

Christianity, which was still chiefly the religion of the proletariat. The paper suffers somewhat from Marxist language but certainly deserves attention. De Vogel, in my opinion more convincingly, describes *Consolatio* as a syncretist blending of Stoic-Neoplatonist and Christian views. In the concluding contribution, Peter Dronke reviews Pierre Courcelle's well-known book on *Consolatio*. While praising this very learned work, he points out a number of overhasty conclusions and misinterpretations, e.g. regarding Boethius' idea of *Fortuna* – besides Cicero's *Somnium Scipionis*, with Macrobius' *Commentary*, Plato's *Timaeus* had also served as a model – and its *Nachleben* in the Middle Ages.

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*David Furley: Cosmic Problems. Essays on Greek and Roman Philosophy of Nature.* Cambridge University Press, 1989. XIV, 258 p. GBP 27.50.

Furley's book consists of 18 essays, which except for two ("The Dynamics of the Earth: Anaximander, Plato and the Centrifocal Theory" and "Truth as what Survives the *Elenchos*") have been published before in journals. The treatise seems to be an interlude, but also a companion to Furley's earlier and forthcoming books *The Greek Cosmologists* Vol. 1 (1987) and Vol. 2. The interval between the essays goes back twenty years, the oldest being written in 1966 ("Lucretius and the Stoics"). Furley has not revised his essays except by making some additions to his notes. The essays have been arranged approximately in chronological order by subjects (from the Milesians to Lucretius). The starting point is mostly polemical as Furley himself admits. He begins with other scholars' opinions which he criticizes. For example, Chapter 14 (Knowledge of Atoms and Void in Epicureanism") opposes Bailey's view that Epicurus believed in direct knowledge of the external objects (*ἐπιβολή τῆς διανοίας*). According to Furley, Epicurus was a kind of empirist. Chapter 2 criticizes attributing to Anaximander the centrifocal theory (i.e. the Earth, which is the center of the cosmos, needs no underpropping because it is similarly related to the extremes). Furley claims that this is an abandonment of the archaic world view.

Regarding the title of this book, one may wonder at the inclusion of three essays, namely Chapters 3, 4 and 6 ("Notes on Parmenides", "Truth as what Survives the *Elenchos*" and "Antiphon's Case against Justice"). They belong to the fields of logic or semantics, and Chapter 6 also deals with questions of ethics. In his preface, which has quite illustrative

synopses of the themes of the chapters, Furley defends the inclusion of Chapter 6 as follows: "But the relevance of one's view of the natural world to human choice and action is also a theme for cosmology" (p. X). What kind of answers could natural science give to the problems of ethics? The question is also interesting if we transfer it to the contemporary situation. But it seems that quantum physics and the theory of relativity are so complicated to ordinary mind that to understand them completely you must master the language of mathematics – otherwise they remain nearly mere myths. Furley also notices how little cosmological problems are reflected in the other genres of literature during the classical period.

Thus Furley's book gives new viewpoints on and interpretations of quite detailed cosmological problems. The most interesting point in my opinion however can be found in the last chapter: "The Cosmological Crisis in Classical Antiquity". In this essay, Greek cosmologists are grouped into two classes: Atomists and Aristotelians. The division can be surmised in the other foregoing chapters of the book. It also corresponds to the division of "The Greek Cosmologists" into two volumes: the subtitle of Volume 1 is "The Formation of the Atomic Theory and its Earliest Critics" and the subtitle of Volume 2 will be "The Teleological World Picture and its Opponents" (see p. 226 n. 5). The division presents eleven pairs of items which are nearly in opposition to each other. When an atomist thinks that the cosmos is transient and the Earth is flat, an Aristotelian lives in an eternal or repeating cosmos and a spherical Earth. An atomist believes in evolution, a material soul, and accident, while an Aristotelian defends creation or eternity, an immaterial soul, and design. The linear dynamics of atomists has as an opposition the centrifocal dynamics of Aristotelians. Similarly, atoms opposed a continuum, the idea of many cosmos opposed the uniqueness of the cosmos, and matter-in motion explanations are in contrast to teleological explanations.

Furley also discusses what could be the first guiding principle of this grouping, that is to say what makes an atomist and what makes an Aristotelian. Not divisions between theism-atheism, closed world-infinite universe, mechanism-animism, but a certain kind of epistemological preference which chooses between the theory of atoms and the theory of Forms. If this choice is an expression of basic personal intuition is a question which belongs to the scope of another treatise, as Furley concludes.

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