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Theaetetus's Ethical Digression According to the Anonymous

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Abstract. The *Theaetetus* is often regarded as paving the way for an epistemology of the late dialogues and leaving aside the Two-World Theory. However, such a reading is challenged by the famous ethical Digression, which, *prima facie*, is an awkward fit in the dialogue and resembles the tenets of the middle dialogues. Thus, questions arise about the meaning of the Digression itself and its place in the dialogue. For a valuable perspective on these questions, this paper turns to Middle Platonic *Anonymi Commentarius In Platonis Theaetetum*. More specifically, the paper reconstructs the Anonymous's position on the *homoiōsis theōi* ethical principle and its relation to *Theaetetus*'s epistemology. In the context of philosophical rivalry with the Stoics, the *Theaetetus* emerges as a dialogue whose ethics and epistemology are both based on the Two-World Theory. However, the *Commentary* presents the Stoic alternatives as incomplete rather than erroneous. Thus, it is shown to be less categorical and banal than it may seem.
Keywords: the Anonymous, *homoiōsis theōi*, *oikeiōsis*, the *Theaetetus*, Middle Platonism, Stoics.

Teaiteto etinė digresija pagal Anonimą

Santrauka. Dažnai manoma, kad *Teaitetas* veda prie vėlyvųjų dialogų epistemologijos ir skatina atsisakyti Dviejų pasaulių teorijos. Tačiau tokią interpretaciją apsunkina garsioji etinė digresija, kuri, iš pirmo žvilgsnio, sunkiai dera su likusiu dialogu ir primena viduriniųjų dialogų nuostatas. Todėl kyla klausimų tiek apie pačią digresiją, tiek apie jos vietą dialoge. Straipsnyje siūloma į šias problemas pažvelgti iš viduriniajam platonizmui priklausančio Komentaro – *Anonymi Commentarius in Platonis Theaetetum* – perspektyvos. Konkrečiau, straipsnyje rekonstruojama, kaip Anonimas supranta *homoiōsis theōi* etinį principą ir jo santykį su *Teaiteto* epistemologija. Filosofinės polemikos su stoikais kontekste *Teaitetas* atsiskleidžia kaip dialogas, kurio etika ir epistemologija grindžiamos Dviejų pasaulių teorija. Vis dėlto Komentare stoikų siūlomos alternatyvos pristatomos ne kaip klaidingos, o kaip nepakankamos. Taigi parodoma, kad Komentaras yra ne toks kategoriškas ir banalus, kaip gali pasirodyti.
Pagrindiniai žodžiai: Anonimas, *homoiōsis theōi*, *oikeiōsis*, *Teaitetas*, vidurinysis platonizmas, stoikai

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Introduction

The *Theaetetus* is often regarded as a purely epistemological dialogue. As such, it can be interpreted as a turning point in Plato's thought, paving the way for an epistemology of the late dialogues and abandoning the Two-World Theory[1]. However, such a reading is challenged by the famous ethical Digression. Not only is it *prima facie* an awkward fit in the dialogue, but it is also suspiciously similar to the tenets of such dialogues as the *Republic*. Thus, it poses two main problems for modern scholars: (1) the meaning of the ethical Digression, and (2) the place of this Digression in the dialogue[2].

In this paper, I reconstruct the answers suggested by the *Anonymi Commentarius In Platonis Theaetetum*, which is preserved only fragmentarily on a papyrus and dates to the late 1st and the first half of the 2nd century AD[3]. More precisely, the paper focuses on, but is not limited to, the Anonymous's interpretation of the ὁμοίωσις θεῷ imperative (found at *Tht*. 176a–b). Although modern scholars have previously described the *Commentary* as 'banal', its value is increasingly recognised[4]. Reconstructing the Anonymous's understanding of ὁμοίωσις θεῷ and the *Theaetetus* in general has both historical and philosophical merits. The historical aspect is relevant because, despite recent studies of the *Commentary*, its position on ὁμοίωσις θεῷ and the connection between *Theaetetus*'s ethics and epistemology have received limited attention so far. The philosophical relevance of the reconstruction stems from the fact that the *Commentary* offers a valuable version of *Theaetetus*'s traditional reading (on which, see n. 1): one that (a) seamlessly incorporates epistemological and ethical perspectives, and (b) underscores the philosophical versatility of textbook Platonism. However, it should be noted that, by indicating the philosophical value of the Anonymous's interpretation, this paper does not defend it as the only right way to read the *Theaetetus*.

I shall proceed in two parts. First, I will reconstruct the Anonymous's interpretation of *Theaetetus*'s ὁμοίωσις θεῷ ideal and ethics in general. Second, I will briefly reconstruct his epistemological stance and outline its connection with ethics. All this will be done against the background of his polemical engagement with the Stoics. This will reveal some previously undetected nuances of his philosophical position. I argue that the Anonymous grounds both ethics and epistemology in an otherworldly perspective without thereby negating the importance of this-worldly social and epistemic phenomena.

[1] For 'revisionist' reading, see Ryle (1966); Burnyeat (1990). For 'traditional' reading of the *Theaetetus* as a Platonic re-confirmation of the Two-World Theory, see Cornford (1935) (and Sedley (2004) as a modern version of it).

[2] For recent examples, see Maffi (2019) and Menn (2020).

[3] PBerol. inv. 9782, first published in 1905. For dating (as well as rejection of proposed authorships, such as that of Eudorus) of the text, see further Bonazzi 2003: 41–49.

[4] The Commentary was described as banal by J. M. Dillon, since, according to him, the text provides only 'simple elucidation' of the dialogue (1996: 270). Current, more nuanced readings of the Commentary include Torri (2019) and Piazzalunga & Bonazzi (2024).

Homoiōsis and *oikeiōsis*: divine and social

Any reconstruction of the Anonymous's (hereinafter: the Anon.'s) stance on the ethical Digression (and especially the ὁμοίωσις θεῷ imperative) of the *Theaetetus* has to begin by noting that this exact part of the *Commentary* has not reached us. Thus, our reconstruction will draw on (a) the fragments of the *Commentary* as a whole, and especially (b) on the place of the *Commentary* where the Anon. mentions ὁμοίωσις θεῷ as Plato's principle of justice, i.e., as a starting point of further ethical doctrine (*ad* 143d1–5). It is worth citing the central passages of this part of the *Commentary* at length:

T1 κήδεται μὲν καὶ Κυρηναίων, κατὰ τὸν αὐτὸν δὲ λόγον καὶ ὠντινωνοῦν ἀνθρώπων· ᾠκειώμεθα γὰρ τοῖς ὁμοειδέσι· μᾶλλον μέντοι ᾠκείωται τοῖς ἑαυτοῦ πολίταις · ἐπιτείνεται γὰρ καὶ ἀνίεται ἡ οἰκείωσις· ὅσοι τοίνυν ἀπὸ τῆς οἰκειώσεως εἰσάγουσι τὴν δικαιοσύνην, εἰ μὲν λέγουσιν ἴσην αὐτοῦ τε πρὸς αὐτὸν καὶ πρὸς τὸν ἔσχατον Μυσῶν, τεθέντος μὲν τούτου σώζεται ἡ δικαιοσύνη, οὐ συγχωρεῖται δὲ εἶναι ἴσην· παρὰ γὰρ τὴν ἐνάργειάν ἐστιν καὶ τὴν συναίσθησιν. ἡ μὲν γὰρ πρὸς ἑαυτὸν οἰκείωσις φυσικὴ ἐστιν καὶ ἄλογος, ἡ δὲ πρὸς τοὺς πλησίον [...] οὐ μέντοι ἄνευ λόγου. [...] ἐλέγξουσι δὲ τούτους αἱ περιστάσεις ναυαγῶν, ὁπου ἀνάγκη μόνον σώζεσθαι τὸν ἕτερον αὐτῶν· κἂν μὴ γένωνται δὲ περιστάσεις, ἀλλ᾽ αὐτοί γε οὕτως διάκεινται ὡς ἐλεγχθησόμενοι. [...] ὅθεν οὐκ ἀπὸ τῆς οἰκειώσεως εἰσάγει ὁ Πλάτων τὴν δικαιοσύνην, ἀλλὰ ἀπὸ τῆς πρὸς τὸν θεὸν ὁμοιώσεως [...]. (V.14–42, VI.20–29, VII.14-19. Ed. Bastianini-Sedley 1995, papyrological *sigla* omitted)

[Socrates] cares for the Cyrenaeans too, but to the same degree as any other people. For we experience appropriation towards those similar to us: he, then, feels more appropriation towards his own fellow-citizens. For appropriation can be more and less intense. So, when people base justice on appropriation, if they say that one's own sense of appropriation towards oneself is equal to that towards the most distant Mysian, then it is a thesis that preserves justice, but it is not agreed that [the appropriation] is equal, because that is something that is contrary to what is obvious and to co-perception. For, while appropriation towards oneself is natural and non-rational, that towards one's neighbours [...] is not, however, without rationality. [...] the situation of the shipwrecked people (where only one of them can be saved) will refute them [i.e., in their stronger claim that they can base justice on appropriation]. Even if this situation were never to arise, they still find themselves refuted. [...] This is why Plato did not base justice on appropriation, but on 'becoming like god' [...]. (slightly mod. trans. here and elsewhere, including interpolations, is by Boys-Stones (2024)).

As we can already see in T1, the Anon.'s interpretation of the ethical Digression and, in fact, the whole dialogue is based on, among other things, the rivalry with the Stoics[5]. The Anon. sees the ideal of ὁμοίωσις θεῷ as a better version of the Stoic principle of

[5] For the importance of the rivalry with the Stoics for the whole *Commentary* (rather than just T1), see Bonazzi (2008), who was probably the first to underscore the importance of the Anon.'s polemics with the Stoics for the interpretation of the *Commentary* as a philosophically stimulating text. The other relevant 'rival' part would be the Sceptical Academy, but the Anon. suggests that even these sceptics, with few exceptions, held Platonic doctrines (LIV.43–LV.7).

justice – οἰκείωσις. He argues that deriving justice from οἰκείωσις is only reasonable if it is indeed equal towards everyone, as the Stoics would have it (V.28–30). However, a thought experiment about a life-threatening situation shows that such a supposition is unrealistic (VI.20–29).

At first sight, a part of the Anon.'s argument may seem rather un-Platonic. He distrusts equal appropriation (οἰκείωσις) towards others as a basis for justice since it is 'not without rationality' (V.41–2). How can the connection with rationality undermine the principle of justice? Would the Anon. have us eliminate rationality from justice? The short answer is no, but a closer look at this remark can help us explain the Anon.'s argument. According to it, the principle of justice is supposed to be both consistent and realistic. 'Realistic' here means that it must have an ontological basis, while 'consistency' means stability. Thus, as one of his counterexamples, he provides a thought experiment where *any* human being would not feel equal appropriation towards others and oneself. In this way, he argues that no ontological basis for consistent οἰκείωσις – the principle of universal appropriation – exists.

In other words, according to Anon., the Stoic framework offers only two possible bases for οἰκείωσις – one is consistent, the other realistic, but neither is both. The only consistent faculty in human beings is instinct, but it cannot, even in principle, lead to universal appropriation. Thus, it is not a realistic basis for οἰκείωσις. On the other hand, rationality, in principle, *can* lead towards universal appropriation. However, it can do so only under favourable circumstances – the counterexample shows it to be inconsistent. So, οἰκείωσις must be based on rationality, but there is no single existing human rationality that would allow for consistent οἰκείωσις as the Stoics define it. Thus, the Anon. argues, justice must be grounded in an otherworldly principle, which is god. This way, the ethical ideal is supplied with an existing and consistent basis. We can now briefly revisit the original perplexity about the role of rationality in justice. The Anon. does not deny the importance of it – we can guess that fairly reasonably, because, at 176b2, the *Theaetetus* pairs *phronēsis* with justice in its explication of ὁμοίωσις θεῷ. However, he underscores that *human* rationality cannot provide a stable basis for justice.

Now, if the Anon. argues for god as a moral principle, what exactly does he mean by the imperative of ὁμοίωσις θεῷ[6]? Since the Anon.'s further explication of this principle has been lost, and since he proposes this principle in the context of the *Theaetetus*, the meaning of this principle has to be examined in the broader context of (a) the *Commentary*, and (b) modern interpretations of ὁμοίωσις θεῷ. The latter is characterised by the quantity of ink that has been spilt over the question whether ὁμοίωσις θεῷ of the *Theaetetus* implies true otherworldliness. That is, whether it suggests flight from society in order to live a

[6] As we saw in T1, the Anon. uses a slightly different wording: πρὸς τὸν θεὸν ὁμοίωσις; however, I refer to this ideal consistently as ὁμοίωσις θεῷ, since (1) this is the wording we find in the *Theaetetus*; (2) it was a standard formulation of ethical τέλος by Middle Platonists – the tradition the Anon. belongs to (see, e.g., Stob. 2.7.3f); from (1) and (2), it follows that (3) the Anon.'s variation in wording does not mean variation in meaning and refers to this formula; (4) this is the wording by which this principle is recognised in modern scholarship.

contemplative life, or rather incorporates social virtues[7]. J. M. Armstrong has made one of the first successful attempts (primarily based on the *Laws*) to emphasise the practical, down-to-earth side of the Platonic ideal of following gods. For him, it seemed only natural to juxtapose this reading of ὁμοίωσις θεῷ with the otherworldly interpretation of the same ideal by Eudorus, Alcinous *and* the Anon. (Armstrong 2004: 172, n.2). However, I shall argue that at least the Anon. should not be seen as an antipode of a socially oriented interpretation of ὁμοίωσις θεῷ.

First of all, as recently underscored by Torri (2019: 243–5), the language of the Anon. suggests that, for him, assimilation to god is a condition for further ethical life, including justice. However, modern readings of the Digression suggest that justice does not necessarily imply active involvement in a polis' life[8]. Thus, if the 'social' interpretation is to be kept, we need further arguments for it. In other words, we have to ask whether the social aspect of the Anon.'s ὁμοίωσις θεῷ is inevitable. The clue lies in the passage of the *Theaetetus*, which the Anon. comments on when he presents ὁμοίωσις θεῷ. In this passage, Socrates suggests that he does not care for Cyrenaeans as much as for his fellow citizens (*Tht*. 143d1–5). Dwelling on it, the Anon. argues that equal care for everyone is not a good measure of justice. However, as the Anon. himself assesses (VIII.11–17), Socrates in this passage expresses deep care for his close ones. So, (1) the Anon. uses Socrates' words and behaviour as a pretext to formulate the Platonic ideal of justice, and, in this case, (2) the behaviour of Socrates is very much social and shows concern for his fellow citizens; thus, (3) it seems rather unlikely that the Anon. would choose the principle of justice which does not presuppose the 'social' aspect and at least some involvement in the life of the polis.

We can further examine this interpretation of the Anon.'s position on justice in the light of modern readings of *Theaetetus*'s Digression as an imperative of flight. One of the seminal 'unsocial' interpretations of ὁμοίωσις θεῷ has been offered by A. Lännström (2011: 124–130). However, in accordance with our own argument above, she rightly notes that the unsocial conception of justice is at odds with Socrates' own example. Thus, she emphasises that the ideal philosopher of the Digression and Socrates offer two different models of virtuous life. This interpretation may as well be true. However, from the Anon.'s perspective, such a division is hardly possible. He sees ὁμοίωσις θεῷ as an alternative to the unrealistic Stoic principle of οἰκείωσις. This rivalry is important for two reasons. First, he seeks to make an alternative bid for a principle of popularly understood justice, which is likely to be socially involved. Second, he juxtaposes the realistic Platonic principle with the unrealistic Stoic one. Although the ultimate basis of the Platonic principle is god, Socrates is the best example of how this ethical principle can be successfully put

[7] Rue (1993) and Mahoney (2004) argue that godlikeness must include active involvement in the life of the polis. The main focus here is on the words 'ὁμοίωσις δὲ δίκαιον [...] γενέσθαι' (176b2–3) and justice as a social virtue. Lännström (2011) and Menn (2020) offer some counterarguments, emphasising that the justice here is negative, which means that not harming others is enough for the philosophical ὁμοίωσις as φυγή (176b1), cf. also Reydams-Schils 2017: 144–145.

[8] See n. 7. This is not considered in Torri's brief account.

into practice. This becomes even more important if we keep in mind that Socrates was a key figure in Hellenistic philosophy, and that Platonists were competing with the Stoics (as well as other schools) for the title of the true followers of Socrates[9]. Thus, it is very unlikely that the Anon. would be willing to separate the ideal of ὁμοίωσις θεῷ in the Digression from the figure of Socrates.

Another important 'unsocial' interpretation of ὁμοίωσις θεῷ is that of S. Menn. He focuses on what the god(s), to whom one should assimilate, are like. Menn emphasises that Plato attributes to the gods such justice that even Epicureans would agree with it (2020: 115). In other words, such justice does not require active involvement in the affairs of others. This interpretation is based on *Theaetetus*'s supposed semi-detachment from such dialogues as the *Republic* and the *Timaeus* (although the latter is later than the *Theaetetus*) (*ibid*.: 113–114). Once again, such an interpretation is incompatible with the Anon.'s general position. He clearly sees the *Theaetetus* as integral to the Platonic corpus, for he freely uses examples from other middle-period dialogues to discuss the *Theaetetus* (see *infra*).

So, for now, we see that the Anon.'s understanding of ethics, based on the *Theaetetus*, emphasises the divine principle as the only truly consistent basis for justice, but also involves an inevitable social aspect. However, in order to see the complete picture of the Anon.'s interpretation, I suggest following his rivalry with the Stoics further. That is, we should now critically compare the Anon.'s reading of ὁμοίωσις θεῷ with the Stoic οἰκείωσις. From the Anon.'s commentary, it may seem that the Stoic principle is purely social and based solely on the inter-human relations. After all, the Anon. supposed that this principle has no stable ontological basis, and did so only from the fact that no inter-human relation is based on consistently universal οἰκείωσις. However, we know that the Stoic οἰκείωσις has an important divine aspect. Although it finds its origins in instinct, as a universal principle of justice, it must be further aided by divine reason. This divine reason leads us to become cosmic citizens alongside the gods[10]. The Anon., writing at a time when Stoicism was one of the main philosophical schools, must have known all that. Thus, it seems that *both* – Platonic and Stoic – principles of justice are at the same time divine *and* socially oriented.

In this context, there are two ways to explain the Anon.'s exaggeration about οἰκείωσις. He either mispresents it or consciously underscores its social and this-worldly aspect. I argue that the latter is more probable: the Anon. emphasises that, despite the similarities between the two ideals (both being social and divine), the issue with the Stoic one is that it makes the divine aspect the end of ethics rather than the beginning, as it should be according to the Anon[11]. For the Stoics, the divine becomes important only at a certain

[9] Long 1999: 620; Alesse 2018: 47.

[10] Schofield 1999: 766–768, cf. also Seneca, *De otio* 4.1 (Long-Sedley 67K).

[11] It should be noted that the rationale behind the Anon.'s reading of Stoic ethics is best understood from the perspective of οἰκείωσις (which he obviously takes to be the most important one). Elsewhere, the Stoics have argued that Zeus is the only source of justice (Plu. *Stoic. Rep*. 1035c). However, (a) this is not said in connection with οἰκείωσις; (b) the Anon. may as well acknowledge that, in a sense, the divine aspect is inevitable in any aspect of the Stoic doctrine, but οἰκείωσις as a principle of justice is still based on imperfect human faculties and only then leads to the divine.

stage of ethics rather than at the very beginning. Accordingly, the Anon. sees the general presence of divinity as minimised in the Stoic version of the divine-and-social ethical ideal. Such a reading of the Anon.'s intention is supported by the historical context. At the time, Epictetus (and, most probably, other Stoics) recycled such Platonic phrases as ἐξομοιοῦσθαι [θεοῖς] and probably borrowed the tenets about the ideal philosopher from *Theaetetus*'s Digression. However, as Bénatouïl (2013) shows, they read the *Theaetetus* only as a Socratic dialogue, ignoring its important otherworldly aspect[12]. The Anon., in his *Commentary*, seems to emphasise exactly this tendency of the Stoics: their own ideal of οἰκείωσις might have a divine aspect, but their problem is to concentrate on inter-human relations rather than on deriving justice from divine ethics[13].

The Anon.'s epistemology and its relation to ethics

After reconstructing the Anon.'s ethics from the perspective of ὁμοίωσις θεῷ, we must remember that, for the Anon., the ethical Digression is not a semantic island, detached from the main part of the *Theaetetus*[14]. We can see that from how he speaks about ethics in the context of epistemological questions and vice versa (cf. Tarrant 2005: 137–138). Thus, in order to better understand his treatment of ὁμοίωσις θεῷ, as well as his connection between the Digression and the dialogue, we now must briefly turn to the epistemological part of the *Commentary*.

As already noted (n.1), many strands of modern *Theaetetus*'s interpretations can be narrowed down to two branches: one emphasises the importance of the Forms, the other emphasises that the dialogue is about knowledge as such, not its objects, and the Forms cannot provide the interpretative key. As one could expect from a Middle Platonist, the Anon. is firmly on the unitarian side. Just from the dialogues he mentions alone, we recognise that middle-period theories are at the centre of his unitarian reading (*Symposium* (x2), the *Republic* (x2), the *Meno* (x3); in contrast, the *Sophist* is mentioned as more of a negative reference in the context of the *Theaetetus*'s interpretation).

However, the Anon. is not simply suggesting that the dialogue is aporetic because the Forms are not employed. In fact, according to the Anon., the dialogue is not fruitless, nor are the Forms exactly missing from it. Like many modern scholars, the Anon. emphasises the Socratic aspect of the dialogue: Socrates intentionally withholds his own doctrinal opinions in order to evoke students' naturally dormant knowledge, thus acting as an intellectual midwife (XLVII.35–45). But, in contrast to scholars such as Burnyeat (1990), the Anon. thinks that quite specific Platonic doctrines lie behind Socrates' maieutical strategy. First, learning is recollection (ἀνάμνησις) (XLVII.47–XLVIII.1; LV.27–33), that is, recovery of knowledge (XVI.35–XVII.3). Second, knowledge is 'right opinion (δόξα ὀρθή) bound

[12] For an example of how Chrysippus himself leaves out the transcendent dimension of reality, see Reydams-Schils 2017: 148.

[13] As briefly noted by Bonazzi, the Anon. does not reject οἰκείωσις altogether, but rather tries to incorporate it into his own Platonic system (Bonazzi 2008: 599).

[14] Contrary to such modern readings as Menn 2020: 112.

by an explanation given by reasoning (αἰτίᾳ λογισμοῦ)' (XV.21–23)[15]. Both of these are explicitly taken from the *Meno*, which the Anon. sees as a natural pair to the *Theaetetus*[16].

Now, as was the case with the ethics, rivalry with the Stoics is an important part of the Anon.'s epistemology and thus crucial for our reconstruction. The Anon. uses the concept of ἀνάμνησις not only to express his unitarian interpretation of the Platonic corpus but also as a polemical tool. By recollection, he argues, human beings articulate their 'natural conceptions' (φυσικαὶ ἔννοιαι), which lack 'articulation' (διαρθρώσεως) (XLVI.43–45). This way, the Anon. transforms the Stoic notion of 'common conceptions' (κοιναὶ ἔννοιαι)[17].

The Anon.'s direct attack on Stoic epistemology does not mean that there is no broad agreement between them. Both parties hold that there is *something* that enables us to recognise reality[18]. However, for the Stoics, the object of knowledge (for the recognition of which κοιναὶ ἔννοιαι are used) is corporeal reality. Their epistemology is, accordingly, impression-based (φαντασιῶν, XV.28). Therefore, as far as the Anon. is concerned, the Stoics do not need any extra 'criterion' in order to gain knowledge. In contrast, for the Anon., both the object and the enabler of knowledge are Platonic Forms (XXIII.1–12; Bonazzi 2013: 320–321)[19]. According to the Anon., Plato shows the sense-trusting people that senses are not *enough* for knowledge (III)[20]. Although the Anon. suggests that the *Theaetetus* is about knowledge rather than the 'criterion' of judgement, he also emphasises that the dialogue still investigates the criterion as an instrument of knowledge (II). That is why, when formulating Zeno's conception of knowledge, the Anon. emphasises that it is a disposition in the receipt of impressions, 'which is not subject to modification by argument' (ἀμετάπτωτον ὑπὸ λόγου, XV.28–30). This stands in direct opposition to his own conception, which rests on λογισμός, which, in turn, rests on the Forms.

However, it is crucial that the Anon. is not entirely sceptical about physical reality and its sense perceptions. We can see that, first of all, from his criticism of the Pyrrhonists

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[15] For the discussion about the Anon.'s αἰτίᾳ λογισμοῦ instead of αἰτίας λογισμῷ, see Bonazzi 2003: 44–47. The literal translation would be '[...] bound by the cause of reasoning'.

[16] He employs the *Meno* not only to define knowledge but also to comment on *Theaetetus*'s mathematical problems: see XXVIII.43–XXIX.1.

[17] Tarrant 2005: 136–137; Bonazzi 2013: 316–317, cf. a broader context of Platonic appropriation of this Stoic concept: Chiaradonna (2007).

[18] Another point of agreement is that the Anon. emphasises that although all humans are 'pregnant' with knowledge, some of them cannot reach objects of knowledge 'in this life' (LVII). Similarly, according to the Stoics, the 'commonness' of conceptions does not mean that they are currently shared by everyone, since our mind is distorted (Chiaradonna 2007: 210).

[19] From the outset, the Anon.'s text is suspiciously Aristotelian and does not mention Platonic Forms: human beings 'unfold the common conceptions' by getting 'the genus (γένος) each time and the differentiae (διαφοράς)' (XXIII.10–12). I suggest that it is only expected. According to the Anon., Socrates' interlocutors make two related errors: 1) they enumerate types of knowledge instead of defining knowledge *per se* (XVIII–XIX); 2) when enumerating such types of knowledge as cobbling, they inevitably imply objects of knowledge (XXI.38–41). Accordingly, he himself does not explicitly discuss the objects of knowledge. However, recollection is always recollection *of something*, and, for the Anon., it is the Forms, as we surely know from his reference to middle-period dialogues and reincarnation in the context of remembrance (LVII.30–31). Thus, the Forms as objects of knowledge are an important part of the *Commentary*, but not *directly*.

[20] In the dialogue, one such sense-trusting person seems to be Protagoras, but here the Anon. probably refers to the Stoics.

who do not differentiate between true and false impressions (LXI.28–33, Piazzalunga & Bonazzi 2024: 219). In other words, even for the Anon, not all impressions are false. This aspect of the Anon.'s epistemology can be further, albeit indirectly, supported by the role the *Meno* and recollection in general play in it. As the *Meno* shows, any recollection starts with sense perception. Thus, for the Anon., the problem lies not in perceptual reality *per se* but in the lack of an otherworldly principle that could help evaluate that reality. As in the case of οἰκείωσις, he does not reject the Stoic perspective but instead shows its incompleteness and incorporates previously Stoic concepts into Platonism by transforming their meaning.

So, in both ethics and epistemology, the Anon. sees the Stoics as going in the right direction but missing the main point of the issue. Parallels behind his stances on Stoic ethics and epistemology are not accidental. For the Anon.'s own ethics and epistemology, as far as they emerge from the *Commentary*, are parallel and based on the same Two-World reading of Plato. In ethics, justice, as Socrates' example shows, inevitably incorporates the social relations of the virtuous philosopher. However, the consistent and ontologically stable basis for justice is not found in this World[21]. In epistemology, sense perception plays an important part in our cognition and, in a sense, can be 'true'. However, it would not lead anywhere without the Forms, which act both as objects and the fundamental enablers of cognition. Thus, the Two-World reading must be the key which enables the Anon. to connect the ethical Digression of the *Theaetetus* with the rest of the dialogue.

However, one last issue about the proposed connection has to be resolved: is the relation between the Anon.'s epistemology and ethics one of parallelism, or rather one of direct derivation? H. Tarrant suggests that the Anon. offers a purely epistemological interpretation of ὁμοίωσις θεῷ (1985: 78–79, cf. Torri 2019: 244–245). According to it, assimilation is to 'omniscient divinity', so our ethical aim is to perfect our reasoning. The main argument for such a reading is that (a) Anon. suggests that the Platonic doctrines he defends were held by all Platonists, including the Sceptical Academy (see n. 5); and (b) the epistemological interpretation of ὁμοίωσις θεῷ is the only one which the sceptical Platonists could accept. However, despite the declaration, the Anon. does not provide any doctrines that the Sceptical Academy is supposed to have held. As shown by Piazzalunga and Bonazzi, the only *dogma* the Anon. actually attributes to the Sceptical Academy concerns the methodology of argumentation, rather than ethics (2024: 210–218). Regarding the actual solution for the unity of the Academy, the Anon. is as ambiguous as he is innovative (*ibid*.: 218). So, we should not try to forcefully marry the Anon.'s interpretation of ὁμοίωσις θεῷ with the supposed ethics of the Sceptical Academy, since the Anon. himself is silent about the existence of any such doctrine. Thus, it is more probable that

[21] The separate, although related, question is whether the god of ὁμοίωσις θεῷ is indeed transcendent. The Anon. does not dwell on this question. However, he would probably understand it as transcendent, at least in the sense of dwelling in another world than ours. This is because: (1) the *Theaetetus* does not explicate this question; (2) the Anon. interprets the *Theaetetus* in accordance with the doctrines of the middle dialogues; and (3) in the middle dialogues, when this question is raised, (most notably, the *Phaedo* and the *Phaedrus*, but also the *Symposium*) the god(s) of highest ethical ideal are transcendent.

the Anon.'s ethics are *parallel to epistemology*, rather than directly *epistemological*. In other words, the Anon.'s ethics and epistemology are both grounded in an otherworldly basis, but this does not mean that his ethics are formulated with cognition as the sole aim.

Conclusions

As we have seen, the Anon. puts effort into showing that the *Theaetetus*, despite the apparent aporia, has a coherent theory. The dialogue is presented as based on the Two-World Theory, with its epistemology and ethics emerging as different sides of the same Platonic coin. In both of them, the Anon. transforms Stoic concepts and incorporates them into his Platonic doctrine. In addition, I would like to note that the Anon.'s coherent reading of the dialogue can be seen as a third, meta-point of rivalry with the Stoics. It does not seem like a coincidence that the Anon., while engaging in this rivalry, uses every opportunity to offer a worldview which incorporates ethics, epistemology (and ontology as the basis for the first two), as an alternative to the Stoic position, which, as generally claimed, also incorporates all of those in the one worldview.

I suggest that the present reconstruction of the Anon.'s position has not only historical but also philosophical merits. When we take a closer look, the *Commentary* does more than simply show *that* and *why* the Two-World Theory is crucial for the interpretation of the *Theaetetus*. It is also an attempt at moderation and balance: in key areas, the Anon. seems to emphasise that the Stoic way of thinking is not totally erroneous but, rather, incomplete. He sees in the *Theaetetus* an ethical ideal that is meant for the social life in the polis, while being firmly based on the divine realm. Similarly, the epistemological ideal provides another perspective of the same philosophical position: it does not write off phenomena as 'useless' but, instead, offers a more stable ground for *epistēmē*. In a way, it is textbook Platonism, but formulated in a more universal manner through engagement with the Stoics' alternative stance.

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