

## DE MELISSO XENOPHANE GORGIA Pyrrhonizing Aristotelianism

No agreement as to the nature, the quality, or the date of the pseudo-Aristotelian treatise *On Melissus Xenophanes Gorgias* has yet been reached. As a rule, it has been exploited as a source for the views of Melissus Xenophanes Gorgias rather than studied as a philosophical essay in its own right. An impressive monograph dealing with the whole treatise has been published some years ago by B. Cassin<sup>1</sup>). The methodology of this study differs from the methods of traditional philology and history of philosophy. Yet Cassin is surely right in submitting that *MXG* should be studied for its own sake before one may begin using it as a source for Presocratic thought.

Anyway, the dominant question in the learned literature up till now seems to have been that concerned with the reliability of the doxographical reports dealing with Melissus Xenophanes Gorgias. The traditional and obvious method is that of comparing the doxographies in *MXG* with the extant fragments of the authors involved. The report about Melissus, when compared with what is in the fragments of his book, seems to be rather reliable<sup>2</sup>). Much of the report about Xenophanes, however, cannot be checked against the extant fragments and actually seems to conflict to a consider-

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1) B. Cassin, *Si Parménide... Le traité anonyme De Melisso Xenophane Gorgia. Édition critique et commentaire* (Lille 1980). The Greek text is based upon the editorial principles of the Lille school (always prefer the manuscripts, however garbled); the French translation is even more difficult to make sense of than the unemended Greek.

2) See K. Reinhardt, *Parmenides und die Geschichte der griechischen Philosophie* (Bonn 1916, repr. Frankfurt a.M. 1977), 90–1; G. Reale, *Melisso. Testimonianze e frammenti* (Firenze 1970), 298–329; J. Wiesner, *Ps.Aristoteles MXG: Der historische Wert des Xenophanesreferates* (Amsterdam 1974), 42–171. The list of Aristotle's works *ap. Diog. Laert. V 25* (cited Vorsokr. 30 A 5, I p. 259, 35) has a Πρὸς τὰ Μελίσσου α', no fragments of which survive; one cannot be sure that this lost work was written by Aristotle rather than by another early Peripatetic, but (as Diels–Kranz intimate) it may have been known to the author of *MXG*. As to the reliability of the *De Melisso*, it should, e.g., be noted that πολλά in the antinomy εἷν – πολλά at *MXG* 974a21–b6 differs from πολλά as used by Melissus at Vorsokr. 30 B 8. See further my paper *Theophrastus and the Xenophanes Doxography*, *Mnemosyne* 40 (1987) 286 f. n. 2.

able extent with the genuine bits and pieces that survive<sup>3</sup>), although the more problematical section can be fully paralleled from a difficult page in Simplicius' discussion of the principles in the first book of his commentary on Aristotle's *Physics*<sup>4</sup>). Assuming that Anonymus (as I shall hereafter often call the author of *MXG*) should be as reliable when dealing with Xenophanes as he as a rule has proved to be when dealing with Melissus, influential scholars, using an argument from analogy, have posited that his report is based on (parts of) a poem or poems that are no longer extant<sup>5</sup>). I propose to deal elsewhere with the doxography in the *De Xenophane* and in Simplicius<sup>6</sup>), but wish to point out here that, in the case of Xenophanes, the traditional test of reliability (if, that is, one wishes to avoid a *petitio principii*) seems to prove *MXG* of doubtful value<sup>7</sup>). Finally, we have the section on Gorgias, purportedly containing an abstract from Gorgias' *On Nature or What Is Not*<sup>8</sup>). Although Diels thought otherwise<sup>9</sup>), scholars today as a rule seem to believe that the uncouth account in *MXG* is to be

3) Wiesner, *op. cit.* (*supra*, n. 2), 172–330, with full references to the learned literature. See further my paper (cited *supra*, n. 2), *loc. cit.*

4) Pp. 22, 22–23, 26 Diels, printed as Vorsokr. 21 A 31.

5) Reinhardt, *op. cit.* (*supra*, n. 2), 95–100; K. von Fritz, Xenophanes, in: Pauly–Wissowa, RE Bd. 9A (1967), 1541–62. See Wiesner's criticism, *op. cit.* (*supra*, n. 2), 17 ff., 245 ff., and see further my paper (cited *supra*, n. 2), *loc. cit.*

6) See my paper cited *supra*, n. 2, and my paper Compatible Alternatives: Middle Platonist Theology and the Xenophanes Reception, in: R. van den Broek–T. Baarda–J. Mansfeld (eds.), Knowledge of God in the Greco-Roman World, EPRO 112 (Leiden 1988) 92 ff. In the second of these papers I argue that the sophisticated negative theology attributed to Xenophanes in both *MXG* and *Simpl.* cannot be earlier than Eudorus of Alexandria.

7) Note that the Πρὸς τὰ Ξενοφάνους α' in the list of Aristotle's works *ap.* Diog. Laert. V 25 (cited Vorsokr. 21 A 28, I p. 116, 34) is due to Menagius' emendation (*ms* -γράφου). Aristotle rated Xenophanes much lower than Melissus, cf. Phys. A 2, 184b25–3, Met. A 5, 986b8–987a2; see further my paper Aristotle, Plato, and the Preplatonic Doxography and Chronography, in: G. Cambiano (ed.), Storiografia e dossografia nella filosofia antica (Torino 1986), 14 f., 19 f. He may have considered Xenophanes to be of the same ilk as the theological poets of the hoary past.

8) The list of Aristotle's works *ap.* Diog. Laert. V 25 (cited Vorsokr. 82 B 3, II p. 283, 7) has a Πρὸς τὰ Γοργίου α', no fragments of which survive. It may be compared, as to its possible reception in *MXG*, with the other lost monograph mentioned *supra*, n. 2.

9) Diels did not print *MXG* chs. 5–6 in Vorsokr. (he merely refers to it as a parallel account to the text of Sextus printed as 82 B 3, see II, p. 283, 6 f.), though he included the *MXG* material for Xenophanes (chs. 3–4 as 21 A 28) and Melissus (chs. 1–2 as 30 A 5).

preferred to the much slicker one in Sextus<sup>10</sup>). Although no fragments of Gorgias' *On What Is Not* are extant to be used for a test, one may point out at least one feature in Anonymus' account (*MXG* 979a14 ff.) which is not clearly expressed in Sextus but may be confirmed from another work by Gorgias that does survive (the *Helen*), viz. the discussion of the divergent views persons subscribe to<sup>11</sup>).

Clearly, Anonymus is reliable in the sense that in his descriptive sections he rather faithfully reflects the sources used: a rather good doxography for Melissus, a problematical doxography for Xenophanes paralleled, however, by the account in Simplicius, and a rather good doxography for Gorgias paralleled by what is in Sextus<sup>12</sup>). His aim, however, is not so much to describe the views of earlier thinkers as to criticize them from a systematical point of view. In a way, he is practising history of philosophy as philosophy. Analysis of these critical arguments provides the clues we need for determining the school of thought our anonymous Aristotelian has been influenced by. Fortunately, he explains his method to some extent in part one of *MXG*, the *De Melisso*.

### *De Melisso*

Anonymus' criticism of Melissus begins about half-way through the first chapter of the essay, at 974 b 8. Until the end of this chapter, the arguments are directed against Melissus' basic principle that "nothing comes into being from what is not". In ch. 2, a rather long one, we find a string of arguments aimed against each further assumption said to have been derived by Melissus

10) With some notable exceptions: G. B. Kerferd, *Gorgias on Nature or What Is Not*, *Phronesis* 1 (1955) 3–25, seems to prefer Sextus (note, however, that in his book *The Sophistic Movement* [Cambridge 1981], 96, he argues that for Gorgias' first thesis *MXG* probably is the better source). J. Barnes, *The Presocratic Philosophers* (London 21981), 182–3, 173–4, 471, translates Sextus. G. Mazzara, *Gorgia, Ontologia e Metafisica* (Palermo 1982), too, prefers Sextus. For Sextus' editing of a source compare a case where one can check his abstract against the original: *M. IX* 92–4 ~ *Xen., Mem. I* 4, 2–8.

11) *Helen*, *Vorsokr.* 82 B 11, 13; cf. *infra*, n. 87 and text thereto, n. 96, and see further my paper *Historical and Philosophical Aspects of Gorgias' "On What Is Not"*, in: L. Montoneri–F. Romano (eds.), *Gorgia e la Sofistica*, *Siculorum Gymnasium* 38 (1985, publ. 1987) 243 ff.

12) I shall not, in the present paper, attempt to inquire in a systematical way into the nature of Anonymus' sources or the doxographical traditions he is indebted to.

from his basic principle, and against other assumptions derived from such derived assumptions. I shall not analyse ch. 2 in detail; its structure and purpose will become clear when the polemical arguments in ch. 1 have been analysed. Ch. 1 reveals in an explicit way what is the method applied in the treatise as a whole; understandably, equivalent thematic expositions are lacking in the parts of the essay dealing with Xenophanes and Gorgias.

One should not, Anonymus states (ch. 1, 974b8–19), take just any opinion (δόξαν) as one's starting-point, but rather such opinions as are "most secure" (μάλιστα . . . βέβαιοι). (1) On the supposition that all the things that are believed (δοκοῦντα) are assumed (ὑπολαμβάνεται) in a way that is not correct, one presumably should not adopt Melissus' δόγμα either, for this doctrine, too, will then be one δόξα among the not correct ones<sup>13</sup>), viz. a false generalization which we have assumed (ὑπειλήφραμεν) because some way or other we feel, or sense (αἰσθάνεσθαι), that it holds in many cases. (2) However, if not all φαινόμενα are false but certain correct assumptions (ὑπολήψεις) about some phenomena are permissible, one [or: Melissus] should either (2a) prove (ἐπιδείξαντα) his specific view to be right, or else (2b) assume (ληπτέον) those other well-known (ταύτας) views which are believed to be more correct (than Melissus')<sup>14</sup>). (3, *corollary*:) Assumptions of this (primary) nature should be more secure (βεβαιότερας) than such as are subsequently to be proved (δειχθήσεσθαι) from them (ἐξ ἐκείνων τῶν λόγων: "from these statements").

This neatly dilemmatic argument has the ring of Aristotelian dialectic ("one should start from such views as are most secure", cf. *infra*, p. 269f.) and even apodeictic; yet I would like to submit that it has been contaminated with, or influenced by, Pyrrhonist forms of argument, and more especially by the fourth trope, called ἐξ ὑποθέσεως, of the post-Aenesidemean Pyrrhonist Skeptic Agrippa<sup>15</sup>). Two brief accounts of this trope are extant, one in Diogenes

13) I emend and punctuate the text from 974b12 as follows: . . . ἐκ μηδενός: μία γὰρ τις ἔστ(αι) [ἢ ἐστι] δόξα καὶ αὕτη τῶν οὐκ ὀρθῶν, ἦν κτλ.

14) Text from 974b16: ἢ ἐπιδείξαντα τοιαύτη ποία, ἢ τὰς μάλιστα δοκούσας ὀρθὰς ταύτας ληπτέον κτλ. The grammar is somewhat harsh, but ἐπιδείξαντα and ληπτέον are co-ordinate.

15) For the Aristotelian antecedents of this trope see the seminal paper of A. Long, Aristotle and the History of Greek Skepticism, in: D. J. O'Meara (ed.), *Studies in Aristotle. Studies in Philosophy and the History of Philosophy* 9 (Washington D.C. 1983), 86 ff. For Agrippa's date see *infra*, n. 99 and text thereto. According to P. Moraux, *Der Aristotelismus bei den Griechen von Andronikos bis Alexander von Aphrodisias*, I: Die Renaissance des Aristotelismus im 1. Jh. v. Chr.

Laertius, the other in Sextus<sup>16</sup>). According to Agrippa *ap.* Diog. Laert. IX 89, the trope is applicable “whenever certain persons believe that you must assume (λαμβάνειν) the *primary*<sup>17</sup> things (τὰ

(Berlin–New York 1973), Aristotle’s *First Analytics* were again discussed and possibly commented upon in the first cent. BCE by Boethus of Sidon (164 ff.) and Ariston of Alexandria (186 ff.). Woldemar Görler, in a letter dated 14 July 1984, points out to me that at Cic., Luc. 43–4, i.e. in the part of *Lucullus* containing the Antiochean critique of the epistemology of the Academic Sceptics, an argument is found that resembles Agrippa’s from hypothesis. Lucullus points out that the Academics use definitions and διαυγέσεις etc. This would entail that the doctrines they are defending are true and established and certain (43, *vera et firma* [cf. βέβαιου] *et certa*). However, if one were to ask them whether a particular definition can be transferred over to any other thing, they are in trouble. If they say it can, they can give no reason why the definition at issue is true (43, *quid dicere habeant cur illa vera definitio sit?*), viz. because it applies to anything you like. If they say it cannot, they must, against their own doctrine, admit that the object defined can be perceived as it really is. *Ibid.*, 44, Lucullus argues that *concludi argumentum non potest nisi iis quae ad concludendum sumpta erunt ita probatis ut falsa eiusdem modi nulla possint esse*, i.e. he uses the argument that in a formal proof one has to start from premisses that are certain. Presumably, Antiochus’ critique of the Academic Sceptics is of Stoic provenance (the argument that a Sceptic contradicts himself in that he uses epistemic notions is still a favourite, but this is by the way). The assumption that premisses must be stronger than what follows from them is of course both Aristotelian and Stoic. However, I believe that the argument at Luc. 43 is different from Agrippa’s from hypothesis in that the Sceptic’s opponent does not state the *opposite* of the Academic position. The Neo-Pyrrhonists believed they were immune against criticisms of the kind illustrated by Cicero because, as they stated, they did *not* define anything (Diog. Laert. IX 74). Perhaps Agrippa’s argument from hypothesis was also intended to make the Neo-Pyrrhonist position invulnerable to the Stoic and Antiochean criticism of Academic Scepticism. M. Wesoly, *Le technique argomentative di Gorgia intorno alla tesi che nulla esiste*, in: Montoneri–Romano (*supra*, n. 11), 311 ff., argues that the method of Anonymus is that of Peripatetic dialectic, but he only takes *MXG* chs. 5–6 into account. Because the published version of his paper reached me too late to be taken into account here, I shall discuss it on another occasion.

16) Sextus’ (not Diogenes’) summary description of the five tropes of Agrippa is translated in J. Annas – J. Barnes, *The Modes of Scepticism* (Cambridge 1985), 182, and the fourth is discussed *ibid.*, 89 ff.

17) My italics. It is important to note that according to Diog. Laert., Agrippa spoke of *principles*, of *first* things that are assumed. This is lacking in Sextus’ preliminary account of the fourth trope (quoted below), which seems to imply that according to Agrippa the dogmatists without proof assumed just anything. However, Sextus’ ἀρχῶνται implies that the starting-point is not arbitrary, but an ἀρχή, and the word ἀναποδείκτως has specific point if one thinks of unproved principles. See further the sequel in P. I 173–4, quoted below. Yet the version in Diog. Laert. IX 89 provides a clearer parallel for *MXG* 974a19 ff., for to understand the implications of Sextus’ preliminary description one has to adduce his subsequent exegesis. For τὰ πρῶτα cf. also, e.g., Sext., M. III 10. That one should prove one’s primary assumptions can be paralleled from, e.g., M. III 12–14 (the whole argument ἐξ ὑποθέσεως against the geometers at M. III 6–18 repays close study), IX 34.

πρῶτα τῶν πραγμάτων) as of themselves credible (πιστά)<sup>18</sup>) instead of postulating them; this is useless, because one may hypothetically state the opposite position (τὸ ἐναντίον γὰρ τις ὑποθήσεται)". The version *ap. Sext.*, P. I 168, is considerably but not essentially different: "the dogmatists take as their starting-point (ἀρξονται) something which they do not establish by argument (οὐ κατασκευάζουσιν) but claim to assume (λαμβάνειν) as granted simply and without proof (ἀναποδείκτως)". Sextus next explains, P. I 173–4, that if the author of a hypothesis is (merely) credible (πιστός), we ourselves shall not be less worthy of credence each time we state *the opposite* (τὸ ἀντικείμενον<sup>19</sup>). If what our opponent assumes is true, the fact that he fails to prove his point is nevertheless suspicious; if what he assumes is false, "the primary foundation of his subsequent proofs will be unsound (σαθρὰ ἔσται ἡ ὑποβάθρα τῶν κατασκευαζομένων)". Presumably, Agrippa's trope from hypothesis (apart from being reminiscent of important arguments and positions to be found in Aristotle's works<sup>20</sup>) is a further development of specific aspects of some among Aenesidemus' eight tropes against causal explanation (preserved at Sext., P. I 180–5)<sup>21</sup>). According to the fifth of these (P. I 183), the aetiologists assign causes "according to their particular hypotheses about the elements (κατὰ τὰς ἰδίας τῶν στοιχείων<sup>22</sup>) ὑποθέσεις), not according

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That according to Agrippa any first assumption is as good as any other is a different matter; in Sextus' preliminary description of the fourth trope at P. I 168 the emphasis, however, seems to be on this specific aspect (cf. also his description of the first trope, P. I 165). J. Barnes, *Diogene Laerzio e il Pirronismo*, *Elenchos* 7 (1986) 402 ff. compares the versions of the five tropes in *Diog. Laert.* IX 88–9 and *Sext.*, P. I 164–9, omitting P. I 170–6 from his synopsis. I do not agree with his suggestion (*ibid.*, 406) that the difference between the fourth trope as formulated by *Diog. Laert.* IX 89 and *Sext.*, P. I 168, is that between the "linguaggio dei peripatetici" (*Diog. Laert.*) and "termini stoici" (*Sext.*). There is nothing specifically Stoic about Sextus' wording at I 168, and what Barnes calls Peripatetic language is brought in at P. I 173–4.

18) This seems to be specifically aimed against Aristotle's view that the primary and unprovable principles of a scientific discipline are self-evident, but is also applicable to, e.g., Chrysippus' five primary and undemonstrable argument forms, which by Boethus were placed even above Aristotle's syllogisms (cf. Moraux, *op. cit.* [*supra*, n. 15], 168 f.).

19) See *infra*, nn. 50, 70, and text thereto.

20) See *supra*, n. 15, n. 18.

21) Transl. in *Annas–Barnes* (*supra*, n. 16), 181. See further the illuminating paper of J. Barnes, *Ancient Skepticism and Causation*, in: M. F. Burnyeat (ed.), *The Skeptical Tradition* (Berkeley 1983), 160 ff.

22) Cf. *infra*, n. 47.

to any agreed or common approaches". According to the sixth (*ibid.*), they only admit such facts as are concordant with their particular hypotheses (ταῖς ἰδίαις ὑποθέσεσι). The formula ἰδίας ὑποθέσει also occurs in the seventh aetiological trope (P. I 184).

It is clear that in *MXG, loc. cit.*, Melissus' thesis, or δόγμα<sup>23</sup>), is an instance of what Agrippa *ap. Diog. Laert. IX 89* calls the "primary things" assumed by certain experts – said by Sextus, P. I 168, to be the dogmatists –, or an instance of what Sextus in his comment on the fourth Agrippian trope designates a "primary foundation for subsequent proofs" (P. I 173). Anonymus, using the same formal approach as and part of the vocabulary of Agrippa, claims that this primary Melissean thesis should itself be 'proved' (ἐπιδείξαντα)<sup>24</sup>), just as what follows therefrom should be capable of being proved therefrom (δειχθήσεσθαι). His use of "to start from", ἀρχεσθαι (974b9), is exactly paralleled in Agrippa *ap. Sext.*, P. I 168, ἀρξωνται. Anonymus' terms 'assume' and 'assumptions' (ὑπειλήφαμεν, ὑπολήψεις, ληπτέον) are also paralleled in Agrippa *ap. Sext. P. I 168* and *ap. Diog. Laert. IX 89* (λαμβάνειν). One should of course concede that this vocabulary is common rather than technical, or typically Pyrrhonist (cf. e.g. *sumpta*, Cic., Luc. 44), but it is important to note that Anonymus does not use a different set of words in common use which would have been equally available. The term δόξα, for instance, also is a common word, but it already has a distinctive colouring (comparable to that of δόγμα<sup>25</sup>) in an important fragment of Timon, where Pyrrho is praised for liberating us from the δόξαι of the philosophers of nature<sup>26</sup>). The word for 'firm' or 'secure', βέβαιος, is also common parlance, but it is used in a terminological way by Sextus, see, e.g., M. III 13.

Furthermore, Anonymus' suggestion (974b10–17) that all beliefs may be false but that, if some are not, this should in principle be decidable, much resembles a dilemmatic statement in the last

23) J. Barnes, *The Beliefs of a Pyrrhonist*, PCPS 208 (NS 28) [1982] 6 ff. = *Elenchos 4* (1983) 15 ff., shows that in the vast majority of cases δόγμα refers to a "philosophico-scientific tenet".

24) In principle, this is as un-Aristotelian as can be; cf. Long, *op. cit. (supra)*, n. 15), 85 ff.

25) Cf. *supra*, n. 23.

26) Timon fr. 48.2 Diels (= Pirrone T 60 Decleva Caizzi; Suppl. Hell. 822) *ap. Diog. Laert. IX 64*. Cf. also Timon fr. 9.4 Diels (= T 58 Decleva Caizzi; Suppl. Hell. 783) *ap. Aristoc. ap. Eus.*, PE XIV 18, 19, where δόξης however seems to have a broader denotation. See also the Diog. Laert. text referred to in the next n.

section of the Pyrrhonist doxography in Diog. Laert. IX 92: ἤτοι γοῦν πάντ' ἀληθῆ ῥητέον ἢ πάντα ψευδῆ· εἰ δ' ἐνία ἐστὶν ἀληθῆ κτλ.<sup>27</sup>). Anonymus' point about inadmissible generalizing inductive inferences from experience (974b13–4) recalls Aenesidemus' fourth trope against causal explanation *ap. Sext.*, P. I 182: “when they [*sc.*, the dogmatists] have grasped the way appearances come about, they consider that they have also grasped how non-apparent things come about<sup>28</sup>). Finally, the neatly dilemmatic structure of *MXG* 974b8 ff. much resembles that of the typically Pyrrhonist argument-forms analysed by Janáček<sup>29</sup>).

According to Agrippa's fourth trope *ap. Diog. Laert.* (as confirmed by Sextus' further explanation, P. I 173–4) we may proceed by immediately stating the opinion that is *the opposite* of the view adopted, or assumed, without proof by our opponent. This is exactly what Anonymus does in the next paragraph (974b19 – 975a3). Actually, he deviously and rather cleverly asserts that Melissus himself was aware that two such contrasting options are available. If, Anonymus argues, Melissus is actually right<sup>30</sup>) in holding that you may consider two opinions that cancel one another out (δύο δόξαι ὑπεναντία ἀλλήλαις), these may be formulated as (a) that the many are, necessarily entailing coming into being from what is not, and (b) that coming into being is impossible, entailing that the things that are cannot be many but must be one, etc. But if both these *opposed* assumptions<sup>31</sup>) from which the opposite inferences have been drawn are equally (ὁμοίως) acceptable, “it is nowise more being proven that ‘one’ is rather than that ‘many’ are (οὐδὲν μᾶλλον<sup>32</sup>) ὅτι ἐν ἢ ὅτι πολλὰ δείκνυται)”. Yet if the first assumption, viz. that of Melissus, is

27) Note that the source excerpted argues that no such decision is possible, and next speaks of the δόξας about anything sensible or intelligible that should be assembled.

28) τέταρτον καθ' ὃν τὰ φαινόμενα λαβόντες ὡς γίνεται, καὶ τὰ μὴ φαινόμενα νομίζουσιν ὡς γίνεται κατελιφέναι κτλ. See further Barnes' comment, *op. cit.* (*supra*, n. 21, second item), 164 f.

29) K. Janáček, Zu den skeptischen Widerlegungsformeln, in: *Classica et mediaevalia* Jaroslao Ludvíkovský oblata (Brno 1975), 45 ff.

30) For the καὶ in 974b19 (εἰ γὰρ καὶ) and 29 (εἰ καὶ) see J. D. Denniston, *The Greek Particles* (Oxford 1954), 304 f. One should not translate εἰ καὶ by “even if . . .” and then infer that Anonymus actually does take sides.

31) At 974b24, read ⟨ὕ⟩π⟨ολήψεων⟩ rather than Apelt's π⟨ροτάσεων⟩, which was accepted by Diels. Cf. Gal. PHP V 4. 12, esp. p. 314, 2 . . . καθάπερ ὁ Πύρρων, ἀμφοτέρως [*sc.* τὰς ὑπολήψεις] ὁμοτίμως τιθέμενος κτλ., a testimony lacking in Decleva Caizzi's edition of the *Testimonianze*.

32) Cf. *infra*, n. 51.



“more firm” (βέβαιος μᾶλλον), the inferences drawn therefrom will have been “more proven” (μᾶλλον δέδεικται). However, we actually do find that both these opposed assumptions (ὑπολήψεις), viz. both (a) that nothing can come into being from what is not and (b) that the things that are must be both many and in motion, are views that are at our disposal. Of these assumptions the latter [viz. (b), the one opposed to Melissus’] is “more credible” (πιστή<sup>33</sup>) μᾶλλον, and possibly everyone would much prefer discarding Melissus’ tenet (ἐκείνην τὴν δόξαν) to abandoning the opposite position, viz. that things are many and do move.

Accordingly, if these two possible and available positions as stated are indeed opposites (ἐναντίας . . . τὰς φάσεις) or, in other words, if it is precluded to posit simultaneously *both* that there is coming into being from what is not etc. *and* that things (τὰ πράγματα) are not many<sup>34</sup> etc., these two opposed statements *would be refuted by one another*<sup>35</sup> (ἐλέγχοιτο . . . ὑπ’ ἀλλήλων). Anonymus does not take sides but just states the contradiction which apparently prevents one from taking sides. This is not Aristotelianism, but a form of Skepticism. Melissus is not wrong because the more common view opposed to his thesis is right (as Aristotle himself would argue, see, e.g., Phys. A 2 – 3); rather, he cannot be said either to be right or to be not right because the view opposite to his is equally feasible. Anonymus does not argue in favour of rejecting the thesis of Melissus; he argues in favour of not accepting the thesis of Melissus. A genuine Aristotelian would not use and then dodge using the *principium contradictionis* the way Anonymus does; such a true-blue follower of Aristotle would have made it his job, especially in a case such as the present one where the possibility of developing a science of nature is at stake, to establish which member of the disjunction is true and which is false<sup>36</sup>). The Pyr-

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33) For the common word πιστός in Pyrrhonist contexts see, e.g., Diog. Laert. IX 89, cited *supra*, p. 243f.

34) “Not many” here means ‘one’, things being one precluding that there can be coming into being from what is not.

35) My italics.

36) Aristotelian dialectic as presented in the *Topics* “is a technique for extracting truth [...] or rather for eliminating falsehood” (E. Weil, *The Place of Logic in Aristotle’s Thought*, transl. from the French of 1951 in: J. Barnes – M. Schofield – R. Sorabji (eds.), *Articles on Aristotle, I. Science* [London 1975], 97). See further, e.g., M. Guérout, *Logique, argumentation, et histoire de la philosophie chez Aristote*, in: *La théorie de l’argumentation. Festschrift Perelman* (Louvain-Paris 1963), 431 ff.; E. Berti, *Aristote et la méthode dialectique du Parménide de Platon*, *Revue intern. de philos.* 34 (1980) 341 ff.; J. Morsink, *The*

rhonist, although prepared to employ the *principium contradictionis* in order to diagnose conflicting views, never goes any further for the time being, the time being, for all practical purpose, being all the time available.

What is, or should be, noteworthy is that Melissus' assumption, as the *more secure* one, is here confronted with the view of men in general, which is *more credible*<sup>37</sup>). Presumably, Melissus' assumption is more secure because it is the view of an expert, i.e. an acknowledged philosopher. Yet the concession that it would be relatively more secure is immediately retracted by Anonymus, who once again brings in the argument from hypothesis of Agrippa's fourth trope (975a3–7). Why not (he argues) formulate such statements as are opposed to it (ἴσως τε κἂν φαίη τις τούτοις τάναντία). For Melissus has neither *proved*<sup>38</sup>) (δείξας) that the tenet which is his starting-point (ἀφ' ἧς ἄρχεται) is correct, nor again does he prove that it is more secure (μᾶλλον βέβαιον) than the subsequent tenet (δόξα) which is its corollary, a tenet he proves (δείκνυσι) by just assuming (λαμβάν) the tenet from which according to him it does derive. Why? Also the [opposite] assumption exists (ὑπολαμβάνεται), viz. that it is more probable (μᾶλλον ... εἰκός) that there is coming into being from what is not than that the many should not be.

The final paragraph (975a7–17) then brings in Agrippa's first trope. Anonymus points out that it is strongly affirmed *both* that what is not comes into being, *and* that the many have come into being from what is not – not only by the man in the street, but also and even by persons believed to be experts (σοφῶν)<sup>39</sup>). Anonymus instances such expert views. Hesiod said that first of all Chaos came into being and next Earth and Eros<sup>40</sup>), (from which) all the other things came into being. But 'these', viz. Chaos Earth Eros, came into being "from nothing" (ἐξ οὐδενός)<sup>41</sup>). May others again,

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Mandate of Topics I, 2, Apeiron 16 (1982) 102 ff.; E. Berti, Sul carattere "dialetrico" della storiografia filosofica di Aristotele, in: Cambiano (*supra*, n. 7), 101 ff.

37) We have noticed that according to Anonymus the more general view was acknowledged by Melissus himself as a definite possibility.

38) My italics.

39) For this use of the term σοφοί cf., e.g., Arist., Top. A 1, 100b22 (quoted *infra*, p. 270), and Met. A 1, 982a6–21, esp. *ad finem*.

40) Theog. 116–7, 120. The quotation is not at first hand, see next n.

41) "ex Aristotelis Metaphysicis A 4 Hesiodi versus, quamquam explanationem obtusam non indidem sumpsit, sed ex Phys. Δ 1. 208b30" (thus H. Diels, Aristotelis qui fertur de Melisso Xenophane Gorgia libellus, Abh. Berlin, Ph.-h. Kl. 1 [1900] 9). Also Sext., M. VIII 6–10, who quotes these lines in part

i.e. other experts, hold that nothing ‘is’ and that all things ‘become’ (or: “come into being”, γίνεσθαι), by which they mean that what ‘becomes’ comes into being “not from the things that are” (οὐκ ἐξ ὄντων), for else they could not hold that *all* things ‘become’ (Anonymus clearly thinks of, e.g., vulgate Heracliteanism<sup>42</sup>). It is therefore clear that at least some experts believe (ἐνίοις . . . δοκεῖ) that coming into being from what is not is feasible. With these remarks the general argument against the thesis of Melissus is concluded. We should note that Anonymus again avoids taking sides; he nowhere states that he agrees with the views contradicting Melissus’ (for instance with that concerned with *genesis ex nihilo*) but rests content with driving home his point that mutually exclusive views have been proposed by various groups of persons, and even by experts.

In the later subdivisions of his argument against Melissus’ primary thesis in ch. 1 Anonymus uses the technique – known from Sextus almost *ad nauseam* – of undermining philosophical and other positions by contrasting them with equivalent positions that contradict them. As we have noticed, this occurs according to the rules of Agrippa’s first trope, called ἀπὸ τῆς διαφωνίας. According to Diog. Laert. IX 88, this trope shows that “any inquiry, whether among philosophers or in ordinary life (παρὰ τοῖς

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(VIII 8), seems to be ultimately dependent on Met. A. Note, however, that the well-known Hesiodic lines were not only quoted (in a slightly different form) by Plat., Symp. 178b, but also by a multitude of later authors; see West’s apparatus *ad loc.* Diels’ comment is obscure; what he means is that at *MXG* 1, 975a11 f., Anonymus quotes Hesiod’s lines from Met. A 4 (because Eros is not at Phys. Δ 1), but took his explanation of Chaos as provided in the next chapter (*MXG* 2, 976b15–8) from Phys. Δ 1. In the latter passage, Aristotle explains Hesiod’s Chaos as χώρα and τόπος; at *MXG* 2, 976b15 f., Anonymus explains it as χώρα and κενόν. But he need not have taken his cue from Aristotle, see Plut., De Isid. 374 C, and Sext., M. X 11 (the Sextus passage is foolishly printed by von Arnim as part of SVF II 501 although the Stoics – cf., e.g., SVF I 104–105 – allegorized Chaos as “the wet”). Note that Anonymus treats Hesiod as an expert on a par with the natural philosophers; this is un-Aristotelian, and only feasible before Aristotle (as in Hippias and Plato) or after the Stoical rehabilitation of theological poetry by means of allegorical interpretation; see my paper Aristotle and Others on Thales, or the Beginnings of Natural Philosophy, *Mnemosyne* 38 (1985) 109 ff., and my paper (*supra*, n. 7), 19 f.

Diels does not speak of the exegesis in *MXG* 1, which reminds one of the Christian concept of a *creatio ex nihilo*; what we have in Anonymus, if I may express it this way, is *genesis ex nihilo* (ἐξ οὐδενός really is strong language). See Appendix, *infra*, pp. 274 ff.

42) Cf. Diog. Laert. IX 7 (Vorsokr. 22 A 1): πάντα δὲ γίνεσθαι, and 8: γίνεσθαι τε πάντα.

φιλοσόφους ἢ τῆ συνηθεία), is full of the utmost contradiction and confusion". Sextus, P. I 165, speaking of the ἀνεπίκριτον στάσιον παρὰ τε τῷ βίῳ καὶ παρὰ τοῖς φιλοσόφους, confirms this. The διαφωνία trope, which may of course be linked up with the injunction to submit the opposite hypothesis to be found at the end of Agrippa's fourth trope (Diog. Laert. IX 89, Sext., P. I 173), is a further development<sup>43)</sup> of an important element in the last<sup>44)</sup> of Aenesidemus' famous ten tropes concerned with the suspension of judgement, viz. the one dealing with customs and persuasions<sup>45)</sup>, which also deals with "dogmatist assumptions" (δογματικὰς ὑπολήψεις, a formula found both at Diog. Laert. IX 83 and at Sext., P. I 145). Sextus claims that this trope is mainly concerned with ethics, but Diog. Laert. IX 83 states that it also deals with "the Gods and with the coming into being and the passing away of all the phenomena (περὶ θεῶν καὶ γενέσεως καὶ φθορᾶς τῶν φαινομένων πάντων)". In Philo, the ethical part (Ebr. 200 – 1) comes after that concerning physics. Actually, Sextus instances the "dogmatist assumptions" by adducing, *inter alia*, the fact that some people say that there is one element only whereas others say that there are infinitely many (P. I 151)<sup>46)</sup>. A similar point about the δόγματα ἀσύμφωνα . . . καὶ ἐναντία of the physicists is made in some detail by Philo (Ebr. 198). That Aenesidemus promoted such arguments against the physicists is also clear from his fifth trope against causal explanation, according to which "practically all these men assign causes according to their particular hypotheses about *the elements*"<sup>47)</sup> (Sext., P. I 183; my italics)<sup>48)</sup>.

43) Cf. A. Chatzilysandros, *Geschichte der skeptischen Tropen* (München 1970), 207.

44) In Diog. Laert. IX 83, this is the fifth of Aenesidemus' ten tropes; in Sextus, P. I 37, 145 ff., it is the tenth; in Philo, Ebr. 193 f., it is the last to be paraphrased (Philo does not number the tropes, and he does not provide all ten). For an argument that the trope concerned with customs and persuasions is Aenesidemus' tenth see my paper Number Nine (Diog. Laert. IX 87), *Revue de Philosophie Ancienne* 5 (1987, publ. 1988) 235 ff.

45) Discussed at appropriate length by Annas–Barnes, *op. cit.* (*supra*, n. 16), 156 ff.

46) Cf. also next n., and text thereto.

47) Text quoted *supra*, p. 244. This particular argument was presumably inherited from Aenesidemus' Academic predecessors, cf. Cic., Luc. 117, *de principiis rerum e quibus omnia constant . . . est . . . inter magnos homines summa dissensio*, and the doxography that follows. A.-J. Festugière, "Le scepticisme et les doxographies", *La Révélation d' Hermès Trismégiste, II: Le Dieu Cosmique* (Paris 1949), 362 ff., who discusses Luc. 117 ff. and other doxographies in Cicero, suggests these derive from Carneades and his pupils. Barnes, *op. cit.* (*supra*, n. 21,

Anonymus demonstrates in what way a Pyrrhonist may undermine the position of a dogmatist opponent. First, guided by Agrippa's fourth trope, you ferret out your opponent's principle<sup>49</sup>) upon which all that follows depends, show that it is not proven, and state or quote the contradictory opposite (ἀντικείμενον). The ensuing contradiction may then also be elaborated according to the rules of Agrippa's first trope, from διαφωνία, according to which a plurality of such opposed views may be assembled. In this way, one applies the principle of equipollence (cf. Sext., P. I 8) and the maxim παντι λόγῳ λόγος ἀντικείται<sup>50</sup>) (Diog. Laert. IX 74, Sext., P. I 202–5). Note that Anonymus at 974b18 uses λόγων to refer to what, previously, he had called (and later on is to call) δόξαι. To quote Pyrrhonist parallels for Anonymus' οὐδὲν μᾶλλον (974b24)<sup>51</sup>) would be otiose. According to Sext., P. I 188–91, the formula is to be employed in a neutral way; according to some Skeptics (according to others, *ibid.*, it is used θετικῶς) *ap.* Diog. Laert. IX 75, it has destructive import (ἀναιρετικῶς), which seems to agree with the way Anonymus uses it.

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second item), 196 n. 60, plausibly suggests that στοιχεῖα not only denotes the material elements, but ἀρχαί in general. – See also next n.

48) For the Academic antecedents of what the Pyrrhonists call διαφωνία (note that the term itself does not occur in the extant reports of Aenesidemus' arguments) see also, e.g., Cic., Lael. 32, Tusc. V 83. That Arcesilaus already listed conflicting theoretical views is argued by G. Striker, Über den Unterschied zwischen den Pyrrhoneern und den Akademikern, *Phronesis* 26 (1981) 156 ff., and by A. M. Ioppolo, Doxa ed Epochē in Arcesilao, *Elenchos* 5 (1984) 36, 41. Interesting but neglected information is to be found in a fragment from book V of Chrysippus' *On the Soul*, *ap.* Gal., PHP III p. 170, 10–26 De Lacy (= SVF II 885), too long to be quoted in full. Note that Chrysippus uses the ancient technical term ἀντιλογία, p. 170, 26 De L. = SVF II p. 239, 14–5. Aenesidemus *ap.* Phot., 170a10f., has ἐναντιολογίας. Ultimately, the technique goes back to Gorgias, see *infra*, n. 87 and text thereto.

49) According to the descriptive version in Diog. Laert. and Sextus' comments, see *supra*, n. 17, and text thereto.

50) This Pyrrhonist maxim is calmly attributed to Protagoras by Clement, *Strom.* VI 8, 65.1 (Vorsokr. 80 A 20). Diog. Laert. is more careful, but even his description is coloured by Pyrrhonist notions (IX 51 = Vorsokr. 80 B 6a, πρώτος ἔφη δύο λόγους εἶναι περὶ παντὸς πράγματος ἀντικειμένους ἀλλήλοις). For ἀντικείμενοι λόγοι cf. Sext., P. I 8 (quoted *infra*, n. 70; see also text thereto); on the Pyrrhonist maxim itself see A. A. Long, Sextus Empiricus on the Criterion of Truth, *BICS* 25 (1978) 38 f. One should distinguish between (Protagorean) relativism and Skepticism, although the Neopyrrhonists did use relativistic arguments for a skeptical purpose (cf. Annas–Barnes, *op. cit.* [*supra*, n. 16], 96 f., 126 f., 128 ff., 148 f., 163 f.).

51) Cf. *infra*, p. 258.

To round off this analysis, I would like to quote a passage from Sextus, P. III 65, in which, as in the polemical section of *MXG* ch. 1, a philosophical doctrine is contrasted both with the view of ordinary people and with the tenets of certain other philosophers: "It is assumed by ordinary people (ὁ ... βίος) and some of the philosophers that motion exists, and by Parmenides and Melissus and some others that it does not. The Sceptics say that motion is no more (μὴ μᾶλλον) existent than non-existent. For it appears that motion exists insofar as the phenomena are concerned, whereas insofar as the philosophical argument (λόγῳ) is concerned it does not exist".

It is most interesting to find Melissus in this passage<sup>52</sup>). The point concerned with motion is of subordinate importance in *MXG* ch. 1, but it is there (e.g., 974b27a). The philosophical λόγος of Parmenides and Melissus is not ridiculed or summarily rejected by Sextus, but accepted as being no less cogent than the contrasting view of ordinary people and of certain other philosophers. As we have noticed, Anonymus too points out that Melissus' primary thesis is equally strong as what one may formulate to oppose it; it may even be more secure, i.e. better argued, than what others believe, although what people in general believe is more credible than the view of a single expert. Furthermore, according to Anonymus Melissus' primary thesis cannot really be said to be more secure than the popular view, because the doctrines of his philosophical opponents are equally well-argued (yet both Melissus' thesis and that of his philosophical opponents remain equally unproven). The ensuing stalemate is the same as that produced by means of the assembling of mutually exclusive views in the two parallel passages in Sextus quoted above.

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52) P. III 65 is paralleled by the more extensive M. X 45-9, where more names are provided. In the first group, we there have ordinary people and the majority of the philosophers: Pythagoras, Empedocles, Democritus, Epicurus, the Peripatetics, the Stoics, and "many others". In the second group we have Parmenides and Melissus, "called stoppers of Nature and non-physicists by Aristotle", and Diodorus Cronus (Megariker fr. 122 Döring). *Ad finem* we then have the opposition between phenomena and philosophical argument. Scraps of M. X 45-6 (cf. also Vorsokr. 28 A 26, second text) are printed as Arist., *De phil.* fr. 9 Ross, an attribution which may be doubted; Aristotle's point is that of *Phys.* A 2-3, and the wording of Sextus' pseudo-quotation need not be Aristotelian. In the Revised Oxford Translation, *The Complete Works of Aristotle*, II, (Princeton 1984), 2390 F 7, second text, the transl. runs "immobilists and unnaturalists", the words τῆς φύσεως being deleted.

I have promised that I shall not study *MXG* ch. 2 in detail. In this chapter, Anonymus discusses the various subsequent tenets said to have been inferred by Melissus from his primary principle. For argument's sake this primary principle is now provisionally posited (975a22–3: *πρῶτον τεθέντος*<sup>53</sup>) ὁ πρῶτον λαμβάνει). To each separate inference by Melissus, Anonymus monotonously opposes the contrary view of another philosopher, or of other philosophers, often supporting his exposition by verbatim quotations from these others. He does so without ever taking sides in the dispute. The discussion uses a variety of approaches; the passage about Empedocles' contrasting view (975a36 – b16), for instance, shows that Empedocles, although sharing Melissus' tenet that there can be no coming into being from what is not, still accepts plurality. This does not entail that, according to Anonymus, Melissus' inference that there is unity is wrong and Empedocles' opposite inference that there is plurality is right, but merely that the principle *P* as assumed by both is compatible with contrasting inferences, or trivially underdetermined by contrasting logical or empirical arguments in its favour<sup>54</sup>). Anaxagoras' doctrine of an infinite number of eternal elements, or principles, is in a similar way opposed to Melissus' thesis that there is only one infinite thing (975b16–21), and Anaximander's doctrine that the one element is water (*sic*) coupled with Anaximenes' doctrine that it is air<sup>55</sup>) and other similar doctrines is contrasted with Melissus' tenet that unity excludes plurality (975b21–27). Parmenides' finite sphere is contrasted with Melissus' infinite being (976a6–10) – a dispute in which Anonymus again does not take sides. In other words, Anonymus consistently and rigorously applies Agrippa's first trope, that from *διαφωνία*. There is no need to spell this out in full detail. I only note that one of Anonymus' first particular points (975a28 f.), concerned with the infinite as being either one or many, recalls the stock example from Aenesidemus' tenth trope<sup>56</sup>) cited above: “we oppose dogmatist assumptions to one another when we say that some declare that there is one element only, others an infinite number” (Sext., P. I 151).

53) For *τεθέντος* in a Pyrrhonist context cf., e.g., Sext., P. I 193, 197.

54) One may compare Sext., M. IX 29, on the *πολύτροπον τῆς ἀποφάσεως* compatible with the assumption that there are gods.

55) At 975b24 read ὁ δὲ Ἀναξιμένης *ἀέρα*.

56) Cf. *supra*, nn. 44, 47, 48, and text thereto. Phil., Ebr. 199 (also from Aenesidemus' tenth trope), opposes those who say the universe is infinite to those who say it is finite (cf. *MXG* 2, 975b35–976a1).

· *De Xenophane*

This analysis of the arguments *contra* in *MXG* chs. 1–2 is confirmed by what we find in the critical discussion of Xenophanes in ch. 4. Anonymus first establishes that Xenophanes' primary assumption is identical with Melissus' (977b21–2, *πρῶτον μὲν οὖν λαμβάνει . . . ὥσπερ ὁ Μέλισσος*). Consequently, a thoroughgoing critique of this principle, already provided in ch. 1, would be superfluous. Anonymus therefore does not start with an Agrippian argument "from hypothesis", but he does use the Agrippian (and Aenesidemean) argument from *διαφωνία*. Xenophanes' argument that God is what is most powerful (and so One) is neutralized by opposing an argument from everyday life, viz. that this is not "what is assumed according to [polytheist] custom" (977b28, *οὐ δοκεῖ δὲ τοῦτο κατὰ τὸν νόμον*). The sophisticated negative theology attributed to Xenophanes in *MXG* (and Simplicius)<sup>57</sup> according to which God "is neither unlimited nor limited" is canceled out by Parmenides' opposite view, according to which the One is a Sphere (987b7–20); needless to say, this again is a dispute in which Anonymus does not take sides. It is not necessary to follow this out in detail; other examples of the argument from *διαφωνία* may be added from this chapter almost *ad lib*.

Far more interesting (or so I believe) than a detailed analysis of *MXG* chs. 3 and 4 from the point of view of the Pyrrhonizing aspect of the arguments to be found there, is what may be pointed out as the result of an inquiry into the argument of chs. 5 – 6, on Gorgias.

*De Gorgia*

In ch. 5, Anonymus first summarizes Gorgias' argument as a whole: (1) Nothing is; (2) if it [i.e. Something in the required sense] is, it cannot be known; (3) if it is and can be known by someone, it cannot be communicated to other persons (979a12–3).

According to Anonymus, the first thesis, viz. that Nothing is, was argued by Gorgias in *two* ways<sup>58</sup>). He first summarizes an

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57) Cf. *supra*, n. 6.

58) See H.-J. Newiger, *Untersuchungen zu Gorgias' Schrift Über das Nichtseiende* (Berlin 1973), 14–18. G. Kerferd, 1955, 5–23 (cf. Kerferd 1981, 96) [*opp. cit.*, *supra* n. 10], argues that the "particular proof" (for which see below) proves that 'not-being' is not and the argument from antinomy that 'being' is not.



argument from antinomy, based upon the contradictions to be found among those who in one way or another posit that Something is (979a14–23). Some point out that it is one and not many, others that it is many and not one; some, again, point out that it has not come into being, others that it has. Gorgias argued against all these pairs of opposed views<sup>59</sup>) by showing that if it (Something, etc.) is, it is neither one nor many and neither generated nor ungenerated; therefore “Nothing is”. If it were, it would have to be according to one or the other of these contrasting views; that it is according to none of these he attempts to prove part in the manner of Melissus and part in that of Zeno<sup>60</sup>). Gorgias’ antinomic counter-arguments are not set out here by Anonymus in detail, but follow much later, viz. in the next chapter (979b20 – 980a1). In between, Anonymus sets out and neutralizes (979a34 – b19) what he calls Gorgias’ “first and particular proof” of the thesis that Nothing is (979a23–4, τὴν πρώτην ἴδιον<sup>61</sup>) αὐτοῦ ἀπόδειξιν<sup>62</sup>). This is ‘first’ not only in the sense that it was to be found before the argument from antinomy (cf. 979b20), but also in that of being ‘primary’. The argument from antinomy (which is not neutralized by Anonymus, see below) therefore comes second in two senses of the word.

Anonymus next gives us a report on Gorgias’ second thesis, viz. that if (Something) is it cannot be known (980a9–19), and concludes with an account of the third thesis, viz. that knowledge of this (Something) cannot be communicated by one person to another (980a19 – b17). Neither the second nor the third thesis are

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In this way, he reconciles *MXG* and Sextus (Sext., M. VII 66–76, has woven the “particular proof” and that from antinomy into a single whole: 66–7 part of the “particular proof”, 68–74 a version of the argument from antinomy, 75–6 another part of the “particular proof”). But *MXG* 5, 979a21–5, unimpeachably states that the “particular proof” shows that both ‘to be’ and ‘not to be’ are not. Kerferd 1955, 19, begs the question by assuming that at the beginning of his piece Gorgias “stated his whole thesis and not merely that part of it which he proposed to deal with first”.

59) 979a18, συλλογίζεται κατ’ ἀμφοτέρων. The comma should be put before not after ταῦτα. The structure of Gorgias’ argument from antinomy is similar to that of some arguments of Zeno of Elea: if  $p$ , then either  $q$  or  $-q$ ; now neither  $q$  nor  $-q$ ; so  $-p$ .

60) This does not pertain to the structure of Gorgias’ argument, but refers to the contents of 979b20 ff.

61) One may also translate ‘special’. It is tempting to recall the ἴδια ὑποθέσεις of Aenesidemus’ fifth, sixth, and seventh trope against causal explanation, and the word ἰδιαζόντως from his fourth (Sext., P. I 182–4). See *supra*, p. 244 f.

62) Also called λόγος, 979a33, b20.

argued against by Anonymus. At 980b17–20, rounding off the part of his essay dealing with Gorgias, he summarizes the third thesis and then laconically seems to state that all these puzzles (ἀπορίαι) are those of other earlier thinkers (ἐτέρων ἀρχαιοτέρων) as well, so that it is possible to scrutinize them in the investigation – which we do not have – dealing with those others<sup>63</sup>). Because Gorgias’ “first and particular proof” of his first thesis (viz., that Nothing is) is the only argument contradicted by Anonymus, only this opposed argument may seem to be relevant to the inquiry into the methods and scope of *MXG*. However, in order to understand the argument *contra* we must first understand what the “particular proof” itself is about. This is not easy. The text is sometimes almost unintelligible; accordingly, scholars have differed both about its *constitutio* and its interpretation. As a rule it has been assumed, quite plausibly, that one may use the text of the opposed argument in order to restore that of the “particular proof”. At any rate, one should not, I believe, emend both these texts in too drastic a way. But before we can deal with the structure of the opposed argument, we cannot avoid discussing the text and interpretation of the “particular proof”.

One thing is sufficiently clear: the “particular proof” turns on the equivocalness of the expression ‘to be’. This, at any rate, is what Anonymus points out, and it is accepted by most scholars<sup>64</sup>). Gorgias, as we would put it, does not distinguish between the existential, or referential, sense of ‘to be’ (Anonymus calls this the unqualified or absolute sense: ἀπλῶς εἶπεῖν, 979a36, b6–7), and the predicative sense, viz. that of the copula, or of identity (Anonymus calls this “being in the similar way”: ὁμοίως<sup>65</sup>), 979a36, b5).

63) For an interpretation of this difficult sentence see *infra*, p. 265.

64) The analysis of O. Apelt, Gorgias bei Pseudo-Aristoteles und bei Sextus Empiricus, Rh. M. 43 (1888) 206–7, is still exemplary; see further Newiger, *op. cit.* (*supra*, n. 58), 30. Kerferd 1955 (cf. *supra*, n. 10) added the predicative sense of ‘to be’, but of course went on speaking of its “existential import”; his view is criticized by C. M. J. Sicking, Gorgias und die Philosophen (1964), repr. in: C.-J. Classen (ed.), Sophistik (Darmstadt 1976), 405–7. For Gorgias’ juggling with the referential and predicative senses of ‘to be’ see further my paper (*supra*, n. 11) 264 f.

65) This unusual usage may be Gorgias’ own, cf. Plat., Parm. 162a, a passage clearly echoing Gorgias (for Plato’s reception of Gorgias in Parm. see further my paper cited *supra*, n. 11, 258 ff.). What Anonymus means is that both ‘being’ and ‘not-being’ may be the subject of a predicative identity statement (of the form ‘x is x’) and accordingly ‘be’ in a “similar” (or if you wish, “the same”) “sense” or “way”. Of these two opposites, however, only ‘being’ can be the proper subject of a sentence of the form ‘x is’.

Or rather, as we shall find, Gorgias without compunction argues from the ‘similar’ to the ‘absolute’<sup>66</sup>).

The summary in *MXG* of the ‘particular proof’ is regrettably short. I translate what I believe to be the correct text (979a23 – 33), italicizing those cases where the equivocality of ‘is’ is at its most flagrant so that copula, or identity, can blossom out into existence or, if you wish, the predicative sense comes to have existential import:

“... his first, particular proof, in which he says that neither to be is [or: can be<sup>67</sup>)] nor not to be.

For if ‘not-being’<sup>68</sup>) *is* not-being, what-is-not is no less than what-is, for what-is-not *is* what-is-not, and what-is, what-is. [...]

But if ‘not-being’ is in the similar way<sup>69</sup>), ‘being’, he says, {the opposite}, is not. For if ‘not-being’ *is*, it is fitting that ‘being’ is not. So for this reason Nothing can be, unless being and not-being are the same.

However, if they are the same, then for this reason, too, Nothing can be. For what-is-not, is not, and what-is as well, inasmuch as it is the same as what-is-not”.

We do not have this proof in its original and majestic Gorgian form, but as a much later paraphrase. Expressions that cannot be vintage Gorgias have crept in; in 979a29, I have bracketed “{the opposite}” because τὸ ἀντικείμενον, the Stoic term for a member of an exclusive disjunction<sup>70</sup>), cannot be paralleled from any verbatim

66) Two passages from Aristotle may be quoted from which Anonymus’ *distinguo* may ultimately derive; both these texts, moreover, are concerned with a mistake as to the being of what-is-not which for all practical purposes is indistinguishable from the one in Gorgias as diagnosed by Anonymus. The first is *Soph. El.* 5, 166b36–167a2: οἱ δὲ [sc. παραλογισμοί] παρὰ τὸ ἀπλῶς τότε ἢ πῆ λέγεσθαι καὶ μὴ κυρίως, [...] οἷον εἰ τὸ μὴ ὄν ἐστι δοξασιόν, ὅτι τὸ μὴ ὄν ἐστιν· οὐ γὰρ ταῦτο (τὸ) εἶναι τέ τι καὶ εἶναι ἀπλῶς. The second, even more telling passage is *Rhet. B* 24, 1402a2–5: ἐτι ὡσπερ ἐν τοῖς ἐριστικοῖς παρὰ τὸ ἀπλῶς καὶ μὴ ἀπλῶς ἀλλὰ τί, γίνεταί φαινόμενος συλλογισμός, οἷον ἐν μὲν τοῖς διαλεκτικοῖς ὅτι ἐστι τὸ μὴ ὄν, ἐστι γὰρ τὸ μὴ ὄν μὴ ὄν.

67) Transl. proposed by Kerferd 1955, 7, and 1981, 94–5 [*opp. cit.*, *supra*, n. 10]. However it is not possible to use it for all instances of ‘to be’ in the proof.

68) In this passage, I have put ‘being’ and ‘not-being’ between inverted comma’s each time the infinitive in Greek is preceded by the article.

69) See *supra*, n. 65, and *infra*, n. 73.

70) Adopted by the Pyrrhonists, cf., e.g., Sext., *P. I* 8, τὴν ἐν τοῖς ἀντικείμενοις πράγμασι καὶ λόγοις ἰσοσθένειαν. Cf. also *supra*, n. 50.

Presocratic text listed in Kranz' Index. But it fits the context *ad sententiam*.

Another expression is more difficult, viz. 979a27–8, ὥστε οὐδὲν μᾶλλον εἶναι ἢ οὐκ εἶναι τὰ πράγματα (“so that things are no-wise more than they are not”). I have omitted this clause from the translation and replaced it by square brackets. As Kerferd has proved<sup>71</sup>), in its present position this constitutes a flagrant and inadmissible *non sequitur* unless the text of the preceding lines is drastically emended. No such interference is called for. Sextus, in the parallel version, has nothing corresponding to this little clause<sup>72</sup>), and the simplest solution is that Anonymus interpolated it in the “particular proof”. If the conclusion that does *not* follow from the unemended premiss is eliminated as an interpolation, what follows after ὥστε . . . πράγματα links up smoothly with what comes before<sup>73</sup>). If one wants to preserve the phrase at all cost, it has to be transposed to the beginning of the “particular proof”, i.e. to a position immediately after 979a24, οὐκ ἔστιν οὔτε εἶναι οὔτε μὴ εἶναι. In that case, it probably replaces a more original ὥστε οὐδὲν τῶν ὄντων εἶναι<sup>74</sup>) which, in the summary, would indeed be entailed by the preceding sentence. However this may be, what is clear is that Anonymus either interpolated a Pyrrhonizing formula or reformulated Gorgias' thesis in a Pyrrhonist way. Although the expression οὐδὲν μᾶλλον can be paralleled from authors even anterior to Pyrrho<sup>75</sup>), it is here used destructively, i.e. in what according to Diog. Laert. is one of the Pyrrhonist ways<sup>76</sup>).

Anonymus argues against the “particular proof” by again applying Agrippa's fourth trope, from hypothesis (*MXG* 6, 979a34 – b19). The *constitutio* of the Greek text is occasionally problematical, but these problems may be solved once the overall structure of the argument has been recognised.

Anonymus first singles out his opponent's principle, and then argues against each separate inference of Gorgias simply by

71) Kerferd 1955 (*supra*, n. 10), 8f.

72) See Ph. H. De Lacy, οὐ μᾶλλον and the Antecedents of Scepticism, *Phronesis* 3 (1958) 60–1.

73) Especially if – as I submit one should – we emend ὁμως in 979a28 to ὁμ(οί)ως, cf. 979a36 and b5 (see also *supra*, n. 63 and text thereto).

74) This is emphatically denied by Newiger, *op. cit.* (*supra*, n. 58), 21–2, 32, but the ὄντα at Isocr. Hel. 3 and Antid. 268 (both at Vorsokr. 82 B 1) are the theoretical constructs of the Presocratics, and οὐδὲν τῶν ὄντων εἶναι is how Isocrates formulates the thesis of Gorgias.

75) See De Lacy, *op. cit.* (*supra*, n. 72), 59 ff.

76) Cf. *supra*, p. 251.

stating the opposite. He has noticed that the “particular proof” hinges on the premiss that ‘not-being’ *is*. He therefore begins with a *distinguo*, 979a35 – b1: “if what-is-not *is*, it must [a] be either absolutely<sup>77)</sup> (ἀπλῶς εἰπεῖν) or [b] it is what-is-not in the similar way<sup>78)</sup> (ὁμοίως<sup>79)</sup>”, sc. the way what-is is what-is. He continues: “this is neither perceived (φαίνεται) to be so nor logically necessary (ἀνάγκη)”. What can neither be perceived nor proved<sup>80)</sup> is that what-is-not would either be in an absolute sense or be in a similar way as what-is, if, that is, “*is* in a similar way” is interpreted in the manner of the “particular proof”. Anonymus continues: “assumed that there are two things, the one being, the other seeming (δοκοῦντος), it is both true and not that what-is-not, *is*”. There is only one interpretation of the ‘is’ in “what-is-not”, viz. a semantical one according to which this ‘is’ is something we (in a loose sense) believe<sup>81)</sup>. The word ὡσπερ εἶ, which I have translated “assumed”, shows that what comes next is only stated for argument’s sake. One may believe that “what-is-not, *is*” insofar as such a belief is a thought in which the ‘is’ is believed to have referential or existential import although it merely is a semantical entity.

It will be clear that Anonymus’ argument against Gorgias’ first premiss in the “particular proof” proceeds along the same lines as his argument against the primary thesis of Melissus in ch. 1; understandably, it is not spelled out in the same detail. What Anonymus affirms, however, is that Gorgias’ first premiss is not proven, viz. neither logically nor experientially – just as, previously, that of Melissus turned out to be not proven. Furthermore, Anonymus had begun by saying that Gorgias’ inference that “No-thing is” in no way *follows from* (συμβαίνει ἐξ, 979a34) what he had said before. This agrees with the rules of Agrippa’s fourth trope, according to which inferences only follow if the first principle is solid and undisputable.

77) I.e. in the existential or referential sense.

78) I.e. in the predicative or identity sense.

79) I follow the text of *Lipsiensis*, always a good guide, proposing only three minimal corrections: 979a35–6 εἰ τὸ μὴ ὄν ΕΣΤΙΝ, ἢ ἀπλῶς εἰπεῖν (ἂν) εἴη (ἢ) καὶ ἔστιν ὁμοίως μὴ ὄν. I have written ΕΣΤΙΝ in capitals to symbolize that it is ambiguous. (ἢ), I suggest, was lost through haplography, and I have added (ἂν) for grammatical reasons (the third modification, ὁμοίως [for -ov] is also made by the editors of the text). The μὴ ὄν in the protasis is the subject of both εἴη and ἔστιν in the apodosis. For ἢ . . . ἢ καὶ see Denniston, *op. cit.* (*supra*, n. 30), 306.

80) For αἰσθάνεσθαι and φαινόμενα cf. MXG 1, 974b14–5; for ἀνάγκη cf. 1, 974b20, and 2, 975a23.

81) Cf. MXG 4, 978a25–28. δοκοῦντος is in *Lips.*

Proceeding further by stating the opposites to the inferences drawn by Gorgias from his premiss that “what-is-not, is”, Anonymus first argues against the view submitted at the beginning of the “particular proof”. Gorgias had stated that “neither to be is nor not to be” (979a24). Anonymus counters “why now is neither to be nor not to be, viz.: both? Neither of them is not, because, as he states, ‘not-being’ would *be* no less than ‘being’, since also ‘not-being’ would be something, for no one, he [sc. Gorgias] says, will say that ‘not-being’ would be in no way whatever”<sup>82</sup>). Gorgias had affirmed that both ‘to be’ and ‘not to be’ are not; Anonymus counters by stating the *opposite*, viz. that “neither is not”, or that both ‘are’, since even ‘not to be’ *is*, as Gorgias, indeed, had argued himself. This he had done in his first premiss, but apparently at greater length than transpires from Anonymus’ transcript of the “particular proof”. At any rate, the substantial phrase beginning with . . . γὰρ advises us of a further observation adduced by Gorgias in support of his premiss. Just as Melissus was used against Melissus (for he had recognized the view opposed to his own tenet<sup>83</sup>), so this time Gorgias is played off against Gorgias.

Anonymus now returns to his *distinguo* (979b3–6: ἀπλῶς εἰπεῖν / ὁμοίως). First, he argues the *opposite* of his opponent’s thesis that what-is-not is in a *similar* way as that what-is (for which see 979b25–7). “. . . if what-is-not is what-is-not, then for this reason what-is-not would *not* be in a similar way as what-is. For the former ‘is what-is-not’, but the latter is *in addition to this*” (979b3–5, my italics). In other words, the former only ‘is’ in a predicative or identity sense as the subject of a sentence with ‘being’ as part of a nominal predicate (“what-is-not is what-is-not”), whereas the latter not only ‘is’ in such a predicative or identity sense (“what-is is what-is”) but also in an unqualified or referential sense, as the subject of a sentence with ‘being’ as a verbal predicate (“what-is is [i.e. exists]”).

82) As has been pointed out by scholars (see Newiger, *op. cit.* [*supra*, n. 58], 43–4, the subject of φησὶν (979b4) must be Gorgias. At 979b3–4, I propose οὐδέεις, φησὶν, εἰ(πη ἂν εἰ)ναί, which is simpler than the other emendations that have been suggested. No further changes are necessary. Editors have considered 979b1–2 τὰδε ἄμφορ οὐθέτερον οὐκ ἔστιν to be a separate clause (for a discussion of this “hopeless sentence” see Newiger, *ibid.*, 46–7), but τὰδε ἄμφορ belongs with what goes before, whereas only a comma should separate οὐθέτερον οὐκ ἔστιν from what follows. K. Algra points out to me that the punctuation in the old Didot edition resembles the one argued in the present paper; the translation, however, does not.

83) 974b19–23; see *supra*, p. 246.

Next, Anonymus assumes for argument's sake that one could truly say of what-is-not that it 'is' in an unqualified sense (ἀπλῶς εἶπειν). This part of his counter-argument is directed against the first section of the "particular proof" and its conclusion that "Nothing is" which, according to Anonymus, is equivalent to "all things are not" (ἅπαντα μὴ εἶναι, 979b8). He argues, explicitly, that the *opposite* inference is equally feasible (αὐτὸ γὰρ οὕτω γε τοῦναντίον ἔοικεν γίγνεσθαι, 979b9): "Why does it follow that all things are not rather than that they are? For on his assumption it is exactly the opposite which would seem to ensue. For if (a) what-is-not is what-is and (b) also what-is is what-is, all things are. For both the things that are and those that are not, are" (979b8–11). "For it is not [logically] necessary that, if what-is-not is, what-is consequently is not" (979b11–2) – a statement which is the exact *opposite* of that in the "particular proof" (979a29–30, "for if 'not-being' is, it is fitting that 'being' is not"). But even if the point in dispute is conceded, Anonymus pursues, the conclusion that "Nothing is" still would not follow: "if one would concede the latter, and what-is-not would be and what-is would not be, there still would be ⟨something⟩: for according to his reasoning the things that are not would be". One may note in passing that a Pyrrhonist's opponent can never win. Anonymus first argues against Gorgias' inference by rejecting or at least neutralizing a premiss, and then argues against it by conceding the same premiss. We have noticed a similar procedure in the argument against Melissus<sup>84</sup>.

Finally, Anonymus argues against the last section of the "particular proof", which was based on the assumption that 'to be' and 'not to be' [or: 'to be not'] would be "the same" (ταυτόν). Again, he is in a position to state the *opposite* of the conclusion "Nothing is" inferred by his opponent, who had argued that, if they are the same, both what-is and what-is-not are not. According to Anonymus, it is perfectly legitimate to stand this argument on its head and to infer that, if they are the same, both what-is-not and what-is are, so that all things are (979b16–9).

In this way, Gorgias' first thesis as underpinned by the "particular proof" is neutralized by Anonymus' consistent application of the injunction of Agrippa's fourth trope, viz. that one should state the contradictory opposite. This time, the argument involved had to be presented in full because Gorgias' thesis is radically

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84) *Supra*, p. 241 f. It is standard practice in Sextus, see, e.g., P. II 22–42.

different from that of Melissus-cum-Xenophanes neutralized in the previous parts of the essay.

We may now briefly turn to the other or second proof provided by Gorgias in support of his first thesis which, as we have noticed, was summarized by Anonymus before he formulated the abstract of the "particular proof" which, as he carefully pointed out, came first in Gorgias' exposition<sup>85</sup>). Consistently, having completed his neutering of the "first and particular proof", he now sets out Gorgias' second proof in some detail. There is even more than one would expect from reading the summary, because the proof turns out to be not only about generated *vs* ungenerated and one *vs* many, but also about motion (980a1-8). The part dealing with the first of these antinomies is extant (a few corruptions, of course). That dealing with the second antinomy has suffered badly in transmission, but may be reconstructed *ad probabilem sententiam*. Of the third part, only the argument against motion has survived; the assumption that the argument against immobility, which must have been placed immediately after the badly damaged second argument from antinomy, has been lost in transmission is inescapable<sup>86</sup>). The arguments themselves, or rather what survives of them, are highly interesting; it is hardly possible to doubt that they were indeed formulated by Gorgias<sup>87</sup>) [who therefore is the πρώτος εὑρετής of the argument from διαφωνία], although presumably they were reworded and in places made more up to date.

What is most remarkable, and calls for an explanation, is that Anonymus does not argue against Gorgias' second proof shoring up his first thesis<sup>88</sup>). A true-blue Aristotelian would have cut knots and said that some things are generated and other things are not, that things are many, and that some things are in motion and other things are not. But Anonymus just describes Gorgias' arguments from antinomy without taking sides in the dispute. The explanation, I believe, is simple. Gorgias' dogmatist first thesis that "Nothing is" had been neutralized by the Agrippian arguments from hypothesis against the "first and particular proof". But a person with Pyrrhonist sympathies is in no position to argue against an

85) Cf. *supra*, pp. 254 f.

86) Cf. Sicking, *op. cit.* (*supra*, n. 64), 390, and Newiger, *op. cit.* (*supra*, n. 58), 75-107. The issue of motion *vs* immobility is listed by Xenophon, see next n.

87) Cf. his *Helen*, Vorsokr. 82 B 12, 13, and the early parallel in Xen., Mem. I 1, 14. See further my paper (*supra*, n. 7), 36 ff.

88) Sextus, in the parallel passage (printed as Vorsokr. 82 B 3), doesn't either.



argument exploiting the conflicts and disagreements among the experts and ordinary people. To state the opposite to an argument from *διαφωνία* would entail taking sides. Gorgias' inference that 'what-is' is neither provably one nor provably many, etc., is perfectly acceptable to a Pyrrhonist; he merely will refuse to accept this as a proof of the dogmatist tenet that "Nothing is".

This observation, I believe, also holds for Anonymus' treatment of Gorgias' second and third thesis, viz. (2) that if Something is it cannot be known and (3) that if it can be known it cannot be communicated to others. I can deal only in the briefest possible way with the philosophically most entertaining arguments which are the underpinnings of these further theses.

The second thesis hinges on the different views different persons have. A person with Pyrrhonist sympathies would hardly be in a position to object against this observation's being pertinent to a denial of the claim that unqualified knowledge is possible. I skip the first argument in support of the second thesis; it is a relativistic one, reminiscent of Protagoras<sup>89</sup>). The next argument has a Pyrrhonist ring, 980a14–8: "just as (sc., what is conceived) is nowise more (οὐδὲν μᾶλλον) than what we see, so what we see is nowise more (οὐδὲν μᾶλλον) than what we think<sup>90</sup>). For, just as in the former case many could see these things [or: the same things], so in the latter many of us could think these things [or: the same things]. Why now should things of this nature [sc., those that are seen] be, rather than those of that nature<sup>91</sup>) [sc., those that are thought]? How the true things are is unclear (ἄδηλον). Therefore, things cannot be known to us, even if they are". The idea behind the opposition between things seen and things thought is, of course, that things as seen (by one person, or by a group of persons) may conflict with things as thought (by another person, or by another group of persons), and conversely. Things as perceived and things as thought are routinely opposed to one another in Pyrrhonist arguments<sup>92</sup>). How those things are which are true is

89) See, e.g., G. Calogero, *Studi sull' Eleatismo* (rev. ed. Firenze 21977), 250, 260–1; Newiger, *op. cit.* (*supra*, n. 58), 138–40.

90) I restore the text at 980a14–5 as follows: ἀλλ' ὡσπερ οὐδὲν μᾶλλον [sc., τὰ φρονούμενα, cf. a13a] <ἢ> ἃ ὁρώμεν ἔστιν, οὕτω <γ'> οὐδὲν μᾶλλον ἃ ὁρώμεν ἢ <ἄ> διανοούμεθα.

91) 980a 17–8 τὸ οὖν μᾶλλον δη . . . α τοιάδ' ἔστι has been the despair of editors. I follow Apelt, who emended τὸ to τ(ι). To fill in the lacuna, I propose to write μᾶλλον <τὰ τοιάδ' ἢ <τ>ἄ τοιάδ'.

92) Cf., e.g., Sext., P. I 9, φαινόμενα δὲ λαμβάνομεν νῦν τὰ αἰσθητά, διόπερ ἀντιδιαστέλλομεν αὐτοῖς τὰ νοητά. The assumption of a Pyrrhonist back-

“unclear” (another Pyrrhonist *shibboleth*) because of the equipollence of what is sensed and what is thought. The general conclusion from both arguments attributed to Gorgias is loosely formulated in a Pyrrhonist way: ὥστε καὶ εἰ ἔστιν, ἡμῖν γε ἄγνωστ<sup>93</sup>) ἂν εἶναι τὰ πράγματα.

The arguments in support of Gorgias’ third thesis, viz. that unqualified knowledge cannot be communicated, are also concerned with differences among persons. Most of these I reluctantly skip. I wish to single out, however, a point made in the summary at 980b19: “no one has the same thing in his mind as anyone else”<sup>94</sup>). The arguments in favour of Gorgias’ third thesis have been reworded and presumably modernized. But they must have been pleasing to a person of Pyrrhonist leanings, because of their agreement with the second of Aenesidemus’ famous ten tropes in favour of suspending judgement, viz. that dealing with the differences among persons<sup>95</sup>) (Philo, Ebr. 171–5, Diog. Laert. IX 80–1, Sext., P. I 79–91). I submit that this, at any rate, is why Anonymus is in no hurry to argue against these arguments<sup>96</sup>).

ground solves the puzzle formulated by Newiger, *op. cit.* (*supra*, n. 58), 131 (better *ibid.*, 137).

93) For ἄγνωστα in an abbreviated Pyrrhonist argument (cf. Annas – Barnes, *op. cit.* [*supra*, n. 16] 136 f.) cf. Diog. Laert. IX 88.

94) Read ὅτι οὐδεὶς ἔτερο(ς) [*ms* ἔτερον, *delevit* Diels] ἐτέρω ταῦτὸν ἐνωεῖ.

95) Commentary in Annas – Barnes, *op. cit.* (*supra*, n. 16), 57 ff.

96) The arguments in favour of Gorgias’ second and third thesis, inasmuch as they hinge on the different things sensed or thought by different groups or individuals, are much similar to the second proof supporting his first thesis, viz. that concerned with the conflicting views of the experts and of ordinary people. The grand design of Gorgias’ tripartite argument can be paralleled from his *Helen*, Vorsokr. 82 B 11, 13 (see E. Dupréel, *Les Sophistes. Protagoras Gorgias Prodicus Hippias* [Neuchâtel 1948], 75, and see further my paper [*supra*, n. 11], 244 f.), and from Plat., Parm. 142a, 164a–b, passages that presumably depend on Gorgias. Much has been written on Gorgias’ method of argumentation *ap. MXG* and *ap. Sext.*, see, e.g., O. Gigon, Gorgias “Über das Nichtsein” (1936), repr. in: O. G., *Studien zur antiken Philosophie* (Berlin 1972), 74–5; Sicking, *op. cit.* (*supra*, n. 54), 392–4; G. E. R. Lloyd, *Polarity and Analogy: Two Types of Argumentation in Early Greek Thought* (Cambridge 1966), 118–21; and Newiger, *op. cit.* (*supra*, n. 58), 11–3, 37, 56, and *passim* (see his index *s.v.* “Methode des Gorgias – Beweis – Zugeständnis – erneuter Beweis”). Gigon, 74, and Lloyd, 120–1, have adduced parallels from Gorgias’ *Palamedes* (cf., e.g., Vorsokr. 82 B 11a, 7–8). We may therefore safely attribute this method to Gorgias himself; but the argument in *Palamedes* is not constructed as rigorously and schematically as that *ap. MXG*. Good parallels for the required schematic rigour abound in Sextus, see, e.g., the steps taken in rigorous succession at P. II 22–42.

To be sure, he appears to announce such investigations in the difficult and garbled sentence which rounds off the essay, 980b19–21, ἀπαντες δὲ καὶ οὗτος ἑτέρων ἀρχαιοτέρων εἰσὶν ἀπορίαι, ὥστε ἐν τῇ περὶ ἐκείνων σκέψει καὶ ταῦτα ἐξεταστέον. As to the *constitutio*, I have no suggestion of my own. Diels, assuming a rather extensive lacuna, suggested . . . οὗτος <καὶ οἱ ἄλλοι λόγοι αὐτοῦ γίνονται περὶ ἃ καὶ> ἑτέρων κτλ. Cook Wilson proposed a drastic change: ἀπα<σαι> δὲ κ<οιν>αὶ <αὐ>τ<αι> ἑτέρων κτλ. Both these emendations presuppose about the same interpretation of the text, although Diels less fortunately seems to assume that *all* of Gorgias' arguments are shared by other more ancient thinkers, whereas according to Cook Wilson's reading one does not have to include, e.g., Gorgias' "first and particular proof"; at any rate the extension of the word "all" is not clear. For the argument from antinomy one may perhaps think of, e.g., the *Dissoi logoi* (Vorsokr. 90), which survived as an appendix in the manuscripts of Sextus which in its turn suggests that the Pyrrhonists were interested in this curious Protagorean piece. That some of the subsequent relativistic arguments in favour of Gorgias' second and third theses were shared by other early thinkers, such as Protagoras, is virtually certain. It should however be pointed out that Anonymus' last word is ἐξεταστέον, "will have to be scrutinized", i.e. *not* argued against. We do not have this investigation, and it may be doubted that it was ever carried out. Note that, e.g., ps.-Plutarch *De fato*, a Middle Platonist scholastic tract which I suppose to be about contemporary with *MXG*, ends on a similar promise, 574 F: τὰ δὲ καθ' ἕκαστα τούτων ἐσαυθὶς μέτιμεν.

The bones of Gorgias' argumentation in *MXG* chs. 5–6 (and in the parallel passage in Sextus) are of undoubtable and venerable antiquity. What can hardly be doubted either is that these bones have so to speak been a bit modernized at their junctures and that more definite oscillating motions have been imparted to the latter in order to flesh out the skeleton with a semblance of life.

The suggestion that Anonymus is a sort of Skeptic is not new. Gercke and Diels have spoken of Skepticism in relation to his essay, but Gercke did so without analysing its argument, while Diels merely characterized the argument in general terms<sup>97</sup>).

97) A. Gercke, Aristoteles, in: Pauly-Wissowa, RE Bd. II (1895), 1043: "eine unvollständige skeptische Streitschrift, vielleicht der jüngeren Akademie"; Diels, *op. cit.* (*supra*, n. 41), 10: a number of reasons "suadent, ut non Theophrasti vel Stratonis aetati hunc scriptorem adsignemus, sed paulo inferiori, ubi effata antiqui Peripati vi iam Carneadeo more θέσεων frivola disputatio in usum esse

Gercke suggested the Skeptical Academy, and Diels spoke of Carneades and others like him. However, if the above analysis is acceptable, *MXG* would belong with the environment of later Pyrrhonism. Aenesidemus may have been a contemporary of Cicero<sup>98</sup>). Agrippa, whose influence on Anonymus I have argued at some length, lived after Aenesidemus<sup>99</sup>). Curiously enough, the Neo-Pyrrhonist character of *MXG* agrees with Diels' dating of the essay to the period between Andronicus of Rhodus and Alexander of Aphrodisias<sup>100</sup>). Diels' main (although not unquestionable<sup>101</sup>) argument is that several brief notes are of undeniable Aristotelian provenance<sup>102</sup>) and therefore show that the *πραγματεῖαι* had surfaced again and were studied. To this he adds linguistic peculiarities and the important occurrence of the Stoic technical term *λεπτόν* at 978a29. That it is a rather late piece is also suggested by the fact that its survival is not linked up with that of the genuine

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coeperit" [my italics], and Poetarum philosophorum fragmenta (Berlin 1901), 24. Diels' reference to the arguments pro and con in the manner of the *θέσις* is interesting; on the subject, see K. Reinhardt, Poseidonios (München 1923), 211 ff., the important monograph of H. Throm, Die Thesis. Ein Beitrag zu ihrer Entstehung und Geschichte (Paderborn 1932), and the convenient and original overview of D. T. Runia, Philo's De aeternitate mundi: The Problem of its Interpretation, *Vigiliae Christianae* 35 (1981) 112 ff. Note that the author of ps.-Plut., *Aquane an ignis sit utilior*, on which see Runia, *op. cit.*, 114–5, does not adjudicate between the contrasting arguments; this little work therefore is not an instance of a true *θέσις*, the propounder of which, although setting out at length the arguments opposed to his own preferred view, does have such a view. As a complement to Runia's view that the structure of e.g. *Aet.* as a whole and of many important passages elsewhere in Philo is patterned after that of the thesis I have argued the influence of the Skeptical argument from *διαφωνία* in a paper Philosophy in the Service of Scripture: Philo's Exegetical Strategies, to be published in the volume mentioned *infra*, n. 110. For the antilogical use of the *θέσις* in the Skeptical Academy see Throm, *op. cit.*, 180 ff. The interrelations between the argument from *ἀντιλογία* (*dissensus*) or *διαφωνία* and the *θέσις* as the art of arguing pro and con are worth investigating; for my part, I would contend that the rhetoricians used the method for a different purpose than the Sceptics of various persuasions.

98) *T.p.q.* is the use of his ten tropes by Philo. See further A. Russo, *Scettici antichi* (Torino 1978), 541 n. 1.

99) Sext., P. I 164, ascribes the five tropes to "younger Sceptics", i.e. those later than Aenesidemus.

100) *Op. cit.* (*supra*, n. 41), 10–11; but note that at *op. cit.* (*supra*, n. 97, second item), 24, he dates *MXG* to "circa Christi natalem".

101) I cannot enter here into the difficult question to which extent Aristotle's school-writings were known in the Hellenistic centuries before Andronicus. See, however, P. L. Donini, L'Aristotelismo nel primo secolo (review article of Moraux, *op. cit.* [*supra*, n. 15, *ubi vide*], Riv. di Filol. 105 (1977) 238 ff.

102) This is at least correct for 976a32 ~ Cael. B 13, 294a21 f. (Vorsokr. 21 A 47).

Aristotelian corpus. According to Diels' description<sup>103</sup>), *Lipsiensis gr. 16* contains, after the text of Cleomedes, that of the three parts of *MXG*, that of ps.-Arist. *De mundo*, and that of ps.-Andronicus Περὶ παθῶν, followed by an excerpt from Aristotle's *Physics*, viz. the last lines of A and B – Δ. *Vaticanus gr. 1302* has *MXG* in between some of Theophrastus' minor works and ps.-Arist. *Mirabilia*. When these medleys were first put together it is impossible to say.

### *Why Melissus Xenophanes Gorgias?*

If we assume that the essay has been transmitted complete, the selection for treatment of Melissus Xenophanes Gorgias has still to be explained, although I hope to have shown that the part on Gorgias is less puzzling from a Neo-Pyrrhonist point of view than the other two parts. The passage parallel to the third part of *MXG* in Sext., M. VII 65–87, moreover, belongs with Sextus' discussion (ibid., 48–88) of the views of those of whom it had been claimed that they had abolished the criterion and thus were to be counted among the ancestors of Pyrrhonism. The first of this series is Xenophanes (48, 49–52), and of the persons listed only the views of Xenophanes, Protagoras (ibid., 60–4)<sup>104</sup>), and Gorgias are discussed at length.

Furthermore, Timon had already shown much sympathy for the early Eleatics<sup>105</sup>). At fr. 44 Diels (Vorsokr. 28 A 1, I p. 218, 11 f., Suppl. Hell. 818) *ap. Diog. Laert. IX 22*, Parmenides is praised for his rejection of φαντασίη. At fr. 45, 2–3 Diels (Vorsokr. 29 A 1<sup>106</sup>), I p. 247, 6 ff., Suppl. Hellen. 819) *ap. Diog. Laert. IX 25*, Melissus is praised in the following words: . . . Μέλισσον / πολλῶν φαντασῶν ἐπάνω, παύρων γε μὲν ἦσσω. For a Neo-Pyrrhonist, this evaluation could have made it seem interesting to scrutinize the few remaining dogma's of Melissus. At fr.

103) *Op. cit. (supra, n. 41)*, 4 f. On the composite character of *Lips.* as an argument for a rather late date see *ibid.*, 12.

104) Protagoras is not mentioned by Anonymus, but we have noticed (*supra*, p. 265) that he may presumably be included among the "other earlier thinkers".

105) Cf. A. A. Long, Timon of Phlius: Pyrrhonist and Satyrist, BICS 204 (1978) 72. However, G. Cortassa argues that Timon is more critical of the dogmatist tenets of the early Eleatics; see his Note ai Silli di Timone di Fliunte, RFIS 106 (1978) 146 ff., and his Timone e Parmenide. Un'interpretazione di Timone fr. 4 W. (= 44 D.), RFIC 110 (1982) 416 ff. Cf. also G. Cortassa, Due giudizi di Timone di Fliunte, RFIC 104 (1976) 312 ff.

106) I.e. in the section on Zeno; not reprinted in that on Melissus.

59 Diels (Suppl. Hell. 833, *ap.* Sext. P. I 223), Xenophanes bewails the fact that he has not achieved “full Skepticism” (ἀπάσης / σκεπτοσύνης) and stuck to the dogma that there is one Being. It appears that according to Timon’s benevolent evaluation Melissus and Xenophanes shared a similar minor blemish, which again would explain why Anonymus treats them on a par as to their common main tenet. I do not of course argue that Anonymus must have been influenced by Timon in a direct way, but ideas such as these may have percolated through the Neo-Pyrrhonist literature. What is at any rate most remarkable is that he remains silent about the various brands of Skeptical epistemology attributed (because of Vorsokr. 21 B 34) to Xenophanes in numerous sources<sup>107</sup>). All one can say is that he chose to deal with his dogmatist tenets only.

The parallels provided by Timon for Xenophanes and Melissus as being close to Early Pyrrhonism, and those provided by Sextus for Xenophanes and Gorgias as being among those claimed as belonging with the ancestors of Neo-Pyrrhonism, are significant. They help to explain why Anonymus discussed Melissus Xenophanes Gorgias. Their names presumably figured on some of the lists of proto-Skeptics that must have been current (for a combination of other lists of this kind see Diog. Laert. IX 71–3). From a true-blue Aristotelian point of view, Anonymus’ *selection* is difficult to explain, although, as we shall see below (p. 271), Melissus’ tenet that “the All is One” is among Aristotle’s instances of what he calls paradoxical philosophical θέσεις (Top. A 11, 104b22) and although, as we have noticed, the πῖναξ of Aristotle’s works *ap.* Diog. Laert. lists monographs on Melissus and Gorgias (but also on other early philosophers not discussed separately by Anonymus, viz. Archytas, Alcmaeon, the Pythagoreans, Zeno [Diog. Laert. V 24], and Democritus [Diog. Laert. V 27]).

### *Aristotelian Aspects*

But the fact that (as I presume) Anonymus is influenced by Neo-Pyrrhonism does not preclude that we put him among the later self-styled followers of Aristotle<sup>108</sup>). Aristocles was familiar

107) See my paper (*supra*, n. 2), 295 ff., for a detailed survey. Note that Sextus both argues that Xenophanes is a dogmatist (P. I 225) and that he is a genuine ancestor of Neo-Pyrrhonism (P. II 46 ~ M. VII 46–52, M. VIII 325–7), thus reflecting various traditions in various passages. For the dramatic part played by Xenophanes in Timon’s *Silloi* see Diog. Laert. IX 111.

108) For what follows cf. R. B. Todd, *Alexander of Aphrodisias and Stoic Physics* (Leiden 1976), 4–11, who also discusses Favorinus.

with the history of Pyrrhonism and even capable of arguing against the Pyrrhonists in a Pyrrhonist way<sup>109</sup>). One of Alexander of Aphrodisias' predecessors in the imperial chair of Aristotelian philosophy at Athens, Alexander of Damascus, is characterized by Galen as a "crude Pyrrhonist", but also as a person who was knowledgeable about Plato and rather a partisan of Aristotle<sup>110</sup>). Perhaps one should avoid<sup>111</sup>) using the term 'eclecticism' here and rather speak of a systematical point of view from which approaches originally belonging to different schools of thought are seen as complementary and compatible. The term 'orthodoxy', at any rate, is hardly applicable to philosophy in the first two centuries CE. That Anonymus, for all his Pyrrhonist sympathies, was a teacher or at least a student of Aristotelian philosophy I am prepared to accept, mainly because the style of the little essay strikes me as a *pastiche* of the more compressed sections in Aristotle's and Theophrastus' school-writings. It can moreover be argued that the Pyrrhonism of Anonymus is to some degree expressed by notions that have an Aristotelian ring. Agrippa found some of the techniques of argumentation advocated by Aristotle useful for his own particular purpose; at any rate, the resemblance between his tropes and certain techniques and positions of Aristotle is undeniable<sup>112</sup>). What a contemporary scholar recently was able to see, Anonymus of course also was able to see, and we need not assume he was the first to do so. The arguments used in *MXG* help us to further understand the relations between Pyrrhonism and Aristotelianism in the early centuries CE alluded to by Galen. What we have in *MXG* is a Pyrrhonized form of Aristotelian dialectic.

I shall list several points in favour of the suggestion that what we have here is indeed a revisionist sort of Aristotelianism. *First*, at 974b17, Anonymus argues that it is advisable to collect those

109) Aristocles *ap. Eus.*, P. E. XIV 18, 1–30.

110) Gal. XIV pp. 626–9 Kühn. Cf. also P. L. Donini, Scetticismo, scettici e cattedre imperiali, in: G. Giannantoni (ed.), *Lo scetticismo antico*, II (Roma 1981), 677 ff.

111) See P. L. Donini, *Le scuole l'anima l'impero: la filosofia antica da Antioco a Plotino* (Torino 1982), 9 ff., and his paper on the subject of eclecticism forthcoming in: J. M. Dillon and A. A. Long (eds.), *The Question of Eclecticism* (Berkeley 1988). However, the concept expressed by the word itself was used in antiquity; the earliest instance known to me is Heracl., *Vorsokr.* 22 B 129; cf. further, e.g., Clem., *Strom.* I 37, 6.

112) Cf. Long, *op. cit.* (*supra*, n. 15), esp. 85 ff., who does not argue that Agrippa really depends on Aristotle.

views which are more secure. This immediately recalls Aristotle's argument ἐξ ἐνδόξων, ἐνδοξα being τὰ δοκοῦντα πᾶσιν ἢ τοῖς πλείστοις ἢ τοῖς σοφοῖς (Top. A 1, 100b21 f.). Moreover, at 974b28–9 Anonymus opposes the view of πάντες to the tenet of Melissus, whereas at 975a10 he refers to the opposed view not only of οἱ τυγχάνοντες, but also of those reputed to be σοφοί. However, the Pyrrhonists deny that one can ever establish what is the majority view (see Aenesidemus' second trope *ap. Sext.*, P. I 88–9; cf. also P. II 43–4) and a fortiori reject the argument *ex consensu omnium*<sup>113</sup>). But such a consensus apparently is what Anonymus appeals to at 975b28, be it only dubitatively and for argument's sake, just as where he referred to a majority view. Consequently, both Anonymus' terminology and certain aspects of his argument seem to be Aristotelian. It should be pointed out, however, that the Pyrrhonists (perhaps inconsistently) could and in any case did use the argument *ex consensu (omnium)* for argument's sake in various ways. It is a prominent feature of some among Aenesidemus' tropes against causal explanation (*ap. Sext.*, P. I 181–4)<sup>114</sup>). The first of these states that, although causal explanation deals with what is un-apparent, "it is unconfirmed by any agreed (ὁμολογουμένην) confirmation derived from the phenomena". The fifth posits that the aetiologists argue according to their particular hypotheses and not "according to certain common and agreed approaches" (κατά τινὰς κοινὰς καὶ ὁμολογουμένας ἐφόδους)<sup>115</sup>). However, these tropes assume that a, or the, consensus that would be required does not (yet) exist. But Sextus, M. X 45<sup>116</sup>), actually opposes a theoretical view subscribed to by a majority (οἱ πλείους τῶν φυσικῶν) to that of the equally expert ἀφυσίκοις. Again, at M. X 38–9 he distinguishes the view of Aenesidemus and the majority (οἱ δὲ πλείους, ἐν οἷς εἶσι καὶ οἱ περὶ τὸν Αἰνησίδημον) from a different one. Consequently, although at first blush Anonymus' handling of the notions of the views of the experts and of those of the majority appears to be an indication of pure Aristotelianism, comparison with the Pyrrhonist parallels shows that this approach is an instance of the compatibility, or even fusion, of approaches belonging to different schools of thought. The *consensus omnium*

113) Cf. Sext., P. II 45. So already Cicero's Academic Sceptic, N. D. I 62, III 11.

114) Cf. *supra*, p. 244f.

115) Cf. also H. Tarrant, Agreement and the Self-Evident in Philo of Larissa, Dionysus 5 (1981) 74–8.

116) Cited *supra*, n. 52.



(πάντες) he appeals to for the sake of the argument does not seem to be used in its Aristotelian sense, but rather in that of what the Pyrrhonists call βίος, or συνήθεια. And because Anonymus does not take sides in the important dispute he has set out in such detail, he is a Pyrrhonist rather than an Aristotelian.

Secondly, the argument at *MXG* 1, 974b8 – the end, and indeed through much of *MXG*, viz. the counter-arguments to be found in chs. 2–4 and the argument against the “particular proof” of Gorgias in ch. 6, remind one of Aristotle’s description of the “dialectical problem”, *Top.* A 11, 104b3 ff.: ...περὶ οὗ ἢ οὐδετέρως δοξάζουσιν ἢ ἐναντίως οἱ πολλοὶ τοῖς σοφοῖς ἢ οἱ σοφοὶ τοῖς πολλοῖς ἢ ἑκάτεροι αὐτοὶ ἑαυτοῖς. But Aristotle adds immediately that such an investigation is useful for the acquisition of *knowledge* (104b7–8, πρὸς τὸ εἰδέναι). The resemblance with the Pyrrhonist method (see above, e.g., pp. 247f.) of opposing the views of men in general to those of the experts and conversely and of opposing the views of the experts (or of different groups of common people) to one another is important, but merely formal, because the goal is different. But an Aristotelian with a leaning towards Pyrrhonism might feel entitled to the assumption that Aristotelian dialectic and Pyrrhonist method are compatible. We come even closer to the argument of the second half of the first chapter of *MXG* in the same chapter of the *Topics*, viz. 104b19 ff.: θέσις δὲ ἐστὶν ὑπόληψις παράδοξος τῶν γνωρίμων τινὸς κατὰ φιλοσοφίαν, οἷον ὅτι [...], ἢ ὅτι πάντα κινεῖται, καθ’ Ἡράκλειτον, ἢ ὅτι ἐν τῷ ὄν, καθάπερ Μέλισσός φησιν κτλ. In the dispute at issue, Aristotle (or a genuine follower) would of course have to take sides, but a late Aristotelian with Pyrrhonist sympathies would feel that from a formal point of view the issue as stated is the same.

Thirdly, the idea that a principle should be stronger than what is derived from it, although an important feature of Agrippa’s fourth trope<sup>117</sup>), is of course also and especially Aristotelian<sup>118</sup>); it constitutes one of the main ideas of his theory of science (e.g., *An. post.* A 2, 71b20 ff.). It is however found in Sextus too, e.g., *M.* III 12<sup>119</sup>): “the foundation must be secure in order that the inferences that follow may be agreed” (βέβαιον γὰρ εἶναι δεῖν τὸν θεμέλιον, ἵνα συνομολογηθῇ καὶ τὸ ἀκόλουθον). Again, the Aris-

117) Cf. *supra*, pp. 242ff.

118) Cf. Long, *op. cit.* (*supra*, n. 15), 86f. Cf. also Chatzilysandros, *op. cit.* (*supra*, n. 43), 209. For the study of the *Analytics* from the first cent. BCE see *supra*, n. 15.

119) For the context see *supra*, n. 17.

totelian and the Pyrrhonist approaches are compatible and complementary, although we, of course, know that no genuine Aristotelian would have rejected the idea that such unproved and indemonstrable first principles have been discovered.

*Fourthly*, that some of the roots of Anonymus' arguments are to be looked for in Aristotle's dialectic is also apparent from his use of the verb διαλέγεσθαι. At *MXG* 1, 975a4–6, Anonymus – or rather the imaginary opponent of the previous intimation that Melissus' principle is more secure – posits that Melissus, having neither proved that the tenet which is his starting-point (or first thesis) is correct nor that it is more correct than what he proves from it by taking it for granted, “has argued dialectically (διελέχθη)”, i.e. not conclusively. If one may use Aristotelian parlance (cf., e.g., *Met.* Γ 2, 1004b16 ff.), one may say that Melissus' premiss is merely dialectical and that he fails to provide a scientific proof; so anyone interested in the truth may argue against it. The same point is made at *MXG* 2, 975a34–5: Melissus “argues in dialectical [i.e. not in a scientific, or conclusive] fashion (διαλέγεται)”, his starting-point merely being that it has been agreed that something exists as a thing that is (or: is the case)<sup>120</sup>). The same point is made for the third time right at the beginning of Anonymus' argument against Gorgias “particular proof” of his first thesis, *MXG* 6, 979a34–5: “From what he says, it nowise follows that Nothing is. For what he proves in this way, he (merely) argues in dialectical fashion” (ἃ γὰρ καὶ ἀποδείκνυσιν οὕτως, διαλέγεται<sup>121</sup>). But it should be noticed that the term is also used by Sextus, e.g., *P.* II 219, *M.* II 7. It appears that crucial Aristotelian notions could be pressed into service for a Pyrrhonist purpose, and that Aristotelian dialectic could be integrated into Pyrrhonist procedures.

*Fifthly*, one should also remember Aristotle's advice in the final chapter of the *Topics* (Θ 14, 163a29 ff.): “For training and practice, one should first accustom oneself to convert (ἀντιστρέφειν<sup>122</sup>) arguments. [...] For conversion is the reversing of the

120) τοῦ μὲν εἶναι τι ὡς ὄντος καὶ κειμένου διαλέγεται.

121) Text as transmitted but the comma of course placed before διαλέγεται, cf. the parallel passages [Diels, not heeding the parallels at 975a6 and a35, accepted Wendland's διελέγεται for διαλέγεται, and further supplied ἃ(λλοι ἃ)ποδεικνύουσιν, preferring the ποδεικνύουσιν (*sic*) of *L* to *R*'s better ἀποδείκνυσιν]. I have pointed out *supra*, n. 66, that Anonymus may have been influenced by *Rhet.* B 24, 1402a4 f., where Aristotle speaks of διαλεκτικοῖς (*sc.* συλλογισμοῖς) much resembling the argument of Gorgias involved here.

122) Here used in a sense that is unusual in Aristotle, see A. Zadro, *Aris-*

conclusion together with the other questions raised and the demolition of one of the points at issue; for of necessity, if the conclusion is false, one of the premisses must be demolished, since it was owing to the positing of all of them that the conclusion necessarily followed. In dealing with any thesis, we must examine the arguments both pro and con [...]” (transl. Forster, slightly modified). This passage does not provide a parallel for the first step of Anonymus’ arguments *contra*, because Anonymus begins with arguing immediately against a (the primary) premiss and does *not* prove it untenable on the grounds that a conclusion that necessarily follows from it is demonstrably false. However, Aristotle’s recommendation, loc. cit., to argue both sides of a θέσις (163a36–7, πρὸς ἅπασάν τε θέσιν, καὶ ὅτι οὕτως καὶ ὅτι οὐχ οὕτως, τὸ ἐπιχείρημα σκεπτόν), if quoted or rather used out of context, could of course be interpreted in a Skeptical way. Furthermore, the word ἀντιστρέφειν in the unusual Aristotelian sense quoted above occurs in Anonymus’ argument against the final point of Gorgias’ “particular proof” (unless one prefers to think that Anonymus used it innocuously). From the assumption that what-is and what-is-not are identical, Gorgias had inferred that what-is is not and therefore Nothing is. Anonymus retorts that ἀντιστρέψαντι ἔστιν ὁμοίως φάναι ὅτι πάντα ἔστιν (979b18–9), viz. one may “convert” Gorgias conclusion and say that if what-is and what-is-not are the same, what-is-not is<sup>123</sup>). Thus, it would follow that what-is and what-is-not are not the same, i.e. that Gorgias’ premiss is refuted, or at least neutralized.

Consequently, what remains of Aristotelian dialectic in *MXG* is semblance, not substance. Agrippa, I would argue, adopted Aristotelian concepts and forms of reasoning for a totally different purpose. Anonymus, following in his footsteps, did the same. When viewed in this light, *MXG* no longer is the riddle it has been.

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totele: I *Topici* (Napoli 1974), 541. – Academic precedent for Anonymus’ *interpretatio* of Peripatetic dialectic can be quoted from Cic., *Tusc.* V 10 (Arcesilaus fr. 12 Mette). Note, however, that Cicero, although attributing to Aristotle the invention of the method of arguing pro and con, is aware of the extent to which it is different from Arcesilaus’ (though not, perhaps, from what according to him is the probabilistic argument pro and con in the manner of Carneades): *ab Aristotele [...] de singulis rebus in utramque partem dicendi exercitatio est instituta, non ut contra omnia semper, sicut Arcesilas, diceret, et tamen ut in omnibus rebus quidquid ex utraque parte dici posset exprimeret.*

123) Cf. supra, p. 261.

*Appendix: genesis ex nihilo. Athenagoras*

It has been pointed out above<sup>124</sup>) that the interpretation of Hesiod, Theog. 116 ff., as being concerned with a coming to be “from Nothing” (*MXG* 1, 975a11–14) resembles the Christian concept of a *creatio ex nihilo* (coming to be ἐξ οὐδενός really is strong language, unparalleled in BCE Greek philosophical texts). The earliest person to whom such a concept may be attributed is the Gnostic exegete and thinker Basilides (ca. 100 – 160 CE)<sup>125</sup>). The earliest orthodox Christian to whom it may be ascribed is Theophilus of Antioch (ca. 180 CE), cf. *Ad Autol.* I 4, II 10. Theoph., op. cit. II 8, criticizes Hesiod and quotes large chunks, viz. Theog. 116–23 and 126–33; he argues that Hesiod’s Chaos – which he identifies with matter – actually must have been created by God. It would, in other words, be an *interpretatio paulisper christiana* of Hesiod if one were to argue that Chaos has come to be from Nothing. Greek philosophers to a man stuck to the tenet that there is no coming into being from Nothing and that if coming into being happens it occurs from what the entity that comes to be is not, i.e. from something else<sup>126</sup>). The point of Epicharmus (or ps.-Epicharmus), *Vorsokr.* 23 B 1<sup>127</sup>), is in my view different; his argument is not that Chaos came from Nothing, but that Chaos must be eternal because there is nothing before Chaos. Note that Sext., *M.* X 18, quoting Theog. 116–7, argues that Hesiod would have had no answer at all if one would have asked him ἐκ τίνοϛ γέγονε τὸ Χάος; Yet Theophilus and Anonymus each supply such an answer. Epicurus’ schoolteacher could not explain to him what Chaos had come into being from (*Diog. Laert.* X 2; Sext., *M.* X 18–9) and referred him to the philosophers; but we do not know who those experts were, or what they may have said.

The immediately subsequent counter-example dealing with vulgate Heracliteanism<sup>128</sup>) also uses the so to speak un-Greek no-

124) *Supra*, n. 41, *ad finem*.

125) See Hipp. Ref. VII 20–1 and the convenient overview of E. Mühlberg, Basilides, in: *Theol. Realencyklopädie* Bd. V (Berlin–New York 1980), 298.

126) Cf. P. W. van der Horst – J. Mansfeld, *An Alexandrian Platonist against Dualism: Alexander of Lycopolis’ Treatise ‘Critique of the Doctrines of Manichaeus’* (Leiden 1974), 10–19 [followed by A. Villey, *Alexandre de Lycopolis: Contre la doctrine de Mani* (Paris 1985), 34 f., 209 f.], and G. May, *Schöpfung aus dem Nichts: Die Entstehung der Lehre von der Creatio ex Nihilo* (Berlin–New York 1978), 166 ff., esp. 17 n. 67.

127) The fragment is interpreted by Barnes, *op cit.* (*supra*, n. 10), 87.

128) Cf. *supra*, n. 42 and text thereto.

tion of a coming into being from an absolute Nothing (975a16, οὐκ ἐξ ὄντων γίνεσθαι κτλ.) for “all things” (ἅπαντα, my italics). This is equally strong language. Anonymus affirms that such a notion is actually entertained by a lot of other experts, or at least entailed by their tenet that all things ‘become’.

Perhaps, moreover, at 976a14 ‘Athenagoras’<sup>129</sup>) is not a slip of the pen of a copyist for ‘Anaxagoras’. *MXG* 2, 976a13 ff. runs: καὶ γὰρ ὁμοιον οὕτω λέγει [sc., Melissus] τὸ πᾶν εἶναι οὐχὶ ὡς ἄλλω τινί (ὅπερ Ἀθηναγόρας ἐλέγχει ὅτι ὁμοιον τὸ ἀπειρον τό γε ὁμοιον ἑτέρω ὁμοιον, ὥστε δύο ἢ πλείω ὄντα οὐκ ἂν ἐν οὐδὲ ἀπειρον εἶναι). Diels, *ad loc.*, points out: “Anaxagorae nomen recte agnovit Beck. at eius sententiam [...] non cepit auctor”. There is indeed no possibility to attribute the argument between round brackets to Anaxagoras. However, a garbled reference to Athenag., *Leg.* 8, may be involved (cuius sententiam non cepit auctor), a passage which deals with the question whether there is one God or δύο ... ἢ πλείους (8.1). One of his arguments is concerned with similarity, 8.2: supposing you have two Gods, these cannot be in one and the same category, οὐ γὰρ, εἰ θεοί, ὁμοιοι, ἀλλ’ ὅτι ἀγένητοι, οὐχ ὁμοιοι: τὰ μὲν γὰρ γενητὰ ὁμοια τοῖς παραδείγμασιν, τὰ δὲ ἀγένητα ἀνόμοια κτλ. Athenagoras’ argument is that what has not come into being cannot be similar to something else that has not come into being, but must of necessity be dissimilar, because each is in a class of its own. Similarity only exists between a model and its copies (although a model is of course different from its copies, and conversely). From this, perhaps perversely, one might infer that you need at least two things in order to have similarity or dissimilarity. Consequently, when you have only one thing [as Melissus posits], it does not make sense to speak of similarity, because you have nothing to compare it with. Athenagoras approaches the issue from another angle, but Anonymus may have faintly remembered his point<sup>130</sup>) and permitted himself to use it at his own convenience. It should, moreover, be noted that the argument of *Leg.* 8 is remarkably similar to some of the arguments in favour of monotheism attributed by Anonymus to Xenophanes in *MXG* ch. 2, the beginning<sup>131</sup>).

129) A contemporary of Marcus Aurelius.

130) On the sloppy mistakes in *MXG* see Diels, *op. cit.* (*supra*, n. 41), 9f. The most flagrant example, perhaps, is the attribution of water as the principle to Anaximander, ch. 2, 975b22f.

131) See my paper (*supra*, n. 2), n. 40.

Such parallels as are available for the tenet concerned with "coming to be from Nothing" in *MXG* ch. 1 and the problematical reference to Athenagoras in ch. 2 suggest, say, the middle or even the later part of the second century CE as *t.p.q.*; this independent evidence agrees rather well with the post-Agrippean date argued in the present paper\*).

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## THE FUNCTION OF THE *LOCUS AMOENUS* IN THEOCRITUS' SEVENTH POEM\*)

### I

One reason for the compelling interest which is aroused by Theocritus' seventh poem would seem to be the fact that it contains both realistic and unrealistic elements. The presence in the poem of elements of both kinds gives it a certain richness of texture. This paper will be concerned more with the unrealistic than

\*) I am greatly indebted to Sir Kenneth Dover for some helpful comments. *Abbreviations:* The following works are referred to by the surname of the author: W. G. Arnott, *Lycidas and Double Perspectives: A Discussion of Theocritus' Seventh Idyll, Est. Clas. 87* (1984) 333 ff.; E. L. Bowie, *Theocritus' Seventh Idyll, Philetas and Longus, Cl. Q. 35* (1985) pp. 67–91; Archibald Cameron, *The Form of the Thalsysia, Miscellanea di Studi Alessandrini in Memoria di A. Rostagni, Turin 1963*, 291–307; K. J. Dover, *Theocritus, Select Poems, London 1971*; G. Giangrande, *Théocrite, Simichidas et les Thalysies, Ant. Class. 37* (1968) 491 ff.; A. S. F. Gow, *Theocritus, edited with a translation and commentary, vol. 2, Cambridge, reprinted 1965*; S. Hatzikosta, *A Stylistic Commentary on Theocritus Idyll VII, Amsterdam 1982*; A. Kambylis, *Die Dichterweihe und ihre Symbolik, Heidelberg 1965*; Charles Segal, *Theocritus' Seventh Idyll and Lycidas, Wien. Stud. 8* (1974) 22 ff. (also in *Poetry and Myth in Ancient Pastoral 110 ff., Princeton 1981*); G. Schönbeck, *Der locus amoenus von Homer bis Horaz, Diss. Heidelberg 1962*.