

## **Foreword**

### **Introduction to the second International Issue of Aither**

Dear Readers,

Again I have the honor of welcoming you on behalf of the editors and editorial board and invite you to read the international issue of the journal Aither. The journal is published by the Philosophical Institute of the Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic and has following two-year cycles: We publish 3 issues in Czech and then one international issue. This gradually forms a series of Aither International Issues, the second of which you have in your hands.

The journal is not only dedicated to philosophy, but also to the all relevant contexts of history, culture, politics, social, religious and other contexts that are important in the European intellectual tradition. To precisely increase common interdisciplinary scientific research was, after all, the reason why we defined the journal through the language rather than field of philosophy. Aither is designed for the publication of studies and interpretations in any way related to the texts and intellectual currents that were originally formulated in ancient Greek and also Latin.

While the first international issue was composed on a shared interest in Greek tragedy that permeated through all articles the current issue is

composed from a wide spectrum of research standing on the pillars of European intellectual traditions ranging from Hesiod's epic cosmology to Swyneshed's late - medieval semantics. The second International issue of our journal begins with a study by Charles Burnett, accompanied by the Latin edition and the translation of the Prague Manuscript of Johannes Borotín. Usually articles are composed in the issue according to historical order and relevance to the topic, i.e. we start with ancient texts and themes followed by articles on Medieval Latin and the early modern period. However, in case texts that are more critical studies or even comments on the manuscript including copyright translation, we put in first place. In this case it means the case studies of Burnett, plus the national edition of the Borotín's manuscript.

The Burnett commentary study is devoted to a text file stored in the Library of the Prague Metropolitan Chapel, the author is Johannes Borotín. The manuscript contains two very different sets of texts: the first period when Borotín was still studying with Master Johannes Andreae (also known under the name Schindel who significantly contributed to the construction of the Astronomical Clock), while the second group of 3 texts is almost 40 years younger and shows Borotín as an elderly teacher. All texts are devoted to mathematics, astronomy and astrology as the seventh and crowning element of the liberal arts. After a brief look at the entire file and a related Borotín's biography in contemporary intellectual discourse, but also in cultural and political context (disputes between nations at Charles University in Wenceslas IV and the Hussites) Burnett also focuses on Borotín's preamble and subsequent initial study to Alcabitios, which are attached in the original version and in its English translation.

The second article by Eliška Luhanová discusses the prehistory of the human race, as shown by mythologema that was often commented by Greek thinkers of the golden age era. In the first part the author deals with Hesiod's concept of paradigm, where she identifies the fundamental ambiguity of the golden age: on one hand, the golden age of the ideal of a carefree life full of happiness, free from hardship and suffering, however, such a life was identified as more animalistic and in a sense inhuman, because it precedes the actual history of the human race and lacks a distinctive feature of human activity motivated by the desire to overcome a lack of adverse fate. Golden Age in the womb of the natural laws thus does not allow self-reflection as deficient human beings, which subsequently through *technai* founds culture as distinct phenomenon from nature, thus a very human plane of existence. This profound ambiguity of hesiodic concept of a prehistoric state combines by Luhanová with other ambiguous conception of the divine representative Kronos. In *Theogonia* Kronos overcomes primordial, pre-cosmic governance of Uranos and becomes the first truly sovereign ruler. His governance, however, has the character of tyranny without taking into account the harmonic relations of space and therefore must be replaced by Zeus and his Order and the Law. On the other hand this work embodies the era of the golden age of Kronos. In this sense, it is a pre-historic and strictly non-human state, which on one hand is much closer to the gods but on the other also to animals. In the second part, the author analyzes Plato's conception of a golden age under the rule of Kronos in the dialogue *Politikos*. In accordance with the interpretive tradition of Plato's myth space is divided into two cosmic stages. The first is under the direct rule of Kronos and Luhanová sees this as a continuation ambivalent hesiodic concept of the human condition. The second period is indirectly controlled by Zeus,

whose governance is mediated by the cosmic order and the rule of law. Human is in this period exposed to conditions that are well known to us: human is mortal and must cope with adversity of fate. Precisely this is, however, a challenge that - based on the author's unitarian interpretation of mythical passages from Protagoras and Symposium - that leads one to the establishment of culture, laws, and finally to philosophy, which is an attempt to overcome mortality.

Pavel Hobza in the third article focuses on Parmenides' famous poem, which he proposes to interpret more in line with contemporary intellectual horizon and without the burden of logical and ontological scheme, which was attached to the Eleatic philosophy much later under the influence of Plato and Aristotle. Hobza primarily proposes an alternative analysis of the poem, which, unlike traditional reading is divided into four parts: the prooimion according to him is much shorter and ends at the moment of utterance of the Goddess. Her speech is the second part, a kind of philosophical reflection mythological foundation throughout the poem in prooimiu. The key to understanding the central problem is according to Hobza the opposition to light and darkness. Respectively binary opposition of being and non-being, but it is presented twice in a different way in the third and fourth parts of the poem. A traditional, so-called ontological interpretation, assumes a stark contrast between being and world of people, where there is no positive relationship between them. Hobza, however, highlights the difficulty of connecting Parmenides *eon* with *einai* and proposes - in response to Empedocles fragment B17 - rather an anthropological interpretation, which is just between the two aforementioned perspectives and connects them together and also is primarily aimed at the world from a human perspective. The third and

fourth parts constitute a sort of continuation of the binary opposition of light-darkness to a more concrete level than methodological passages in the first and second parts. In the third part is non-being present in human perspective rejected in contrast to the divine truth against which the human world is defined perceptively, as a mere perception. The fourth part on the contrary gives way to a detailed description of the human world and according to Hobza provides a scientific perspective, which also shows the practical possibility of human use of the original divine concept of *nus*.

The fourth paper by Josef Moural is devoted to Plato's dialogue *Timaios*, specifically to the passages 37a-c, which are part of a broader interpretation of a particular process of creation. According to the text, demiurgos created (an invisible) world soul from circles based on the being of both identical and different, and then inside of it (visible) body. Activity of World Soul is conceptualized through circular movements reacting to contact with things of integral or a composite nature, beings enduring or emerging. In this way process of perception is conceptualized as a fetus of thought of the world soul. Moural however, considers broader questions concerning the soul and the different concepts of cognitive activity in Plato, and therefore analyses the aforementioned passage as one of the key occurrences of such a conceptualization. After a detailed textual analysis that partially deviates from the standard reading of for example Brisson, Moural asks a basic question that is not addressed explicitly in the text:

1. What does the world soul exactly perceive?

2. What specifically is this knowledge?, i.e. what can be said of its objects?
3. What is the epistemological status of different types of knowledge?
4. How is the logos incorporated into knowledge, or some internal communication within the circles of the soul?

The first answer notes that touch compared to auditory and visual perception is not addressed by Plato and because of nothing outside themselves can be perceived by cosmic animal; there is conceivably certain sensory self-reflection of his body through the soul. This, however, according Mourgal also does not exclude the possibility of a certain concept of intentional directivity to the object. The second question is left open by Mourgal, since its solution lies in one of two possible philological interpretations of passage 37b1 – 3. In principle, the question is whether the knowledge of forms and sensory perceptions goes separately, or in a relationship or whether we can assume something of Plato's theory of predication. The third response may take the form of "strict specialization", according to which knowledge within a circle is completely indifferent to others, or to offer an interpretation in terms of "quasi specialization", according to which the aforementioned circle plays a prominent, but not an exclusive role. The fourth answer is the most speculative and is based on the resolution of the logos on the aspect of knowledge articulation and communication of knowledge.

Miroslav Hanke devoted the paper to detailed analysis of solutions for "last sofisma" in the work *Insolubilia* of the British logician Roger Swyneshed. The manuscript dates back to 1330 and is a historically

influential contextual attempt to revise classical logic, especially the influential Aristotelian square table of opposites and the two essential conditions of truthiness: firstly correspondence with reality as a necessary condition and second truth duration as *condition sine qua non* of validity. Swyneshed also formulated a number of sophisms, the solution to corroborate the plausibility of their theories. The Hanke article focuses on the latest sophism that Swyneshed placed at the end of his work. Hanke through both historical and systematic analysis demonstrates that the “last sophism”, which offers a dual solution “plain liar paradox” based on arguments different from the arguments Swyneshed used throughout the previous file and in addition there are two alternative solutions based on different theoretical starting points. According to Hanke this neglected passage either points to the need for a correction of existing ideas about Heytesburian tradition, or it is necessary to declare it as apocryphal. The article was completed with a double appendix, appropriately referring readers to Swyneshed’s contextual reasoning in contemporary tradition.

Last paper by Jakub Ráliš deals with the long going problem of medieval philosophy i.e. predication to God. This paper although takes a bit different perspective from the point of view Greek and Latin tradition. It is namely perspective of one of the greatest minds of Jewish thinking Maimonides. Although Jewish thinker in the environment of Arabic Egypt, Maimonides was through Arabic philosopher deeply influenced by Greek philosophical tradition. This fact is reflected strongly in his view on the functioning of language especially in connection with characterization of God. Ráliš claims that Maimonides saw God as an absolutely “other entity” which can not be sufficiently described by human language. Maimonides’ conception itself is interesting topic, but

author primarily tries to show that Maimonides' conception of homonymy in this context leaves us without any real possibility to grasp the God through the language and most probably therefore not even through the rationality.

Dear readers, I hope you will enjoy the content of the second international issue of our journal and, of course, we would greatly appreciate any feedback. As an electronic journal, we try to be as close as possible to our readers and, if possible, meet their expectations and possibly respond to their specific themes. In case you have any recommendations or suggestions for future issues, please feel free to contact the editor via email addresses listed on our website under "Contacts".

Kryštof Boháček

Editor-in-Chief