'intérêt de connaître la pensée du membre intellectuel si éminent de cette communauté auquel Pancorbo a dédié son ouvrage.

Morteira est le fondateur du *Keter Torah*, La couronne de la Loi, école fréquentée par Penso et Spinoza. Pancorbo nous apprend que ses connaissances théologiques « de la ley y la tradición judía, de la patrística y de filosofía clásica y escolástica », couvraient aussi bien des disciplines juives, profanes et chrétiennes. La loi renvoie en effet à l'ensemble des livres de la bible hébraïque, et la tradition à la somme monumentale d'interprétations compilées dans le Talmud. En revanche la patristique et la scolastique sont propres au christianisme. En effet, si le judaïsme a bien ses patriarches, les prophètes bibliques, Abraham, Isaac et Jacob sont difficilement comparables aux *Auctoritates Patrum* qui fixèrent les doctrines de l'Église à partir de leur lecture des Évangiles et de la Bible, et représentent le sommet d'une hiérarchie inexistante dans le judaïsme. Morteira, comme son élève Spinoza, est l'héritier des Lumières juives et musulmanes qui brillèrent à partir de

l'Andalousie vers les diasporas, durant le Moyen-Age occidental. Les Lumières juives sont-elles mêmes une émanation de l'art ancestral talmudique de la discussion philosophique, fondé sur la controverse comme moyen dialectique d'affuter ou de réfuter des arguments, qui ne vise pas à atteindre une vérité unique qui condamnerait l'adversaire à l'opprobre de la contradiction et de la fausseté. Cette méthode et son arsenal d'instruments logiques complexes<sup>1</sup> est plus proche en cela de la méthode scientifique dégagée quelques siècles plus tard par Karl Popper que de la méthode dialectique fondée sur des prémisses fixées par des autorités. Un adage talmudique résume bien cet état d'esprit : « Les paroles des uns et des autres sont paroles du Dieu vivant ».<sup>2</sup> Dans la tradition talmudique, la lecture littérale sans herméneutique est considérée au mieux comme une superstition naïve, au pire comme menant à de graves confusions, telles que l'idolâtrie, la multiplicité du divin ou son anthropomorphisme,<sup>3</sup> dans une religion où l'interprétation a jeu égal avec le texte. Maïmonide reprend dans son *Guide*, un principe qu'il a déjà explicité dans l'introduction de son *Mishneh Torah* selon lequel les préceptes donnés à Moïse au Sinaï ont été donnés avec leur interprétation, selon le verset *Exode* 24:12: « Je vous donnerai les tables de pierre avec l'enseignement et le commandement ». La *Torah orale*, comprise comme recherche sur la *Torah*, qui signifie 'celle qui enseigne', ou 'le guide', lui donne forme et vie, de la même façon que les voyelles donnent forme et vie au texte biblique hébraïque, comme Spinoza l'exprime de façon imagée, dans son *Abrégé de grammaire hébraïque*, et son exemple du flûtiste, qui par la position de ses doigts sur la flûte, produit un son. Le grand-oncle de Spinoza, Abraham Espinosa de Nantes, faisait partie du groupe qui soutint la candidature de Morteira, adepte comme lui de la philosophie de Maïmonide, au poste de rabbin de la communauté sépharade d'Amsterdam, contre d'autres candidats moins ouverts à la philosophie. Le Talmud se fait l'écho de toutes les positions, parfois opposées, à la condition qu'elles défendent rationnellement leurs arguments dans un discours respectant des

---

<sup>1</sup> Cf. MOÏSE MAÏMONIDE, *Terminologie Logique*, ed. MOÏSE VENTURA, Vrin, Paris 1935–1982. Les commentaires et la traduction à partir des manuscrits arabes et hébreux que joint Moïse Ventura à son édition, sont lumineux à cet égard.

<sup>2</sup> Cet adage trouve son origine dans *Le Talmud de Babylone*, Sefer Mo'èd, Traité Eruvin, chapitre I, 13b. Pour la version anglaise en ligne voir *The Babylonian Talmud*, trans. MICHAEL L. RODKINSON, 1918, Book 2, volume III, Tract Erubin, ch. 1, p. 28, cf. <<https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/source/Judaism/FullTalmud.pdf>>.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. MOÏSE MAÏMONIDE, *Le Guide des égarés*, pt. I, ch. 35, ed. SALOMON MUNK, Verdier, Lagrasse 2012, p. 171: « De même qu'il faut enseigner aux enfants et publier dans les masses que Dieu est 'un' et qu'il ne faut point adorer d'autre que lui, de même il faut qu'ils apprennent par tradition, que Dieu n'est point un corps, qu'il n'y a nulle ressemblance, dans aucune chose, entre lui et ses créatures, que son existence ne ressemble pas à la leur, que sa vie ne ressemble pas à celle des créatures douées de vie, ni sa science à celle des créatures douées de sciences, et que la différence entre lui et elles ne consiste pas seulement dans le plus et le moins, mais plutôt dans le genre d'existence ».

règles de logique rigoureuses, excluant les arcanes de la sophistique. Les membres de la communauté amstellodamoise étaient, de fait, loin de former un groupe homogène, et des sceptiques côtoyaient des kabbalistes, des rationalistes ou des averroïstes. Dès lors, fixer une doxa sur dieu, l'immortalité de l'âme ou la sacralité des mots, relève du non-sens. Si les motifs du *Herem* qui frappa Spinoza demeurent pour une large part hypothétiques, car ils n'ont pas été formulés dans le document officialisant sa mise au ban de la communauté, les hypothèses les plus courantes évoquent une 'déviance' de Spinoza sur ces trois sujets. Il n'a encore rien publié au moment de son *Herem*, mais une simple revue de la proposition vingt-trois de la Cinquième Partie de son *Ethique, De la Liberté humaine*, permet de disqualifier l'accusation relative à la non immortalité de l'âme.<sup>4</sup> Sa conception d'un *Deus sive Natura*, premier principe intelligible, intelligent intellectuel n'apparaît pas aussi scandaleusement différente de celle énoncée quelques siècles plus tôt par Maïmonide,<sup>5</sup> pas plus que sa conception de la non sacralité des mots.<sup>6</sup> Or les 'opinions' de Maïmonide, pour reprendre sa terminologie, ne lui ont valu aucun *Herem* dans la communauté amstellodamoise, et s'il n'est pas une Autorité dans une religion qui n'en compte pas, ses écrits font autorité. Ces considérations semblent ainsi renforcer les thèses de plusieurs érudits évoquées succinctement par Pancorbo dans sa note 21 de la page 86, d'une mise au ban consentie par Spinoza – qui aurait pu accepter, comme son ami Juan de Prado de faire amende honorable comme cela lui avait été proposé – pour préserver sa communauté d'une condamnation des autorités politiques d'Amsterdam qui l'accueillaient, dans un climat de tolérance toute relative.

On peut ainsi imaginer que cette communauté n'échappait pas aux débats qui agitaient les sociétés chrétiennes, en cette période charnière entre fin de Renaissance et début de modernité qui annonçait les lumières philosophiques. Ces débats devaient revêtir une acuité accrue dans la société d'anciens conversos, soucieuse de préserver une acceptation fraîche, qu'elle savait fragile. Toutefois, un éclairage sur la réception par Penso de la pensée de Spinoza, héritier comme lui d'une longue chaîne de pensée sépharade, et sur sa position sur les motifs intellectuels qui ont pu servir de justification à son *Herem*, serait la bienvenue,

---

<sup>4</sup> BARUCH SPINOZA, *Ethique*, pt. V, *De la liberté humaine*, prop. 23, ed. ROBERT MISRAHI, Éditions de l'Éclat, Paris-Tel-Aviv 2005, p. 384: « L'Esprit humain ne peut être absolument détruit avec le Corps, mais il en subsiste quelque chose qui est éternel ».

<sup>5</sup> MAÏMONIDE, *Le Guide des égarés*, pt. I, ch. 68, p. 322: « Dieu est à l'univers ce qu'est la forme à la chose qui a forme et qui par-là est ce qu'elle est, la forme constituant son véritable être. Tu connais cette célèbre proposition que les philosophes ont énoncé à l'égard de Dieu, savoir qu'il est l'intellect, l'intelligent et l'intelligible, et que ces trois choses en Dieu ne font qu'une seule et même chose dans laquelle il n'y a pas de multiplicité ».

<sup>6</sup> MAÏMONIDE, *Le Guide des égarés*, pt. II, ch. 30, p. 697: « Ce qui mérite encore de fixer ton attention, c'est le passage: 'Et l'homme imposa des noms' (Gen. 2:20), qui nous apprend que les langues sont conventionnelles et non pas naturelles, comme on l'a cru ».

peut-être dans un ouvrage à venir, et permettrait de contribuer à clarifier de nombreux points toujours incertains, malgré l'abondante littérature sur ce sujet.

Le deuxième événement marquant pour lequel on aurait aimé connaître la position de Penso, est l'irruption en 1665 du mouvement sabbatien, qui suscita un engouement particulièrement vif de la part de membres éminents de sa communauté, et qui affecta profondément son ami Miguel de Barrios. Sabbataï Tzevi, un ascète de la communauté de Smyrne, dont Gershom Scholem a établi la fragilité de la santé mentale, se proclama messie, et Nathan de Gaza son prophète, et annonça que son règne débiterait en 1666.<sup>7</sup> Arrêté en février 1666 à son arrivée à Constantinople par le grand Vizir, il préféra la conversion à la mort. L'éducation de Sabbataï Tzevi est le fruit d'un curieux mélange. Formé au judaïsme sépharade, il a partagé la fascination de nombreux marranes pour la nouvelle école kabbaliste de Safed et son chef de file Isaac Louria. Il a également rallié les thèses du millénarisme anglais qui annonçait 1666 comme l'année apocalyptique. Scholem voit ce « formidable mouvement religieux qui se répandit comme une trainée de poudre dans toute la Diaspora », comme l'aboutissement démesuré d'un engrenage mystique, initié par l'émergence de la kabbale lourianique.

Sholem explique l'adhésion de nombreux conversos à cette doctrine par le réconfort magique qu'elle leur permettait d'espérer après le traumatisme engendré par les exactions à l'origine de l'exode ibérique, et le ralliement à Tzevi, comme l'incarnation de cette espérance salvatrice et rédemptrice. Barrios fut gravement affecté par l'effondrement de cette hérésie après la conversion de son proclamé messie. Il est curieux de constater que Barrios ne fut pas frappé de la même opprobre que Spinoza pour l'adhésion à une doctrine pourtant bien plus problématique que celle qui lui était reprochée, pas plus qu'Isaac Aboab da Fonseca, qui dirigea la procédure de *Herem* contre Spinoza, et qui partagea cet engouement. Si Pancorbo met en évidence, dans son *Liber Tertius*, p. 99-100, l'usage plus discursif que doctrinal des références kabbalistiques de Penso dans certains de ses discours et panégyriques, on aurait peut-être aimé connaître sa réflexion sur les idées défendues par Louria et sur le mouvement sabbatien.

Enfin, le troisième point pour lequel une revue de la position de Penso aurait été la bienvenue concerne un événement moins retentissant mais néanmoins important: la traduction du *Kuzari*, *Apologie de la religion méprisée*, œuvre maîtresse de Juda Hallévi (1075–1141), auteur éminent du judaïsme médiéval. Son *Kuzari* fut traduit pour la première fois en espagnol en 1663 à Amsterdam par Jacob Abendana. Dès 1594, à Venise, Juda Moscato, dont les traités étaient familiers à Penso, comme le souligne Pancorbo, avait proposé un commentaire en hébreu de

---

<sup>7</sup> GERSHOM SCHOLEM, *Les grands courants de la mystique juive*, trans. MARIE-MADELEINE DAVY, Editions Payot & Rivages, Paris 2014 (Petit Bibliothèque Payot), ch. 8, *Sabbatianisme et hérésie mystique*, p. 419–470.

ce classique de la littérature apologétique juive.<sup>8</sup> *Le Kuzari*, qui instaure un dialogue entre le roi des Khazars et un philosophe, un théologien chrétien et un théologien musulman avant de faire appel à un rabbin et de décider de rallier son peuple au judaïsme, n'est pas sans rappeler un genre familier à Penso.

Cependant, en s'appuyant sur la littérature de ses prédécesseurs qui chacun affirme l'une au l'autre influence de style chez Penso, Pancorbo, loin de les rejeter, fait vivre toutes ces influences avec celles, inédites, qu'il a mises au jour, et leur assigne un ordre et une place. Il déroule ainsi ce qu'on pourrait nommer une *écologie de pratiques* de styles, pour emprunter en l'adaptant le concept forgé par Isabelle Stengers. *In fine*, c'est une invitation à une réflexion sur l'identité comme ouverture et porosité qui émane de l'ouvrage de Pancorbo. Penso, compris comme personnage de son récit, n'est plus une entité distincte de ses expériences et de ses œuvres mais partage une identité dynamique propre à celles-ci. En se penchant sur les parcours de vie, d'actions et d'œuvres, de Penso l'écrivain marrane, Pancorbo restitue la transmission, pilier de son éducation sépharade, en la tissant avec les fils des autres traditions qui constituent les milieux au sein desquels il évolue, et met à mal toute illusion d'une quelconque pureté d'identité à laquelle d'aucuns seraient tentés de réduire sa personnalité. Ce faisant, il fait surgir le génie propre de Penso dans la transformation qu'il opère à partir d'une réception littéraire, académique et culturelle, en une transmission originale. Tisser les fils d'une vie, ses nécessités et ses événements, et les filer avec les fibres « d'une œuvre littéraire extravagante », selon l'expression, reprise par Pancorbo à Hermann Kellebenz pour en faire émerger une étoffe cohérente qui donne vie à sa texture et son motif, était un défi qu'aucun auteur n'avait osé relever avant Pancorbo. Il l'a relevé avec brio.

---

<sup>8</sup> JUDA HALLEVI, *Le Kuzari, Apologie de la religion méprisée*, ed. CHARLES TOUATI, Verdier, Paris, 1994, p. XII.



MICHEL SCOT, *LIBER PARTICULARIS*, *LIBER PHYSONOMIE*, ED. OLEG VOSKOBOYNIKOV, SISMEL-EDIZIONI DEL GALLUZZO, FIRENZE 2019 (MICROLOGUS LIBRARY, 93), PP. VIII + 416, ISBN 9788884509062.

LISA DEVRIESE  
KU LEUVEN



« Scientia cuius est preciosa et multum tenenda in secreto, pro eo quod est magne efficacie, continens secreta artis nature que sufficiunt omni astrologo » (p. 271, *prohemium libri physonomie*). With the volume under review, which presents the critical edition of Michael Scot's *Liber particularis* and *Liber physonomie*, respectively the second and the third book of his *Liber introductorius*, the editor Oleg Voskoboynikov went to great lengths to let the modern reader into the secrets of nature. He started working on this edition almost twenty years ago, and contributes with this volume to a new understanding of Michael Scot's original works. The lengthy edition of 322 pages is preceded by an instructive introduction, which firstly discusses the author Michael Scot, secondly the *Liber introductorius*, and finally the edition and the manuscript tradition.

In the first part of the introduction, the editor reconstructs the career of Michael Scot, both as a translator of Arabic texts and as an author of original treatises. On the life and figure of Scot, several conflicting rumours and doubtful and false facts were already circulating during his lifetime. Due to the lack of objective knowledge on this complex person, the editor recreates and reconstructs Scot's life by chronologically discussing his works. Through the paragraphs discussing Scot's methods of translating Arabic texts into Latin, his intended public, his style and characteristic features, the editor creates a vivid image of Michael Scot's goals, interests, and preferences (we learn, among other things, that Scot is not interested in arithmetic and geometry, that he omits references to the Koran in his translations, and that he shortens calculations because he doesn't understand them or does not consider them interesting, see p. 12). Not only his literary output is discussed; by connecting him with the court of Frederick II, with the Curia, and with other contemporary scholars, the editor positions Michael Scot within the intellectual and religious milieu of the late twelfth and the first half of the thirteenth century. The clearly written introduction is accompanied by ample references to further literature, which makes it an accessible introduction to Michael Scot's life and works.

The second part of the introduction focuses on the doctrinal and literary aspect of the *Liber introductorius*, a work which – according to the colophon – is intended as an introduction to astronomy. It consists of three books: the *Liber quattuor distinctionum*, the *Liber particularis*, and the *Liber physonomie*, but due to its large volume the three books never circulated together in one manuscript. The date of the work is unclear, but the intertextual references in the three books indicate that it was meant as one homogeneous project. The editor of the present volume, in which book two and three are edited, is not interested in a textual study concerning content, but places the collection of the three books against its background, the environment in which it originated, its intentions and its role towards the emperor Frederick II, to whom the work is dedicated. Even though the editor states on the first page of the introduction that it is not his intention to offer a comprehensive study on Scot or an analysis of the doctrinal content of the work (p. 5), the volume could have profited from a summary of the central ideas of books two and three, as well as some clues on its reception history, its originality, and its importance in the tradition of astronomical and physiognomical works. This second part of the introduction gives insight into the author of the work, but not so much on the work itself.

The manuscripts are discussed in the third chapter of the introduction, which shows that the tradition of the *Liber introductorius* is very complex. Two versions, with many interpolations, of the text circulate, and it is uncertain whether a finished version of the text even existed. The many interpolations in the first book, together with its size, seem to be the implicit reasons why only book two and three are edited in this volume. In addition, the editor has opted to edit an approximation to the original text, rather than to make a codicological stemma of all the manuscripts and search for the archetype (p. 53). However, what exactly this approximation entails and how it was established, is not specified.

The presentation of the manuscripts in a continuous text makes it a bit unclear to grasp which manuscripts contain which books and which particular version of that book. A schematic representation could have been useful. Three different categories of manuscripts are mentioned: (a) two manuscripts that contain the short version of book 1 and the short version of book 2; (b) four manuscripts that contain the long version of book 2 and book 3, that are of Italian origin and present a homogeneous text; and (c) three manuscripts that contain book 2 and 3, but are of a later date. Here, a small inaccuracy crept into the text: there are only three manuscripts mentioned, while the editor wrote four (p. 54: « il y a enfin quatre autres manuscrits plus tardifs »). Moreover, it is unclear whether they transmit the long or the short version of book 2. The manuscripts containing book 1 are not mentioned, since they have no value for the present edition.

The editor declares that he edits « la version qui circula en Italie du Nord après 1300 » (p. 56), as a result of which he follows the four manuscripts with the Italian

origin (our category 'b'). However, it is unclear why the three later manuscripts (our category 'c') are not taken into account. They may contain a qualitatively better text and could be a copy of an Italian manuscript (all the more because of the absence of manuscripts made in France and elsewhere, cf. p. 53), and they cannot be excluded based on their date alone. However, no additional information on these three manuscripts is given.

Concerning the third book, the *Liber physonomie*, it is stated that « le troisième livre se retrouve tout seul pour la première fois seulement dans l'incunable vénitien de 1477, dans un état assez corrompu » (p. 39). However, it is possible that this statement be not entirely correct. Johannes Thomann, who studied Michele Savonarola's physiognomic treatise *Speculum physionomie* (1442), listed in his book physiognomic treatises written before the year 1500.<sup>1</sup> Besides the ones mentioned by Voskoboynikov, Thomann mentions three more manuscripts containing Michael Scot's *Liber physonomie*, that are not discussed in the present volume and that are possibly as old as, or even older than, the incunable. The first manuscript is Città del Vaticano, BAV, Reg. Lat. 1151, fols. 1r–22v, which dates from the fifteenth century.<sup>2</sup> The second manuscript is Paris, BnF, lat. 3660A, fols. 154r–189v. Although the manuscript is not yet digitized, the website of the Bibliothèque nationale de France mentions the incipit and explicit of the (incomplete) work: « Imperator, inter caetera circa quae te oportet [...] » – « [...] et per consequens gravior efficitur. Et in hoc est finis libri secretorum mulierum ». According to the same website, the manuscript dates from the fifteenth and sixteenth century, and it actually consists of twelve manuscripts or fragments of manuscripts of Italian origin bound together.<sup>3</sup> The third additional manuscript mentioned by Thomann is from the seventeenth century (Padova, Bibl. Antoniana, 616 Scaff. XXIII, fols. 51v–116r).<sup>4</sup> These manuscripts were probably unknown to the editor.

Despite these few critical remarks, this first critical edition of Michael Scot's *Liber particularis* and *Liber physonomie*, preceded by a rich introduction, is a very important contribution to the field of medieval natural philosophy. As for the *Liber physonomie*, it is considered as the first original contribution to the discipline of physiognomy in the Middle Ages. It is not a compilation of older sources, but an original text with a wide variety of sources, taken from anatomy, zoology, astrology, ethics, etc. With his encyclopaedic project on the philosophy of nature,

---

<sup>1</sup> JOHANNES THOMANN, *Studien zum 'Speculum physionomie' des Michele Savonarola*, Copy Quick, Zürich 1997.

<sup>2</sup> To be consulted online at: <[https://digi.vatlib.it/view/MSS\\_Reg.lat.1151](https://digi.vatlib.it/view/MSS_Reg.lat.1151)>. Last accessed on August 20th, 2020.

<sup>3</sup> <<https://archivesetmanuscrits.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/cc616104>>. Last accessed on August 20th, 2020.

<sup>4</sup> LUIGI MARIA MINICOTTI, *Catalogo dei codici manoscritti esistenti nella Biblioteca di Sant'Antonio di Padova*, Tipi della Minerva, Padova 1842, p. 153.

Michael Scot was situating physiognomy as a natural philosophical science.<sup>5</sup> To be finally able to consult and study this text in a modern critical edition is a major achievement, which will stimulate and facilitate research on Michael Scot, medieval astronomy, and physiognomy.

---

<sup>5</sup> DANIELLE JACQUART, « La Physiognomonie à l'époque de Frédéric II: Le traité de Michael Scot », *Micrologus*, 2 (1994) (= *Le scienze alla corte di Federico II / Sciences at the Court of Frederick II*), p. 19–37; JOLE AGRIMI, 'Ingeniosa scientia nature'. *Studi sulla fisiognomica medievale*, SISMEL-Edizioni del Galluzzo Firenze 2002 (*Millennio Medievale*, 36), p. 23–29, 101–106. JOSEPH ZIEGLER, « The Beginning of Medieval Physiognomy. The Case of Michael Scotus », in GUNDULA GREBNER, JOHANNES FRIED (eds.), *Kulturtransfer und Hofgesellschaft im Mittelalter: Wissenskultur am sizilianischen und kastilianischen Hof im 13. Jahrhundert*, de Gruyter, Berlin 2008, p. 299–319.

CORPUS DEI PAPIRI FILOSOFICI GRECI E LATINI (CPF). TESTI E LESSICO NEI PAPIRI DI CULTURA GRECA E LATINA, PT. II: FRAMMENTI ADESPOTI E SENTENZE, VOL. 1\*: FRAMMENTI ADESPOTI, LEO S. OLSCHKI, FIRENZE 2019, PP. XXX + 268, ISBN: 9788822266897.

ANGELA ULACCO  
UNIVERSITY OF FRIBOURG



This volume is part of a major, ongoing international project, whose goal is to publish in a single corpus all of the papyrus texts relating to philosophy, along with a translation and commentary. The project was officially proposed in Florence in 1983, during an international meeting at the Accademia Toscana di Scienze e Lettere ‘La Colombaria’. Currently, the project is being coordinated by an international scientific and editorial committee directed by Fernanda Decleva Caizzi, whose members include, in alphabetic order, Guido Bastianini, Gábor Betegh, Antonio Carlini, Maria Serena Funghi, Daniela Manetti, Franco Montanari, Glenn W. Most, Valeria Piano, Rosa Maria Piccione, and David Sedley.

The corpus (*Corpus dei Papiri Filosofici Greci e Latini*, CPF for short) has been published over the years in several volumes and yet more volumes are on the way. It is divided into four main parts. Part I (« Autori noti ») is dedicated to known authors and philosophical schools, and is subdivided into two parts: the first one gathers testimonies and fragments concerning Greek and Latin philosophers, as well as lists of authors and philosophical works (including the *Testimonia Herculaneisia*); the second one focuses on those writers who played a particularly relevant role in the history of philosophy and culture. Part II (« Frammenti adespoti; Gnomologi e sentenze ») consists of three sections: the volume presented here, dedicated to the *adespota* (i.e. unattributed fragments); a second part on maxims and *chreiai* of known authors; and a third part dealing with the maxims and *gnomica* of unnamed authors. Part III (« Commentari ») is dedicated to papyrus commentaries on philosophical texts, such as the anonymous commentary on Plato’s *Theaetetus*. Part IV provides indices and tables (in several volumes). There is also a very informative website (<[www.papirifilosofici.it](http://www.papirifilosofici.it)>), where it is possible to find a presentation and history of the project, an overview of the methodology, the catalogue of published and planned volumes, and the list of collaborators. This monumental and solidly executed work, of which every library should have a copy,

is the result of a collaboration between several scholars, both from Italy and from abroad, in the fields of classical philology and the history of ancient philosophy.

The present volume – which gathers the *adespota* (literally: papyri ‘without owners’) and is last in order of publication – is no exception. It is referred to as Part II.1\*, where the asterisk is meant to indicate that other tomes are on their way. After a short but helpful preface by Maria Serena Funghi (p. v–ix) and warnings (p. x), we find a list of abbreviations – i.e. for the bibliography (p. xii–xvii), journals (p. xviii–xxi), general abbreviations (p. xxii–xxiii) –, critical signs (p. xxiv), and collaborators (p. xxv). This is followed by a list of the editors of each papyrus in this tome in the order treated (p. xxvi) and an overview of the whole of Part II.1; here one can find a list not only of the fragments published in this tome, but also of the selected fragments for the upcoming tomes (p. xxvii–xxix). The volume ends with an « Indice analitico » and, for the first time in the history of the CFP, with photographic reproductions of the papyrus fragments discussed. These are accompanied by various acknowledgments and warnings, a very useful list of papyrological collections along with a list of the libraries and institutes that conserve the papyri, and a list of the papyri discussed in chronological order. An index of Greek words is missing, but it will probably be included once Part II is completed.

In the preface, Funghi explains the origins, methodology and difficulties involved in dealing with unattributed philosophical papyri. As Funghi observes, the new edition of the *adespota* has been eagerly anticipated, especially by scholars working in ancient philosophy. The texts collected in this volume contain references to several schools of philosophical thought, from the Socratic to the Stoic and the Epicurean, as well as from Middle Platonism to Aristotelianism and Christian Neoplatonism. They can be dated indeed from the Hellenistic to the Imperial period (i.e. from the third century BC to the sixth century AD), a long and important phase in the history of ancient philosophy. As a matter of fact, recent years have witnessed an increasing interest in Post-Hellenistic and Imperial philosophy, especially, though not exclusively, in relation to Platonism, and Aristotelianism. This period does indeed mark the transition to a new way of doing philosophy, one that is mostly textual, based on the exegesis and commentary of the works of ancient authorities.<sup>1</sup> For information about texts and writers from this time, we mostly rely on the doxographic tradition and testimonies of later authors, which requires detailed and precise study. Research on philosophical papyri was expected to provide new data about this phase of ancient thought, especially regarding the part not transmitted by the medieval manuscript tradition. As Funghi remarks, when measured against the initial enthusiasm, the

---

<sup>1</sup> As argued by PIERRE HADOT, « Théologie, exégèse, révélation: écriture dans la philosophie grecque », in MICHEL TARDIEU (ed.), *Les règles de l'interprétation*, Editions du CERF, Paris 1987 (Patrimoines. Religions du Livre. Centre d'Études des Religions du Livre), p. 13–34.

volume of information we can gain from the papyri is quite modest, not only because we often only have small fragments at our disposal, but also because it is not an easy task to determine with certainty to what extent they can be considered to contain philosophical material. Moreover, the fragments of papyrus rarely allow us to establish a precise chronology or to attribute them to a specific philosophical school. Even the analysis of the lexicon used in the fragments can produce ambiguous results. It must be noted that the study of terminology, as important it is, does not in itself allow for a specific attribution to a philosophical school, since it was very common in Post-Hellenistic and Imperial times for schools to share a lexicon – i.e. a terminology that originated in a specific school but was later adopted and appropriated by others, not infrequently by modifying the original meaning.<sup>2</sup> This consideration alone shows that, in studying this very important but fragile material, not only critical editions, textual revisions, and new translations are needed, but that the study of the cultural and philosophical context is essential in order to gain a deeper understanding of the extant material.

The volume presented here does not disappoint in this regard. Although the papyri presented have been already edited and, in some cases, translated and commented elsewhere, this volume, like other tomes in the series, is not a mere collection of texts, but proposes new conjectures and new translations. The commentaries given for each papyrus are very informative; in most cases, they not only present an overview of the current debates, but also offer new interpretations of the philosophical and cultural content of the fragment.

The papyri have been selected in light of a careful reconsideration of the available material in comparison with the papyrus databases (*LDAB*, the Leuven Database of Ancient Books, and *MP*<sup>3</sup>, the Mertens-Pack<sup>3</sup>), whose conclusions regarding the classification of philosophical papyri have not always been accepted. A preliminary set of 115 fragments was reduced to 90, of which 33 are published in the present volume. The selected papyri – also those which will be published later – are listed in the « Piano del volume » (p. xxvii–xxix). Of the 90 fragments that most likely can be classed as philosophical, about 40 can be traced back to a particular school: slightly more fragments are linked to Platonic philosophy than to Stoic philosophy. These are then followed, in decreasing order, by fragments related to the Peripatetics, the Epicureans, and the Socratics. When looking at the 33 fragments presented in the volume, one gets the impression that, although they can be identified with certainty as parts of commentaries or handbooks, many of them are linked to some kind of exegetical activity bearing on authoritative texts

---

<sup>2</sup> See, for instance, the appropriation of Stoic terminology within the Platonic tradition, cf. RICCARDO CHIARADONNA, « Platonismo e teoria della conoscenza stoica tra II e III secolo D.C. », in MAURO BONAZZI, CHRISTOPH HELMIG (eds.), *Platonic Stoicism-Stoic Platonism. The Dialogue between Platonism and Stoicism in Antiquity*, Leuven University Press, Leuven 2007 (Ancient and Medieval Philosophy, Series I, 39), p. 209–241.

from the main philosophical schools, or to discussions and disputes in cultural environments which express a 'popular' philosophy.

The papyri treated – and presented in approximate chronological order from the third century BC to the sixth century AD – are the following: P. Ai Khanum; P.Heid. 193; P.Hib. 28; P.Hib. 188; P.Hib. 189; P.Jen inv. 660; PSI inv. 3192; P.Daris. inv. 134; P.Berol. inv. 9814; P.Heid. inv. 1740; P.Lond. Lit. 161; P.Berol. inv. 10356; P.Fay. 311; PSI 1215; P.Vind. 29800; P. Aberd. 122; P.Oslo inv. 1039; P.Oxy. 3320; P.Oxy. 4941; PSI 851b; PSI 852; PSI 1095; PSI 1508; P.Amh. 15; P.Oxy. 438; P.Oxy. 3007; P.Oxy. 3656; P.Berol. inv. 16545; P.Brux. inv. E. 7191; P. Oxy. 3008; P.Oxy. 3658; PSI 1612; PSI 1612.

Each chapter has a similar layout, opening with a general description of the content, the possible chronology, and the reference number of the corresponding photographic reproduction at the end of the volume. We then find other useful information, such as the geographical provenance of the papyrus, the library or the institution where it is preserved, and a list of previous editions, translations, and other relevant literature. Each chapter opens with a description of the papyrus itself and an explanation of the problems involved in its reconstruction. This is followed by an edition with a critical apparatus, a translation into Italian (where the text is not too fragmented) and a line-by-line commentary, which deals with previous interpretations and, in most cases, also offers new arguments or possible new interpretations for the textual conjecture and/or for the content and its possible attribution.

Since it is not possible, for present purposes, to analyse every single chapter, I will briefly discuss one of the fragments that I consider to be among the most interesting in the volume, namely n. 33 (P.Vind. Inv. 29800r, p. 228-255). The text is cautiously presented as reporting traces of Platonic philosophy. There exist two groups of fragments of the papyrus, which has been reconstructed and rearranged to the final revision by Maria Serena Funghi. Each fragment is analysed by a different scholar (Maria Serena Funghi, Eva Falaschi, Mauro Bonazzi), such that the chapter brings together multiple areas of expertise, as is also the case for other fragments in the volume. The first part of the chapter concerns the material criteria used to classify the fragment, such as the type of writing, which in this case can be narrowed to a temporal range between the end of the first BC to the beginning of the second century AD. The text exhibits diacritic signs resulting from corrections made by the scribe himself. As for the content, the lexicon is typically Platonic (ιδέα, δημιουργός, παράδειγμα). That said, it is clear that this is not enough to determine the nature of the text and when exactly it was composed. The presence of references to Aristotle's *Categories* and Plato's *Timaeus* suggests an exegetical and scholarly context between the middle of the fourth century BC and the second century AD. We know that, at the beginning of the first century BC, these two works were considered the most important texts written by the so-

called ‘Ancients’ and were held to be worthy of exegesis. Most probably P.Vind. Inv. 29800r originated in a Middle Platonic milieu. Contrary to what is cautiously suggested by Boys-Stones,<sup>3</sup> there is evidence that speaks against the hypothesis that the fragment is part of a commentary on the *Timaeus*. One of reasons is that we cannot find therein any commented or paraphrased *lemmata* as we would expect from a commentary. The main topic of the short fragment is a description of the painter and of the sculptor in their activity: when they cannot look at the model, they can find the form in themselves, and, on the basis of it, shape (the matter) and create, looking with the eye of soul the object of their vision. Parallels can be found in the Imperial philosophical literature in the use of the image of the artist who looks at an internal model (an intellectual model) which is better than looking at a sensible one. I will not explore further the hypothesis about the possible origin of this analogy in the Platonic tradition. I think it suffices, for present purposes, to mention that the image of the artist who can have an internal or an external model recurs in the Platonism of early Imperial times, often in the context of an explanation of causes, and in particular of Platonic Forms. However, there are some cases (Alcinous, *Did.* 163.17–23 and Seneca, *Ep.* 65,8–9), where there is no downgrading of the external model (the sensitive model) compared to the internal and intelligible model in the artist’s mind, as is the case in the papyrus fragment. It is not possible to establish with certainty the relation of the fragment with the debates on the status of the ideas as immanent, as thoughts of God<sup>4</sup> (who is often identified with the *τεχνίτης*; see for instance Ps.-Archytas, *de princ.* 19,26–20,2; Philo, *de op. mundi*, 67.9–12; 20,2). The commentary on this point covers the possible meanings of the content of the fragment, even if the explanation, given the highly incomplete state of the text, can only be hypothetical. I do, however, believe that it would indeed be fruitful to compare these results with other Platonic references from the Imperial period in order to gain a better understanding of the use of this analogy in the Platonic tradition.

Other significant fragments in this volume include, in my opinion, those related to Epicurean philosophy (in particular n. 23, P. Oxy 3658) and to Stoic philosophy (n. 6, P. Berol. inv. 16545), as well as the interesting (probably Peripatetic) text on utopic constitution (n. 12, P. Hib. 28).

---

<sup>3</sup> Cf. GEORGE BOYS-STONES, *Platonist Philosophy 80 BC to AD 250. An Introduction and Collection of Sources in Translation*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 2017, p. 67.

<sup>4</sup> For this topic in Middle Platonism, see JOHN DILLON, « Ideas as Thoughts of God », *Études Platoniciennes*, 8 (2011), p. 31–42; and ALEXANDRA MICHALEWSKI, *La puissance de l’intelligible. La théorie plotinienne des Formes au miroir de l’héritage médioplatonicien*, Leuven University Press, Leuven 2014 (Ancient and Medieval Philosophy, Series 1), esp. p. 69–93.

The volume is the product of solid, collaborative scholarship. It will be welcomed by papyrologists and historians of ancient philosophy, as well as, in general, by everyone interested in in the philosophy and literature of Post-Hellenistic and Imperial times.

FRANCESCO PAOLO DI TEODORO, *LETTERA A LEONE X DI RAFFAELLO E BALDASSARRE CASTIGLIONE*, LEO S. OLSCHKI, FIRENZE 2020 (BIBLIOTECA DELL'ARCHIVUM ROMANICUM, SER. I: STORIA, LETTERATURA, PALEOGRAFIA, 503), PP. XII + 72, ISBN 9788822266774.

MARÍA DEL CARMEN MOLINA BAREA  
UNIVERSITY OF CÓRDOBA



The publication of this book by Professor Francesco Paolo Di Teodoro (University of Turin) is framed within the numerous cultural events organised on the occasion of the anniversary of the death of Raphael Sanzio celebrated in 2020. It is part of the ambitious programme of bringing out the special edition of *Scritti di e per Raffaello* (Olschki), planned for this year, also carried out by Di Teodoro. As a selected sample of such material, the *Letter to Leo X*, written by Raphael and Baldassarre Castiglione in 1599, constitutes an invaluable piece of information, while expecting to have access to the complete volume.

Given the nature of the present book, the main text is preceded by a critical introduction by the editor consisting of a historical contextualisation and comparative study of the original core documents used in the publication: the manuscripts of the *Lettera a Leone X* from Mantua (State property and Private property), Munich and Padua. Despite some exceptions, the fate of these documents had been to fall into oblivion for many centuries, until when, in 1799, the *Lettera* was rediscovered by Daniele Francesconi. In his *Conggettura che una lettera creduta di Baldesar Castiglione sia di Raffaello d'Urbino*, Francesconi validated the Raphael-Castiglione binomial as joint authorship. In order to reclaim the importance of the work, Di Teodoro prepared this new and revised edition which updates the version that he himself published in 1994.

As the editor remarks, the *Lettera* is particularly relevant in order to analyse the theoretical side of 'the divine' Raphael as well as to evaluate his detailed expertise in classic architecture, especially his in-depth knowledge of Vitruvius. What Raphael addresses to the Pope Leon X is basically the project of creating a map of the most celebrated monuments in ancient Rome, including aspects taken from archaeology, architecture, decoration, etc., in the attempt to combine both the antique city, that is, the pagan Rome, and the Renaissance city, considered as the heart of Christianity. This highly transdisciplinary project, born from Humanistic influence, remained unfinished due to the early death of the artist.

One of the most singular elements of the project, as reflected in the *Lettera*, is the central role of drawings. It could be stated that Raphael intended to develop a sort of *restauro grafico* of the city of Rome. « Restituire graficamente all'Urbe il suo antico splendore vuol dire anche consegnarla all'eternità immutabile [...] » (p. 26). To this end, he divided the city into 14 regions so as to draw the orthogonal representation of their buildings. This implied a methodical process of collecting data and translating every mathematical value into graphical shape according to *sezione*, *pianta* and *prospetto*. In Raphael's view, this designing process, based on the *diseño prospettico*, followed the same method used by Vitruvius. Di Teodoro claims that it is in the *Letter to Leo X* that this designing method is systematised and consolidated, in the sense that the project conceived by Raphael was not only architectural but eminently pictorial.

In this scenario, the *Lettera* appears as a true outline for a systematic text about architecture which reminds major Renaissance treatises. Briefly, Raphael distinguishes three types of buildings: those built by the ancient Romans, those by Barbarians, and finally the contemporary edifications of Renaissance style. It goes without saying that the first ones are, in his opinion, the authentic source of inspiration in order to achieve the *bella maniera* that is mainly pursued in his project. On the contrary, as a result of the Barbarian invasions, architects forgot the way of classical antiquity. That being said, Raphael does not categorically reject the *macchina gotica* in its entirety – he admired the naturalist tendency of its arboreal architecture, which he thought it might be connected to the Vitruvian tradition as well.

### I. *Haver cura di quello poco che resta di questa anticha madre*

The editor's statement that the *Letter to Leo X* by Raphael and Castiglione lays the foundations of heritage protection represents the main contribution of the book. On many occasions, as the letter develops, Raphael expresses his profound sorrow over the deplorable state of the monuments of Rome and declares being suffering « grandissimo dolore vedendo quasi il cadavero di quella nobil patria, che è stata regina del mondo, così miseramente lacerate » (p. 43). In this sense, Raphael demonstrates big interest in the urgent necessity of eradicating damaging practices in what respect monument preservation, which he ascribes to the harmful effect of the passage of time, the actions of the Barbarians, and most importantly, the adverse consequences derived from the art policy implemented by the Popes.

Raphael expresses his discontent to Leo X and denounces that the Popes have systematically plundered the *sacre ruine* of Rome over the years for the sole purpose of building their magnificent city of Christianity: « Persino I pontefici, che avrebbero dovuto difendere le 'povere reliquie di Roma', hanno invece, hanno invece, 'atteso a ruinare templi antiqui, statue, archi et altri aedifici gloriosi',

lasciando che i marmi fossero impiegati per l'edificazione della nuova Roma » (p. 25). Raphael does not only accuse the Popes of permitting the general destruction of classical monuments, he also insists on their indifference and indolence, which to a certain extent becomes equally destructive. In these circumstances, Raphael explains his project to Leo X with the hope of helping to avoid actions of this sort. Therefore, by means of the *Lettera*, he tries to establish measures to prevent detrimental impacts on Classical art.

In this line, Raphael urges the Pope to put maximum effort to ensure the most appropriate care for monuments. This should be an objective of utmost importance for the Pope, Raphael argues, inasmuch as the protection of artistic heritage might truly manifest the virtue of the *Pastor clementissimo* of all Christians, who safeguards the benefits of such an universal legacy from *maligni et ignorant*. Hence, Raphael encourages the Pope to preserve ancient works – the *pietre 345nstaure* – as a gesture of divine grace. This way, the Pope would incarnate the model of the Christian prince of peace, who brings prosperity to the people instead of savagery and barbarism. Not casually, this message contained in the *Lettera* appears precisely in a moment of growing awareness of the need to protect Roman monuments. For example, in 1462, Pio II published the bull *Cum alman 345nstaure urbem*, where he said to be committed to defending Rome's former splendour and conserve it for posterity. The same purpose is present in *Roma instaurata* written by Flavio Biondo some decades earlier, dedicated to the Pope Eugenio IV. However, general devastation of classical buildings continued, reaching increasingly alarming levels.

This being so, the editor claims that the *Letter to Leo X* shows Raphael's great awareness of the value of classical heritage and the way in which he tried to solve this matter mainly from the perspective of an architect. In his preliminary study, Di Teodoro highlights Raphael's determinant role in bringing about the basis of heritage protection, taking the letter as a way of promoting specific actions within the framework of the preservation of historical monuments. Despite the editor's enthusiastic stance on this issue, the previous statement may require a nuanced analysis, given that the conceptual dimension of the *Lettera* pales in comparison with other theoretical texts that provide more powerful results. In this regard, surprisingly enough, the editor does not discuss the most relevant document in the field, *De re aedificatoria*, written by Leon Battista Alberti in 1450, which raises significant similarities and might be considered a precedent of the *Lettera*. The book X of Alberti's treatise, for instance, which is focused precisely on the conservation of buildings (*operum instauratio*), draws interesting parallels with Raphael's letter.

As a prolific author and theorist, Alberti's exhaustive knowledge of classical antiquity, his inspiration in nature, as well as his extensive research on written sources like Vitruvius, along with the direct study of ruins and archaeological

remains make him a principal figure on the conceptualisation of Renaissance architecture and urbanism. The wide influence of his texts undoubtedly exceeds the scope of Raphael's *Lettera a Leone X*. Alberti does not only master the visual technique of *disegno prospettico* a century before Raphael, following the path of his admired Brunelleschi, but he also initiated the practice of studying the monuments built by the Romans, which he considered his true teachers. Alberti explained that he acquired precious knowledge about the ancients by observing carefully and making sketches of these buildings and the ruins that remained, still full of wise lessons to be learnt. Similarly, in the book VI of *De re aedificatoria* he manifests his tears of suffering for the beautiful buildings practically reduced to rubble, in a way that seems to be replicated by Raphael in his letter. According to Alberti, ruins are the consequence of time, the active destruction of the Barbarians, and also the passive destruction provoked by indifference and disregard. That is why Alberti states that the architect must intervene in favour of conservation. In this point Raphael clearly echoes Alberti's programme.

## II. *The Modern Concept of Heritage Protection*

Notwithstanding the attempts to preserve monuments from destruction, the event known as *Sacco di Roma* took place only seven years after Raphael's death. In the context of such a terrible situation, it is worth mentioning that a copy of the *Letter to Leo X* was sent for publication by Castiglione's son in the attempt to vindicate the figure of his father in the eyes of Pope Clement VII and thus dispel the shadow of suspicion about Castiglione's alleged negligence during the *Sacco*. Although the purpose of Castiglione's son was not fulfilled because the *Lettera* finally remained unpublished, the intention of using it as a proof in his benefit makes clear the signification conferred to the document: the deep sense of commitment and responsibility towards monument protection contained in the letter was evident from the very beginning. As Di Teodoro says in the introduction, this aspect of the *Lettera* is certainly a factor of importance which has lasted until today. More specifically, he points out that in the text by Raphael and Castiglione are to be found the seeds for the modern concept of heritage protection which lays at the heart of current legal proceedings like Article 9 of the Italian *Carta Costituzionale*.

Di Teodoro maintains that the *Lettera a Leon X* serves as a powerful stimulus for developing theoretical and practical reflection upon monument conservation in countries with rich heritage as is the case of Italy. He also recognised his aspiration to give this book as a dynamic tool for students at the university so as to motivate them to find solutions to the challenging task of art preservation. Be that as it may, the previous observation made by the editor in relation to the modern concept of heritage protection, although interesting, is not sufficiently argued. He does not provide explanatory details of how this notion is actually sustained on Raphael's

guidelines. In this sense, the reader of this book will miss a thorough analysis of concrete measures of current legislation in the realm of heritage law. For example, the editor does not compare the *Lettera* with specific cases taken from legal sources. This would have been really helpful in order to get a broader sense of the practical influence of the *Lettera* nowadays.

In this state of things, it might be useful to consider a productive dialogue with the *Carta del Restauro* of Cesare Brandi, promulgated by the Italian Ministry of Public Instruction in 1972. This document became a key reference in the field of monument preservation and also an operational guideline for concrete actions required to safeguard artistic heritage. Particularly, it is well-known for introducing the notion of 'preventive restoration', which has been renamed as 'conservation'. Precisely, it can be inferred from the *Letter to Leo X* that Raphael, in his approach to the ancient buildings of Rome, is mainly referring to conservation, so this significant parallel may entail relevant implications. Likewise, Raphael was ahead of his time inasmuch as he almost foresees the modern term of cultural heritage, in the sense that monuments are not ultimately important by themselves but because of the values that they represent for the identity of a community or their contribution to the history of civilisation in general. From this point of view, the *Lettera* precedes the classic definition of heritage given by Henri Rivière. In this important task of laying the foundations for the modern notion of heritage, Italy has played a fundamental role in recent decades.

See, for instance, the *Carta del Restauro* which was passed into law in 1932 after being adapted from the Athens Charter of 1931, with the objective of protecting antique monuments after the Second World War. Another event of this kind was the Hague Convention celebrated in 1945 under the initiative of the Italian Commission of the UNESCO to protect cultural heritage in case of armed conflict. It would have been especially interesting to look for the trace of Raphael's letter in the Venice Charter for the Conservation and Restoration of Monuments and Sites of the year 1964, as a result of the II International Congress of Architects and Specialists of Historic Buildings, which became the origin of the ICOMOS. Likewise, in the mid 1960s, the Franceschini Commission for the improvement of monument preservation of the Italian Government tried to solve major problems concerning the legal normative of art protection and raise social awareness about it. As can be seen, the active participation of Italy in the modern constitution of heritage protection surely presents rich and varied influences, so that it would not be surprising if the *Letter to Leo X* were one of its most singular precedents. As far as the *Lettera* is concerned, it is relevant to note above all the personal and professional commitment of Raphael, supported by the appropriate writing style of Baldassarre Castiglione, to maintain classical heritage and ensure that the work of art is in its full right to survive, which is really a breath of fresh air.



IRENE ZAVATTERO (ED.), *L'UOMO NEL PENSIERO DI BONAVENTURA DA BAGNOREGIO*, ARACNE, CANTERANO (RM) 2019 (FLUMEN SAPIENTIAE. STUDI SUL PENSIERO MEDIEVALE, 11), PP. 372, ISBN 9788825525922.

TOMMASO MANZON  
UNIVERSITY OF TRENTO



MAPPING THE HUMAN BEING IN BONAVENTURE: A HISTORICAL AND SYSTEMATIC OVERVIEW

The goal of this work – which gathers the proceedings of a conference held in 2017 at the University of Trento – is that of presenting a multifaceted exploration of Bonaventure's analysis of the human condition. In this sense, this book aims at making a contribution towards our understanding of a topic of both significant depth and width. The question concerning the essence of the human condition is central to Bonaventure's thought, and there is hardly any part of his work that does not include considerations of anthropological relevance.<sup>1</sup> Accordingly, to unfold the *Doctor Seraficus's* understanding of human nature is to dive deep into the architecture of his *opus*. This means that it is impossible to map 'the figure of humankind' in Bonaventure without having to touch on the whole net of his philosophical system.

Significantly, the book's editor Irene Zavattero acknowledges this challenge since the very first paragraph of the introduction, underlining how the notion of *homo imago dei* – that is, the Biblical formula along whose lines Bonaventure frames his anthropological investigations – has been lengthily meditated upon by the Franciscan thinker, as well as by generations of students of his work (p. 9). Nonetheless, Zavattero's assumption seems to be that it is crucial to re-invigorate the scholarly interest in this subject. In this respect, she claims that the goal of this book is to shed further light on what *homo imago dei* means to Bonaventure, in order to promote a wave of renewed interest in philosophical and theological anthropology (p. 9). It follows that this book sets quite high stakes by attempting to transcend the field of limited specialist interest, appealing to all those whose research concerns the nature of the human condition. At the same time, the

---

<sup>1</sup> For a classic introduction to the topic of Bonaventure's anthropology, which can be fruitfully read as an introduction to the present text, see ALEXANDER SCHAEFER, « The Position and Function of Man in the Created World According to Saint Bonaventure », *Franciscan Studies*, 21 (1961), p. 233–382.

contributors' proficiency assures that also Bonaventure's experts will find much food for thought here.

Further articulating the book's *ratio essendi*, Zavattero quotes an excerpt from Bonaventure's *In II Sententiarum* to the effect of underlining the dominant theme of his anthropology: humanity is located by God as the metaphysical nexus between the Creator and creation. Within this framework, human beings submit to their Creator while at the same time ruling over all other creatures (p. 10–11). Insofar as they are created endowed with rationality and freedom, humans are the only creatures capable of fully understanding and responding to the deity's design and intentions. This is the basic view that the different voices animating this text seek to expound.

The essays themselves are divided into four sections according to their areas of interest. Section 1 consists of an overview of the whole of Bonaventure's anthropology. The two essays included in this section closely revolve around the basic themes presented in the introduction. Accordingly, their goal is to locate the position and features of the human being within the edifice of Bonaventurian thought. Section 2 focuses on the topic of the soul. This is arguably the most historically-tinged part of the book, where Bonaventure's account of the nature of the soul is approached from the point of view of its philosophical and theological sources. While the first half of the book focuses more on the human being as individually considered, the second half switches the attention to human relationships, and to the realm of action and language. In section 3, entitled « Ethics and Law », we find a multifaceted discussion of the faculties of the human soul. Topics such as freedom of will, natural law, and desire get their due attention in their intersections with the notion of *imago dei*. Finally, section 4 contains an exposition of some of the aspects of Bonaventure's philosophy of language and epistemology. Specifically, the essays look at his theory of witness and exegesis of Biblical images. I shall now give an overview of the main contents of each essay.

As already mentioned, section 1 includes two broad sketches of Bonaventure's understanding of the human condition. The opening essay is authored by Letterio Mauro (« L'antropocentrismo di Bonaventura »), who styles the *Doctor Seraphicus's* thought as pervaded by a strong 'anthropocentrism'. In Mauro's intentions, this qualification is wholly positive: Bonaventure is an anthropocentric thinker inasmuch as he understands humanity as the living crossroad of created reality: horizontally, we stand as the convergence, recapitulation and synthesis of creation (p. 25–26). This happens insofar as the human constitution expresses the characteristic traits of inanimate, vegetative, and animal creation – plus of course its own specific human elements. Vertically, humanity is the priest of creation, allowing the latter to maintain a link with God (p. 29). In other words, Mauro shows how Bonaventure appropriates the ancient tradition of humanity as a microcosm,

and as the designed mediator between spiritual and material reality.<sup>2</sup> The essay is further enriched by a short but dense discussion of the relevant secondary literature (p. 22ff).

In her contribution (« L'anthropologie cruciforme de Bonaventure »), Laure Solignac also takes up the task of exploring the same Bonaventurian themes. There are two elements within her extensive piece of writing which stand above the other and which deserve to be mentioned here. First, in order to synthesise Bonaventure's twofold vision of creation's horizontal tension towards humanity (*appetitus totius naturae*, see p. 56), and of humanity's vertical tension towards God, she moulds the term 'cruciform anthropology' (p. 39). Second, Solignac provides a discussion of Bonaventure's Franciscan stress on the familial ties holding between humanity and the rest of creation (see p. 44ff). Her essay also holds the commendable aim of relocating Bonaventure with respect to the categories of philosophical historiography: the Bonaventurian picture of the human being is not – as some commentators hold –<sup>3</sup> foremostly Neo-Platonic (p. 40–41); in turn, Solignac argues that we should understand Bonaventure's view of humanity as being cross-shaped – that is, set along two axes, one stretching horizontally and the other vertically.

The second section opens with a fine historico-philological investigation by Andrea Di Maio (« *Animalitas, spiritu, mens. Antropologia tripartita e struttura dell'itinerario bonaventuriano* »). In his piece, Di Maio discusses the three-fold ascension of the mind to God within the context of the *Itinerarium mentis in Deum*. Di Maio contextualises the *Itinerarium* in his original context (p. 95), and locates it within the rest of the Bonaventurian *opus* (p. 102ff). After having done so, he discusses the theological anthropology deployed by Bonaventure in the *Itinerarium* (p. 108ff), tracing it back to its Biblical and Patristic roots (p. 94–95). In particular, Di Maio stresses the influence of the Dionysian concept of negative theology (p. 102), which Bonaventure unfolds in the *Itinerarium* and later picks up again in the *Collationes in Hexaëmeron* (p. 106).

The following essay by Alessandro Ghisalberti (« L'anima gerarchizzata. Dionigi e l'ultimo Bonaventura ») also revolves around the connection between Bonaventure and Pseudo-Dionysius. Specifically, Ghisalberti focuses on the notion of 'hierarchy' and 'hierarchical soul'.<sup>4</sup> The presence of this concept is traced

---

<sup>2</sup> See JAMES McEVOY, *Microcosm and Macrocosm in the Writings of St. Bonaventure*, in JACQUES-GUY BOUGEROL (ed.), *S. Bonaventura 1274–1974*, vol. II, Collegio S. Bonaventura, Grottaferrata 1973, p. 309–343.

<sup>3</sup> For instance, see DOMINIQUE POIREL, « Thomas d'Aquin lecteur d'Hugues de Saint-Victor: à propos de la nature humaine », *Archives d'histoire doctrinale et littéraire du Moyen Âge*, 78 (2011), p. 195–228.

<sup>4</sup> It is worthy of mention that the concept of 'hierarchy' has been crucial to the developments of the contemporary current of philosophy and theology known as 'radical orthodoxy'. See JONH MILBANK, CATHERINE PICKSTOCK, GRAHAM WARD (eds.), *Radical Orthodoxy: A New Theology*, Routledge, London 1999.

throughout the *Itinerarium* (p. 131ff), in the *De triplici via* (p. 138), as well as in the above-mentioned *Collationes* (p. 146ff). Altogether, Ghisalberti is able to show how Bonaventure was able to turn the ecclesiological speculation of Dionysius into a key for describing the soul's path to God. By doing so, he achieved a synthesis between Victorine and Cistercensian theologies and the Greek Patristic tradition flowing from Dionysius (p. 144).

In his essay (« Bonaventura, Tommaso e la considerazione dell'anima come *forma et hoc aliquid* nell'aristotelismo del XIII secolo »), Massimiliano Lenzi discusses Bonaventure's views on the nature of the soul alongside those expressed by Thomas Aquinas. Lenzi starts his discussion by summarising the development of the concept of the soul within the Aristotelian tradition and its reception in the medieval university (p. 155). Subsequently, he discusses how Aquinas and Bonaventure attempted to conceive of the subsistence of the soul when separated from the body in the light of Aristotle's *De Anima* (p. 161). His conclusion is that Thomas and Bonaventure ended up developing similar solutions to this problem. Accordingly, Lenzi aims to rebuke the historiographical thesis that sees Thomas as a 'coherent' Aristotelian, and Bonaventure as the exponent of an eclectic and invariably neo-Platonic thought (p. 175).

Davide Riserbato («*Signatum est super nos lumen vultus tui, Domine* [Sal. 4,7]. Il concorso tra il *verum mentibus impressum/naturaliter insertum* e le *rationes aeternae* in Bonaventura ») closes the second section investigating the relationship between the notions innately impressed into the human minds and the ideal forms (*rationes aeternae*). Riserbato notes how Bonaventure links both natural knowledge and the eternal forms to the existence of truth. However, he claims that their relationship has never been sufficiently clarified by the secondary literature (p. 177–179). Focusing on the two series of *Quaestiones* concerning Christ's knowledge and the Holy Trinity, Riserbato sheds light on Bonaventure's notion of *veritas*, and his exemplaristic epistemology.

The third section opens with a text by Andrea Colli (« *In anima stat appetitus totius naturae*. A Note on Desire in Bonaventure's *Commentary on the Sentences* »). Colli employs the figure of the prophet Daniel – evoked by Bonaventure in the prologue of his *Itinerarium* and described as a *vir desiriorum* – to explore Bonaventure's account of desire. In this respect, Colli argues that the mention of the prophet Daniel at the beginning of the *Itinerarium* is more than a rhetorical ploy, but rather a witness to the centrality of the desiring subject in Bonaventure's thought (p. 197). Subsequently, Colli launches himself into an elaborate analysis of the notion of *appetitus* throughout the *Commentary to the Sentences*. By doing so, he registers the influence of the Peripatetic tradition, upsetting not few prejudices concerning Bonaventure's relationship to Aristotle (p. 197ff).

The following essay, by Elisa Cuttini (« La facoltà di scelta in rapporto alla legge naturale in Bonaventura da Bagnoregio e nella *Laudato si'* »), presents an

registers the influence of the Peripatetic tradition, upsetting not few prejudices concerning Bonaventure's relationship to Aristotle (p. 197ff).

The following essay, by Elisa Cuttini (« La facoltà di scelta in rapporto alla legge naturale in Bonaventura da Bagnoregio e nella *Laudato si'* »), presents an 'actualizing' reading of Bonaventure. The Franciscan *Doctor* is read by Cuttini alongside Pope Francis's encyclical letter *Laudato si'*.<sup>5</sup> Cuttini's attempts to explain the lines of thought underlying *Laudato si'* by using Bonaventure's ideas as a hermeneutic framework (p. 221). In spite of the fact that the *Doctor Seraphicus* lacks any sort of visible ecological awareness (p. 222) – that is, at least according to modern sensibility – Cuttini convincingly shows how *Laudato si'* quotes from the *Legenda Maior* (p. 226) – as well as the many and diverse resonances between Pope Francis's discourse and Bonaventure's notions of law, *pietas* (p. 223–224), and sin (p. 228–229) – give enough ground for finding Bonaventurian echoes in the encyclical letter.

Also exploring Bonaventure's political thought, Gianfranco Maglio presents us with an analysis of the relationship between positive and natural law in Bonaventure (« Il diritto e la legge naturale in Bonaventura da Bagnoregio »). Proclaiming the necessity of identifying Bonaventure's place within the broader culture of his own time, Maglio produces an overview of Bonaventure's relationship to pagan philosophy and to the earlier Latin sources of Christian theology (p. 233ff). Then, he goes on to sketch the outlines of the thirteenth-century debate on natural law (p. 238ff). In particular, Maglio focuses on such predecessors of Bonaventure as William of Auxerre and Alexander of Hales (p. 240–241). Having done all this background work, Maglio dives into an extended discussion of Bonaventure's philosophy of natural law. The exposition is rich, presenting and commenting many examples from Bonaventure's works.

Moving onto a different ground, Stefano Perfetti takes into consideration the exegetical work of Bonaventure – a part of his authorship which is often neglected by scholars. In this respect, this essay serves as an introduction to Bonaventure's exegetical method. Perfetti's summary of the essential features of the *Ecclesiastes* and of its reception history in Patristic and early medieval thought is of great value and clarity (p. 271–278). Specifically, Perfetti looks at Bonaventure's *Commentary to the Ecclesiastes* (« *Similiter spirant omnia. La condizione umana tra degradazione carnale e ascesa spirituale nel commento di Bonaventura a Ecclesiaste 3,18–22* »). In Bonaventure's understanding, the *Ecclesiastes* trains one's insight into the nature of reality, teaching to look beyond appearances, thereby turning our eyes to the

---

<sup>5</sup> For some other attempts at an 'ecologically inspired' reading of Bonaventure and of Franciscan thought in general, see KEITH WARNER, « Franciscan Environmental Ethics: Imagining Creation as a Community of Care », *Journal of the Society of Christian Ethics*, 31 (2011), p. 143–160; LLIA DELIO, « Evangelical Life Today: Living in the Ecological Christ », *Franciscan Studies*, 64 (2006), p. 475–506.

Bonaventure's doctrine of freedom. Free will is understood by the *Seraphicus* as an expression of humanity's own essence. Accordingly, true human freedom consists in the capacity of giving full expression to our own nature and of truly becoming the *imago Dei* (p. 16). Zavattero's discourse takes off locating Bonaventure's work on the freedom of the will within its historical and cultural *milieu*. Depending mainly on Peter Lombard's sources, Bonaventure also roots his reading of free will within the then young tradition of Franciscan thought. In Bonaventure's day Franciscan intellectuals tended to give priority to the will over the intellect in their accounts of the formation of our deliberative processes (p. 290–292). After this historical preamble, Zavattero unfolds the content of the 25th *Distinctio* from *II in Sententiarum*. There, Bonaventure discussed the different modes (*stati*) of the freedom of will. Accordingly, the rest of the essay is devoted to the discussion of the analogy between human and divine freedom. This is articulated with respect both to the Bonaventurian letter, as well as to his sources – with an emphasis on Anselm of Canterbury and Bernard of Clairvaux (p. 297ff). Through her essay, Zavattero manages to accomplish the difficult task of making a fruitful contribution to an already well-covered topic.<sup>6</sup> This is a short, but balanced and exhaustive synthesis of Bonaventure's doctrine of freedom, and a useful addition to our understanding of his theological anthropology.

In part taking up the argumentative lines laid down by Perfetti, the last section opens with an essay by Barbara Faes (« Predicatori e pescatori. Alcune metafore marine nell'esegesi biblica e nei sermoni di Bonaventura ») concerning Bonaventure's exegetical praxis. Specifically, Faes focuses on the relationship between Bonaventure's exegetical works and his activity as a preacher. In parallel, she seeks to unfold his reading of Biblical maritime metaphors. This choice is motivated by the centrality of the sea and of sea-related images within the Christian spiritual and theological tradition. Indeed, maritime metaphors abound in authors such as Clement Alexandrinus, Origen, Ambrose and Augustine (p. 311–312). Faes picks two case studies, each one connected to one of the topics she aims to cover. First, she looks to the *proemium* to Bonaventure's commentary to Luke's Gospel. Since the same text is employed by the *Doctor Seraphicus* in the opening section of a sermon, this presents a perfect exemplar for Faes's analysis (p. 313ff). Second, she unpacks Bonaventure's exegesis of the Lukan episode of the miraculous catch (p. 319ff). Both texts illuminate Bonaventure's picture of the good clergyman – where the latter is understood as the evangelical 'fisher of people' – discussing the skills he needs to possess. Faes's essay offers a clear presentation of some crucial aspects of Bonaventure's oft-neglected exegetical

---

<sup>6</sup> See for instance GIANFRANCO MAGLIO, *Libero arbitrio e libertà in San Bonaventura*, Wolters Kluwer-Cedam, Assago-Padova 2016.

works. In particular, she shows his dependency on the Latin theological tradition for his exegetical techniques and his understanding of the ecclesial office.

The following essay, by Paola Müller (« Per un'ermeneutica della testimonianza in Bonaventura da Bagnoregio »), seeks to read Bonaventure through the lenses of the current debate concerning the epistemology of testimony. The issues concerned by this debate are the following ones: (1) the sort of information conveyed by one's testimony; (2) what kind of epistemological warrant is enjoyed by the act of witnessing to something (p. 229). While this topic has not been explicitly thematised by medieval thinkers, Müller seeks to connect the debate on testimony with the medieval use of *auctoritates* (p. 331–332). The essay presents an exhaustive picture of the topic. Bonaventure's views of *auctoritas* are unfolded through a close reading of relevant passages from the *Collationes in Hexaëmeron* (p. 336ff). Here, Bonaventure outlines the four relevant criteria that should be followed when considering whether to accept a testimony. The sections where Müller discusses Bonaventure's understanding of the testimonies given by Francis (p. 332), Creation (p. 333), and Jesus Himself (p. 344) are also of particular interest. They are noteworthy insofar as they look to classic topics of Bonaventurian scholarship through some unusual and yet valid interpretative lenses.

The book's final essay (« Tra sapere, visione e Speranza »), penned by Massimo Parodi, starts considering some conceptual and lexical difficulties expressed by the *Itinerarium* (p. 347). From there, the text branches out in many different directions, considering the Bonaventurian image of humankind, the difficulty of getting to know something about 'the man Bonaventure', and the connection between the methodology of the historian of philosophy and the choice of his topic. Standing as this text's fitful culmination, Parodi's essay is an inspired presentation of Bonaventure and his conception of humankind as *mediator*, reflecting at the same time on the connection between life and science, with particular reference to the work of the historian.

In the light of the intention of underlining the relevance of Bonaventure's thought for our present context – with an emphasis on his anthropology – I believe that this volume indeed delivers its promises. All the contributions present solid historical foundations; in this sense, each essay presents a small and yet dense view not just of the work of Bonaventure, but of the whole of his historical context and cultural background. All of this does not detract anything from the book's legibility, which is perfectly approachable by a non-specialist public, as well as by the occasional student of medieval philosophy seeking to deepen his knowledge of the *Doctor Seraphicus*.



DAVID HAMIDOVIČ, CLAIRE CLIVAZ, SARAH BOWEN SAVANT (EDS.), IN COLL. WITH ALESSANDRA MARGUERAT, *ANCIENT MANUSCRIPTS IN DIGITAL CULTURE. VISUALIZATION, DATA MINING, COMMUNICATION*, BRILL, LEIDEN–BOSTON 2019 (DIGITAL BIBLICAL STUDIES, 3), PP. XVI + 284, ISBN 9789004346734.

MARÍA DEL CARMEN LÓPEZ RUIZ  
UNIVERSITY OF CÓRDOBA



The volume entitled *Ancient Manuscripts in Digital Culture. Visualisation, Data Mining, Communication* collects the works of seventeen experts in Biblical Studies from all around the world. The book, edited by David Hamidovič, Claire Clivaz and Sarah Bowen Savant, in collaboration with Alessandra Marguerat, all of them distinguished scholars, witnesses the rapid diffusion of the humanities throughout digital channels, emphasising the need to modernise the techniques and methodologies of analysis and the studies applied to practical cases. By making use of new technologies, experts acknowledge the broadening of the study objectives of their research and confirm the innumerable advantages of using some of the most innovative programmes for Social Sciences and Humanities applied to specific cases. This book presents a compendium of twelve chapters that reflect the digital shift in the working methodology of the world's most renowned scholars in Biblical and Christian manuscripts, within internationally funded research projects.

This third volume of the collection bears witness to the spread of the digital humanities and presents, through an in-depth analysis, the gradual growth of visual culture and various case studies on ancient manuscripts. The reader will be able to find out which are the most sophisticated visualisation tools, how to develop complex stylometric analyses, how to handle data from a didactic point of view, how to take advantage of the tools used by authors in research related to epigraphy – just to mention some of the contents covered in the book. The quality of the work is considerably acknowledged by the editorial and scientific committee that directs the collection, composed by some of the most important experts in Ancient, Biblical, Arabic and Semitic Studies from universities in Norway, Germany, United Kingdom, United States, Spain, Belgium, France or the

Netherlands such as Daniel Apollon, Marco Büchler, Hugh Houghton, Hayim Lapin or Juan Pedro Monferrer-Sala.

The work is divided into three different parts, and is preceded by a comprehensive introduction recapitulating the entire work by Claire Clivaz and Sarah Bowen Savant. The first part, « Visualising the Manuscripts », consists of two overviews on the topic (Ingeborg Lied and Peter M. Phillips) and two additional studies on digital editing and visualising of manuscripts and papyrus fragments (Brent Landau, Adeline Harrington & James C. Henriques, and Stephen J. Davis). The second part, « Data Mining and Visualisation », includes two articles on qualitative/quantitative analysis of ancient texts (Thibaut Clérice & Matt Munson, and Paul Robertson), an article on natural language processing and textual referencing (Brett Graham), and a third article on electronic transcriptions and the processes of documentation involved (Hugh Houghton). Finally, the third part, « Communication », includes two articles focusing on the process of teaching and learning (Heather Dana Davis Parker & Christopher A. Rollston, and Jennifer Aileen Quigley & Laura Salah Nasrallah), an article on communication in academic settings and the concept of 'forgery' in digital humanities (James F. McGrath), and finally, the report of the results of a research project using 3D, academic modelling (Bradley C. Erickson).

In the first part, Lied presents an article entitled « Digitization and Manuscripts as Visual Objects: Reflections from a Media Studies Perspective » (p. 15–29). The article deals with visualisation and its epistemological consequences from the point of view of textuality. Specifically, she studies the digitalization of manuscripts in libraries and reviews the impact of online manuscripts and the consequences they have for their study, especially with regards to editing tasks. The author comments on publishing practices as well as the expectations of the reader who visualizes manuscripts online.

The next author, Phillips, in the article « The Power of Visual Culture and the Fragility of the Text » (p. 30–49), decides to tackle an issue that is becoming increasingly frequent in academic environments: the disappearance of the texts themselves, using arguments that include the image of the European social imaginary and the concept of 'pictorial turn' in order to « explore the interaction between visual culture and the Bible » (p. 35). To illustrate this proposal, the author draws on three visual case studies, including *Noah's* recent film.

The third article in this first part is signed by Landau, Harrington & Henriques, and is entitled « *What no eye has seen: Using a Digital Microscope to Edit Papyrus Fragments of Early Christian Apocryphal Writings* » (p. 50–69). In it, the authors present an interesting article in which they introduce us to the digital microscope (having an infrared lighting mode) that they employ to study three fragmentary writings: *P.Oxy. 210*, *P.Oxy 4009* and *P.Oxy. 4469*.

The fourth article is entitled « Manuscripts, Monks, and *Mufattishin*: Digital Access and Concerns of Cultural Heritage in the Yale Monastic Archaeology Project » (p. 70–86), and is signed by Davies. The author explains what analysis and work with digital monastery manuscripts consists of and how they can be made visible online, considering at all times the « importance of context for determining the limitations [...] of digitization efforts connected with archaeological and archival work in Egypt » (p. 80). The author summarises the steps to be followed, the procedures and digital methods related to Egypt's monasteries, and proposes as examples the fragments found in the White Monastery near Sohag and in the Monastery of the Syrians in Wadi al-Natrun.

The second part of the work begins with the article by Clérice & Munson, entitled « Qualitative Analysis of Semantic Language Models » (p. 87–114), in which the authors show that the projection of algorithmic results is an indispensable part within the arsenal of resources of any humanist as a method for understanding the Digital Humanities. Their goal is « to move the assessment of the results returned by semantic extraction algorithms closer to the actual hermeneutical tasks carried out in the, e.g., historical, cultural, or theological interpretation of texts » (p. 87).

Graham signs the second article of this part, entitled « Using Natural Language Processing to Search for Textual References » (p. 115–132). After describing and presenting a generic algorithm (NPL) and a compendium of syntactic rules used for textual references, the author shows us how to locate textual references in any type of text, whether oral or written.

« Electronic Transcriptions of New Testament Manuscripts and their Accuracy, Documentation and Publication » is the title of the article signed by Houghton (p. 133–153), in which the author points out the procedures and transformations that have been carried out in the new digital editing of the Greek New Testament.

In the article « Visualizing Data in the Quantitative Comparison of Ancient Texts: a Study of Paul, Epictetus, and Philodemus » (p. 154–188), Robertson applies the notion of 'polythetic classification', specifically to the texts that make up his corpus of work (Paul's letters, Epictetus's *Discourses*, and Philodemus's *On Piety and On Death*). He claims that « Hand-coding the data is necessary in order to capture the complex nature of literature, literary style, content, and a nuanced classificatory framework » (p. 181).

The third part of the work begins with an interesting article by Dana Davis Parker & Rollston entitled « Teaching Epigraphy in the Digital Age » (p. 189–216). In it, the authors propose a model based on the delineation of Semitic epigraphy, in order to take advantage of the new digital technologies applied to the study of ancient texts from a didactic perspective.

Aileen Quigley & Salah Nasrallah comment on the results of a case study centred on online teaching throughout MOOC courses (p. 217–240). It is thanks to

their study that they can confirm the importance of attracting students' attention on critical and pedagogical reflection in order to bring the Bible closer to them. They see the online courses as an opportunity to encourage thinking and criticism from students and scholars anywhere in the world. The title of their article is « HarvardX's Early Christianity: The Letters of Paul: A Retrospective on Online Teaching and Learning ».

In « Learning from Jesus's Wife: What does forgery have to do with the digital humanities? » (p. 241–260), McGrath decides to take a look back at the famous *Gospel of Jesus' Wife* episode from a pedagogical point of view, in order to focus the attention on what can be learned from interaction and debate amongst specialists in a digital communication environment.

The last article of this volume is entitled « Synagogue Modelling Project Report: a Multi-faceted approach to 3D, academic modelling » (p. 261–276). In it, Erickson demonstrates « how 3D modelling addresses difficulties intrinsic to fields dealing with material culture through a survey of a recently completed Byzantine synagogue modelling project that produced scaled, virtual reality environments of the 4<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> century CE synagogues of Beth Alpha, Hammath Tiberias, and Sepphoris » (p. 262). The author defends photogrammetry and 3D modelling as the methods of production of his research project.

As we have been able to assess throughout this brief tour in the pages above, the future of humanities is inextricably linked to new technologies as the result of the digital culture era in which we live. Thus, the authors who have collaborated in this collective work show that it is possible to adapt working methodologies to make the most of research progress through the advantages of digital culture, especially in the context of ancient manuscripts. The authors who have participated in the making of this volume want to share their know-how, talent and dedication with readers, and the result could not be anything else but outstanding. It is an original work for the DBS (Digital Biblical Studies) series, representing a turning point in the trends carried out so far in the collection, and a whole new landscape for the digital humanities in Biblical, Early Jewish, and Christian Studies. The quality of the work is a source of pride for the three research groups that have devoted most of their time to the digital Biblical and Christian humanities, as demonstrated at the annual meetings of the Society of Biblical Literature (SBL), the SBL International (ISBL) and the European Association of Biblical Studies (EABS) in recent years. We are confident that the book may constitute an excellent initial step toward digital humanities and that it shall be a perfect guide for all those readers and researchers interested in deepening their knowledge of antiquity from an updated and digital perspective.