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Hermes and Dike

**The Understanding and Goal
of Platonic Philosophizing**

Abstract

*The questions of philosophical understanding and justice are essentially interrelated from the very beginnings of the Greek philosophizing. Just as the philosophical hermeneutics or **ἡρμηνεία** has its prephilosophical origin in the Greek god Hermes, the Platonic understanding of justice (**δικαιοσύνη**) has it in the goddess Dike. In his ambivalency Hermes thus indicates the possibility of understanding as well as the possibility of misleadance or misuse of understanding, which – in the horizon of Socratic and Platonic philosophy – means the same as lack of understanding. In the Platonic philosophy the cognition and ethical attitude are namely closely related. But if the ethical attitude is understood mostly as righteousness, the latter shouldn't be understood in the somewhat reduced meaning of accordance of human actions with the state laws; what we have to deal with is the inner accordance and harmony of man and his soul, and this also means the accordance of man with the world he lives in. From this point of view the potential hermeneutical an-archism" can once again – this time in another way – be pointed towards the question of **ἀρχή** and transposed from the sphere of mere theory into the very being of human life, which is – in the Platonic philosophy – threatened through the question of soul.*

Key words

Greek philosophy, Platonism, justice, understanding, hermeneutics

What do Hermes and Dike have in common? If we can say that Hermes points toward hermeneutics, and Dike toward justice, this relationship raises not only the question of the "hermeneutics of justice" but also that of the "justice of hermeneutics". Hermeneutics is hereby not understood solely as a philosophical strand, originating from the modern biblical exegesis and finding its articulated form in Schleiermacher's and Gadamer's outlines of philosophical hermeneutics. Rather, it can be found where Hermes abides, and Hermes is a very old god, since he bears traces of the pre-Homeric world. The endeavor to understand the world is of course older than philosophy itself and at least from Plato onwards we are witnesses of the practice of philosophical interpretation of texts,¹ with the very issue of individual human understanding already being under question.² The latter can be reduced to two essential elements, two hermeneutic walls: opinion

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Plato is the first explicit interpreter of the thoughts of his predecessors, and even poetry. On his explanation of Simonides' text in his dialogue *Protagoras* (338 E-347 A) see also Thomas A. Szlezák, *Platon lesen*, Frommann-Holzboog, Stuttgart-Bad Cannstatt 1993, p. 53.

2

Distinctive hindrances in understanding, which are the main obstacles of philosophizing, are perhaps most thoroughly analyzed by Callicles in Plato's dialogue *Gorgias*; on this issue see Th. A. Szlezák, *Platon lesen*, p. 16.

(*doxa*) and human character (*hōmō*). Both “stand in the way” of philosophizing – as part of the way and as an obstacle –, both have to be overcome by philosophy, and this overcoming points toward a philosophically transformed (*metanoia*) man, a man – and his polis –, who has attained justice (*dikaio-sunh*), namely the kind of justice which is not only one among the possible “characteristics” but rather bears the meaning of a meaningful structure of the whole. Reaching this is the very goal of philosophy.

Hermeneutics reveals the crucial question of the *truth* of understanding, which cannot be reduced to Aristotelian *hērmeneia*. In the attempt to provide an answer to this question, we should rather rely on the original ancient Greek “conception” and “preconception” of hermeneutics, as revealed through the god Hermes. In the same manner, justice cannot be properly understood from the perspective of its present meaning. The crucial question therefore is, what is the nature of the world as revealed through Hermes and Dike: what are its possibilities and what dangers are there for hermeneutics in Hermes’ hands; what does justice mean, when grounded in the more original meaning of Dike?

Let me first provide some general remarks concerning the problem of understanding Greek gods – although this is probably a theme which would need a separate and more thorough analysis. First of all because our understanding of the word “God” is dominated by Christian thought, and more and more also by an indefinite understanding of this notion today, especially in the way it appears in new-age ideologies and other concepts of “god without god”. What is most important here is perhaps the insight into the complexity of the relation between mythos and logos in the ancient world; this relation most definitely cannot be reduced to attack against mythos, launched in the name of the Enlightenment. On the contrary, in ancient Greece, philosophy and theology are essentially interrelated, and this doesn’t relate only to the early Greek thought. As Weischedel puts it in the *God of Philosophers*:

“Under a certain aspect, which concerns what is essential, the whole ancient philosophy can in its basic outlines be treated as philosophical theology.”³

In the ancient world we must, of course, always distinguish between the polytheistic world of the Olympian gods and the so-called “philosophical god” – on this ground Aristotle, for example, makes a distinction between *qeologia* and *qeologikh* which is also the name for his first philosophy. According to Weischedel, the god of philosophy is understood by the first philosophers as the “god of the world (Weltgott)”;⁴ and this is most surely not a god of worship and prayer. The ancient Olympian gods, however, also know nothing about revelation and commandments and doctrines; they simply *are* and appear in their being as the self-revelation of the world.⁵ The gods of myth and of Greek poetry descend, according to Pflaumer,

“... from the Greek original experience of nature. They are *fusi*--gods (Physis-Götter).”⁶

We therefore must not and should not understand them as “personification” of certain characteristics we experience in relation to them. We should bear in mind all this, although it is difficult not to speak about a certain Greek god personally, as the form of mythos dictates us.

1. Hermes – god of hermeneutics?

I. *Hermes and hermeneia*

Arguably, hermeneutics derives its name from the god Hermes (‘*Erhmō*’), who is one of the less appreciated gods among the twelve Olympics. Hermes

is otherwise a very old Greek god and his name appears already on the tablets in the Linear B writing. In public places throughout Greece, one could trace the so-called **Ermai**, columns with phallus, above which stood the bust of Hermes, wherefrom the god probably got his name. Among the earliest sources which tell us something about him and his life, is the fourth Homeric hymn, hymn to Hermes.

This etymological relatedness of hermeneutics and Hermes has also been criticized; some are not ready to acknowledge the Olympian roots of hermeneutics, but prefer to relate Hermes to Hermetism. This connection is undoubtedly legitimate as well, for it holds true that – as Mircea Eliade says in his *History of Religious Ideas* – “Hermes is one of the few Olympian gods who ... will not disappear with the triumph of Christianity”, but experienced – “assimilated to Thoth and Mercurius”⁷ – a new rise in Hellenism and later in Renaissance through *Corpus Hermeticum*, alchemy and Hermetism.⁸

Eliade also mentions that “philosophers identified Hermes with Logos and that Church Fathers compared him with Christ”;⁹ in this way, Hermes is placed in the very heart of the origins of European spirit and tradition. Already in the ancient Greek world, the god Hermes was identified with Logos and this identification holds true whether we understand Logos as something that gives sense to what is not understood (seemingly “senseless”) or as the very explanation (gathering the dispersed “non-senses” into sense). It is surely not a coincidence that the Christian mediator between man and the “unknown God” Jesus Christ is also called Logos. The mediating role of Hermes shall be discussed later.

The Greek word **εἰρμηνεία** means explaining, at first more in the sense of mediating messages, of speech communication, and later also making statements and interpreting. In his work *On the Way to Language*, Heidegger explains **εἰρμηνεύειν** as “exposition (Darlegen)” which becomes “interpretation (Auslegen)”.¹⁰ It is perhaps also not a coincidence that the Greek word **εἰρμαῖον** means something that is “found by chance”, a gift of Hermes, something you find by coincidence – and this connection already implies that hermeneutics doesn’t have much chance to do its work properly, for its horizon includes not only understanding but also the lack of understanding or misunderstanding.

The essential connection is probably to be sought for in the mediatory function performed by Hermes; the mediatory function of language (again – **logos** –) is here undoubtedly fundamental. Hermes as mediator between gods and

3 Wilhelm Weischedel, *Der Gott der Philosophen*, Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, Darmstadt 1994, Vol. 1, p. 39.

4 W. Weischedel, *Der Gott der Philosophen*, p. 42.

5 This point of view is shared also by Walter F. Otto in the work *Theophania. Der Geist der altgriechischen Religion*, Rowohlt, Hamburg 1956, p. 84.

6 Ruprecht Pflaumer, “Zum Wesen von Wahrheit und Täuschung bei Platon”, in: Dieter Henrich et al. (ed.), *Die Gegenwart der Griechen im neueren Denken*, Mohr, Tübingen 1960, p. 205.

7 The “Star of Hermes” or later just “Hermes” was also the Greek name for planet Mercury.

8 Mircea Eliade, *A History of Religious Ideas*, Vol. 1: *From the Stone Age to the Eleusinian Mysteries*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago 1978, p. 276.

9 M. Eliade, *A History of Religious Ideas*, p. 276.

10 Martin Heidegger, *Unterwegs zur Sprache* (Gesamtausgabe, Vol. 12), Suhrkamp, Frankfurt am Main 1985, p. 115.

men mediates the messages to people and thus already interprets them. The sole repeating of divine words would namely have no effect, since gods talk a different language, as we come to know, for example, from Plato's *Cratylus*. Hermes "translates" the language of gods into human language, whereby he doesn't translate only the words themselves, but tells the meaning of the divine message in such a way that can (only) be understandable to people. This also gives him immense power, since the possibilities of manipulation are, so to say, unlimited; it depends on his attitude (**εἰ-**) alone as to what degree he shall use or misuse them.¹¹ His activity is related to seizing the right moment, the right opportunity – but for what purpose?

II. "Who" is Hermes?

What, then, are the specific characteristics of Hermes, which could also help us discern the degree of his credibility? As the ancient sources tell us, Hermes was a very controversial and ambivalent "god". We usually stress his ability of communication: he bears credit for successful conversing with enemies and strangers, whereby he didn't interpret only their words but also – as we have already mentioned – mediated between gods and mortals; he was the herald of gods, the interpreter (**εἰρηνεύς**), whose realm was logos.

Bearing in mind his skilful orations and mastery of logos, we can justifiably relate him to rhetoric and literature. We needn't specify here in detail what philosophy thinks of rhetoric (and sophistic, which is related to it) as well as of poetry. For Plato, for example, a poet is precisely an interpreter, while rhapsodists are "interpreters of interpreters (**εἰρηνεῶν εἰρηνή-**)" (*Ion* 535 A 9).¹² Already from this point of view, the predispositions of Hermes are – and this is the least we can say – philosophically suspicious. It is namely clear that logos, understood in this way, is something that can be true or false, as Plato already explains, and as Aristotle later states in his writing *De interpretatione* (**Περὶ εἰρηνείας**). Also **εἰρηνεία** can therefore be true or false. The key question is thus: how do things stand with Hermes' truthfulness, his aspiration for truth, and consequently with hermeneutics, which claims Hermes to be its "patron"? Let us try to answer this question by means of some principal activities of Hermes, without pretending to exhaust all of his aspects.

Hermes is always on the way. We sometimes say that he is the god of roads and crossroads. Or if we quote Walter Otto and his work *The Gods of Greece*: "His [that is, Hermes'] way is precisely in that he doesn't belong to any district, that he has no permanent place, but is always on the way between here and there..." – and Otto continues: "... and as such suddenly joins to somebody who is alone." He thus reveals himself as the "genius of night", who at the same time offers man the experience of unfamiliarity as well as of benevolence and intimacy.¹³ Hermes is "the most human god", because "no strangeness is strange to him".¹⁴ The state of this "in-between" is the fundamental position of human being, not least the state of "in-between" between wisdom and stupidity, which is the origin of the possibility and need for philosophy. Man himself is also a being-on-the-way, who searches for the path. To be on (**meta**) the way (**odov**) is a question of method, and the guide on this way is Hermes, who is himself a traveler, and at the same time also the *god of method* in all its ambiguity between deliverance and perdition.

Hermes is thus a guide. He can guide souls to the Underworld (he is called **υἱοπόμπος**) and also, if necessary, back from it. He guides herds and sometimes takes them into stables. He (mis)guides the loved ones, whether by helping them to stay together or to go apart. As the god who is closest to man,

he is always the first to provide him with help. His realm is not **paideia**, but **paidagwgia**. Hermes is the *god of pedagogics as psychagogics*. He puts the awoken to sleep and awakes the sleeping, as Homer puts it in his *Iliad* (cf. 24.343) – his medium are dreams.

Hermes is, as we have already mentioned, the messenger or herald of gods. At the same time he is necessarily also the interpreter, if not “the translator” of gods. The thin line between the translator and traitor is often violated unintentionally; talking about Hermes, it can be violated unconsciously, without knowing, or consciously, with a great deal of joy. Hermes is namely also the god of cunning and luck (also financial), which might be derived from this; he is thus also the god of trade and thieves. Walter Otto emphasizes that in Hermes we always have to deal with the relation between profit and loss, which basically belong together. Hermes is characterized by skillfulness, with which he converts things. His role is thus basically related to risk and danger, which accompany any aspiration to learn “the will of gods”, to “understand”.

What is also meaningful is the conflict with Apollo, which he experienced in the first days of his childhood. If philosophy is defined as Apollonian, then their relation can be very meaningful. As soon as he was born, he stole oxen from his brother Apollo and led him on a wrong trail by reversing their traces. Their rivalry is also evident from certain lines in the Homeric hymn to Apollo, where he threatens that he will – if he doesn’t get the same divine rights as Apollo – become the leader of robbers (cf. ll. 173–5). Apollo was appeased only when he got a lyre from Hermes; then he gradually grew fond of him.

All these descriptions notwithstanding, we still haven’t “caught” Hermes: as Eliade emphasizes in the above-mentioned work, his attributes were subjected to constant reinterpreting¹⁵ – we could also say that Hermes himself was the victim of his own “hermeneutics”.

III. Truth and hermeneutics

Within the framework of philosophy, hermeneutics can imply several things, depending on the historical aspect as well as on the aspect of its contents, with the horizon of understanding of Hermes being extremely wide. On the internet, for example, we can find an article written by Bill Crouse who recognizes the contemporary cult of Hermes even in postmodernism and deconstruction. He sees its nihilistic consequences in daily life as a denial “of the objective reality, the possibility of knowledge, the individual identity of man, the possibility of moral decision-making and the ultimate meaning of words, i.e. we al-

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For a more detailed discussion of this issue, see Franci Zore, *Početak i smisao metafizičkih pitanja. Studije o povijesti grčke filozofije*, Demetra, Zagreb 2006, p. 85 ff.

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Abbreviations of ancient works are quoted according to: H. G. Liddell – R. Scott – H. S. Jones, *A Greek-English Lexicon*. With a Supplement 1968 (Ninth Edition reprinted), Oxford University Press, Oxford 1977.

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Walter F. Otto, *Die Götter Griechenlands. Das Bild des Göttlichen im Spiegel des grie-*

chischen Geistes, Suhrkamp, Frankfurt am Main 92002, pp. 149–150. – Also important here is the relation between Hermes and Hestia, which shows how “all our experience of being is in its midst the experience *between* what is one’s own and what is one’s strange” (Dean Komel, “Hermenevtični eros”, *Phainomena*, 43/44 (2003), pp. 63–91, here p. 75).

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D. Komel, “Hermenevtični eros”, pp. 75–76.

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Cf. M. Eliade, *A History of Religious Ideas*, p. 276.

ways need an interpreter of messages”.¹⁶ However one-sided this judgment of the “cult of Hermes” may seem to us and regardless of how we may value it, these characteristics of the modern world are in definite relation to Hermes.

Hermes is undoubtedly the *god of hermeneutics* in that he offers man the experience of understanding and misunderstanding as well as of constant converting of one into the other. He questions everything he represents: method, psychagogics and finally hermeneutics itself, as he demonstrates the heterogeneous consequences of all its interventions. Through Hermes we become aware of the limitations – for example – of the project of the Enlightenment and of the so-called “cunning of reason (*List der Vernunft*)”. Hermes tells us that we are “in-between” and that we should act accordingly. Sooner or later he can take the method, which he kindly offered to us, away to his stables. In other words, Hermes shows us the dangers inherent to hermeneutics, dangers which can turn it against itself or its basic intention – hermeneutics can thus easily convert into the principle of “anything goes” as well as into the oblivion of its own involvement in the “hermeneutic circle”.

This clearly points to the danger inherent in the lack of the basic adequacy of hermeneutics in itself. Hermes can easily survive with either philosophy or anti-philosophy. Only a “corrective” can place hermeneutics in the field of philosophy, a corrective which Plato recognizes in the fundamental striving for “justice”. It is perhaps only the latter that makes hermeneutics truly philosophical. However, the role of Dike is in this sense even less self-evident than the role of Hermes – it is probably even more difficult to answer the question as to what “justice” is.

2. Justice (*dikaïosunh*) as the goal of philosophy

Nowadays¹⁷ it is extremely difficult to talk about justice in general and justice by Plato, since we are overwhelmed by modern meanings of these words, which seem to be in inflationary use in everyday public speech. Therefore I think that special attention should be paid to ancient Greek understanding of justice in general – only on this basis we can start talking about Plato’s understanding of justice in particular. If the insight into the pre-Platonic understanding and the original meanings of words is of utmost importance here, we also shouldn’t ignore the fact as to how these meanings are preserved in Platonic tradition, and this is the very reason why we should also introduce Proclus’ texts here.

The name of the Greek goddess Dike (**Dikh**) is closely related to the notion **dikaïosunh** and other related words (for example **to; dikaion**), which represent some of the key concepts for understanding of the Platonic philosophy, especially if we don’t approach it from the viewpoint of “pure theory” but from the viewpoint of striving for the comprehension of man and human soul (**yuchy**) and its formation (**paideia**). Saying that Dike is Justice and **dikaïosunh** righteousness simply doesn’t suffice, since these words themselves don’t tell us what is the meaning of justice and righteousness in Greek mythical or philosophical understanding.

On the other hand it can also be of help to our contemporary treatment of these problems, if we are aware of the origin of the above mentioned notions and are therefore able to understand them in a broader sense than they are used nowadays – when they tend to be reduced and empty, although expressions like “human rights” gain exceptional dimensions in the “political” discourse (which of course totally evades the original sense of the political). The politi-

cal discourse is namely also closely related to the meaning of **dikaiosunh** as the possibility of “political being”, *i.e.* of people living in a community (**poti~**).

I. The Greek goddess Dike and her district

Let us first look at the early Greek context in which appears the goddess Dike, who is known as the goddess of “justice”. The fact that she is Zeus’ daughter, places her extremely high in the hierarchy of Greek **muqo~**. As Gadamer puts it: “Zeus as the father of gods and men is at the same time the master of rights (der Walter des Rechts).”¹⁸ But this relation is not only of principal nature. According to Orpheus,¹⁹ Dike sits next to Zeus’ throne and arranges all human affairs – **Dikhn [...] Orfeu; para; ton tou Dio; qromon fhsi; kaqhmenhn panta ta; twñ ajqrwpwn eforan**²⁰

Her activity, however, is not limited only to the human race. In *Odyssey*, for example, Homer makes distinction between “justice of the gods” (**dikh qewn**) and “justice of the mortals” (**dikh brotwñ**)²¹ – so there is “justice” for mortals as well as for gods. The gods are not exempted from Dike; in their own way they too are obliged to it. Dike reveals justice to mortals, but at the same time she also protects justice, which means that she has two roles: on one hand she brings enlightenment, and on the other hand she punishes or provides retribution for injustice. Dike thus implies the feeling or the sense of justice and its meaning for human being and society.

Her mother is Themis and the ancient image of “law” is expressed precisely by these two deities: Themis and Dike.²² It is no coincidence that they appear together in one of the key scenes of the proem to Parmenides’ poem:

**epei; outi se moira kakh; proupepe neesqai
thndEodon (h gar apEajqrwpwn ekto; patou estin),
ajla; qemi~ te dikh te.**²³

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Bill Crouse, “Deconstructionism: The Post-modern Cult of Hermes”, <http://www.rapid-responsereport.com/briefingpapers/Deconstruction52.pdf>.

17

This chapter was published as “Platonic Understanding of Justice. On **dikh** and **dikaiosunh** in Greek Philosophy”, in: Damir Barbarić (ed.), *Platon über das Gute und die Gerechtigkeit*, Königshausen & Neumann, Würzburg 2005, pp. 21–30.

18

H.-G. Gadamer, “Das Vaterbild im griechischen Denken”, in: H.-G. Gadamer, *Griechische Philosophie II* (Gesammelte Werke, Vol. 6), Tübingen 1985, pp. 218–231, here p. 220.

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Hermann. Diels – Walther Kranz, *Die Fragmente der Vorsokratiker*, Vol. 1, (19. Aufl.; unverän. Nachdr. der 6. Aufl. 1951), Weidmann, Zürich 1996 (elsewhere: DK), p. 13.

20

DK 1 B 14. – In italics are the words which the editors indicate as genuine, since the source signifies only indirect quotations.

21

See *Od.* 19.43: **auth toi dikh epti; qewn, oi; Dlumpon efousin**, “is the way of the gods that hold Olympus”, and *Od.* 11.218: **ajlEauth dikh epti; brotwñ, ote tiv ke qanhsin**, “this is the appointed way with mortals when one dies”; cf. also the line *Od.* 4.691: **h; tEepti; dikh qeiwn basilhwn**, “as the wont is of divine kings” (English translation by A.T. Murray). – On different lexical meanings of **dikh**, some of which are also indicated in the given translations, see below.

22

The survey can be found in: Émile Benveniste, *Le vocabulaire des institutions indo-européennes*, Vol. 2: *Pouvoir, droit, religion*, Minuit, Paris 1968, pp. 99–105 (Themis) and pp. 107–110 (Dike).

23

DK 28 B 1, 26–28.

“No ill fate has sent you to travel this road – far indeed does it lie from the steps of the man – but right and justice.”²⁴

Themis and Dike are the goddesses who sent the author on the way to find out the truth, whereby Dike holds the keys that open the doors of Night and Day.²⁵ Themis herself, on the other hand, implies the foundation on which a certain order is established or “stated”, therefore she can also represent the “statute” as the basis of justice and righteousness.

Dike is also one of the Horae (literally: “Seasons”), who are named also “the gatekeepers of heaven”; they have jurisdiction over the natural order, accordance and harmony (they are also music lovers and choreographers). In a certain sense this holds true also for those who seem to be connected with the sphere of the “law”. Hesiod namely, besides Dike, mentions in *Theogony* as the other two daughters of Zeus and Themis also Eunomia (Legislation) and Eirene (Peace); at the same time he stresses their concern for the mortals:

**deuteron h̄gageto liparh̄n Qemin, h̄ teken Wra~,
Eujomih̄n te Dikh̄n te kai; Eijh̄h̄n teqal uīan,
ai{ t̄ÆfḡÆw̄reūosi kataqh̄toisi brotoisi.**²⁶

“Next he married bright Themis who bore the Horae (Hours), and Eunomia (Order), Dike (Justice), and blooming Eirene (Peace), who mind the works of mortal men.”²⁷

According to other sources, Horae also express life and growth; in the Attic cult, for example, there exist Thallo (**Qallwy** Blossom), Auxo (**Aujkw** Growth) and Carpo (**Karpwy** Fruits).²⁸

But here, of course, we cannot speak about natural order separately from the legal order, since this division of the natural (**fusei**) and the posited or “stated” (**qesei, nonw̄**) is of a much later origin.²⁹ As well as – in the early Greek thought – **fusi-** implies beings as the *whole*³⁰ and not just one of its segments,³¹ the order itself is cosmic order or the order of the *whole*. In this sense also the meaning of the goddess Dike, *i.e.* the meaning of “justice” can only be related to the whole.

II. The meaning of the Greek words for righteousness

The lexical meaning of the words **dikh**, **dikaiousuh** and **dikaio~** directs us – the way we are already used to in studying the meaning of Greek words – in very different ways which sometimes at a first glance (or in a certain way) mutually almost exclude one another. **Dikaio~**, for example, thus means “observant of custom or rule” and later “equal, even, well-balanced”, while **dikh** means “custom, usage”, “order, right”, “judgment”, “lawsuit”.³² In the everyday, non-philosophical context it is not difficult to choose the appropriate meaning, yet there remains the question as to what is the common foundation of these meanings.

The Greek word **dikh** is most likely etymologically related to the verb **deiknumi**, which means “I show, I denote”.³³ But this doesn’t tell us enough; the question remains in what sense is Dike “deictic” – or maybe even “apodeictic”? **Dikh** can, for example, be something that has *shown* itself as fate (appropriate share), manner, custom (what is habitual), justice (what is right) and judgment (in accordance with justice). In this context, we can also say that we are dealing with the ancient “philosophy of law”³⁴ – of course not in the present-day reduced meaning, but in the broader, so to say cosmic meaning which answers the question: “what is right” and “what it means to be right”.

The original meaning, prior to any “application”, can be found in the context of early Greek thought, for example in Anaximander, Parmenides and Heraclitus.

In his famous fragment Anaximander says that

“... the source of coming-to-be for existing things is that into which destruction, too, happens, ‘according to necessity; for they pay penalty and retribution to each other for their injustice according to the assessment of Time’”, **kata; to; crewn: didonai gar autā; dikhn kai; tisin ajlhthoi~ th~ ajlikia~ kata; thn tou cronou taxin** (DK 12 B 1).³⁵

To translate **dikhn didonai** with “pay penalty” is of course formally correct, but it largely expresses the later understanding of justice and its “retribution” (penalty) as the principle of restoring the order (**taxi~**). However, as Heidegger says in his *Introduction to Metaphysics*, **dikh** here implies denoting itself as denoting the accordance or the accordance itself (*Fug*), understood firstly in the meaning of contact (*Fuge*) and being in accordance (*Gefüge*) and then as the process of bringing into accordance (*Fügung*).³⁶ Although we can’t afford to go into a deeper analysis of this fragment, it is possible – from what has been said above – to anticipate the meaning which relates Anaximander to the understanding of **dikh** in Greek **muqo~**.

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The English translation cited from: G. S. Kirk – J. E. Raven – M. Schofield, *The Presocratic Philosophers. A Critical History with a Selection of Texts*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge ²1988, p. 243.

25

See DK 28 B 1, 11–14. – More about this later.

26

Th. 901–2. Hesiod, *Theogony*, Edited with Prolegomena and Commentary by M. L. West, Oxford University Press, Oxford 1966, p. 145 (text), pp. 406–7 (commentary).

27

English translation by Hugh G. Evelyn-White.

28

Pausanias (9.35.2) for example reports: **to; gar th~ Karpou~ ejstin ouj Carito~ ajla; Wra~ ofhoma th/ de; efera/ twn Wrwn nemousin ofhou th/ Pandrosw/ tima~ oij Aqhnaiōi, Qallw; thn qeon ojomazonte~**. “Carpo is the name, not of a Grace, but of a Season. The other Season is worshipped together with Pandrosus by the Athenians, who call the goddess Thallo” (English translation by W. H. S. Jones and H. A. Ormerod).

29

For the distinction between the natural and the posited see Felix Heinemann, *Nomos und Physis. Herkunft und Bedeutung einer Antithese im griechischen Denken des 5. Jahrhunderts*, Reinhardt, Basel 1965.

30

“The Greek essence of truth is possible only along with the Greek essence of being as

fusi~.” Martin Heidegger, *Einführung in die Metaphysik* (Gesamtausgabe, Vol. 40), Suhrkamp, Frankfurt am Main 1983, p. 109.

31

As for example by Aristotle, whose limited understanding of **fusi~** defines also the Aristotelian physics (cf. *Metaph. Z 11*, 1037 a 14–17, K 4, 1061 b 28–30, *Ph. B 1*, 192 b 13 and elsewhere). – On the question of **fusi~** by Aristotle see also Martin Heidegger, “Vom Wesen und Begriff der **Fusi~**. Aristoteles, Physik B, 1”, in: *Wegmarken* (Gesamtausgabe, Vol. 9), Suhrkamp, Frankfurt am Main 1976, pp. 239–301.

32

H. G. Liddell – R. Scott – H. S. Jones, *A Greek-English Lexicon*, pp. 429–430.

33

See V. P. Vlachou, **Lexikovrhmatwn th~ Arcaia~ Ellhnikhv glwssa~**, Athens 1989, p. 161.

34

See Erik Wolf, *Griechisches Rechtsdenken I-II*, Klostermann, Frankfurt am Main 1950–52, and Alfred Verdross, *Grundlinien der antiken Rechts- und Staatsphilosophie*, Springer, Wien 1948.

35

English translation from: G. S. Kirk – J. E. Raven – M. Schofield, *A Critical History with a Selection of Texts*, p. 118.

36

Martin Heidegger, *Einführung in die Metaphysik* (Gesamtausgabe, Vol. 40), Suhrkamp, Frankfurt am Main 1983, p. 169.

As we have already mentioned, the goddess Dike plays one of the key roles in Parmenides' poem, where – together with Themis – she is the guide on the path towards the Truth.³⁷ Dike also possesses the keys of day and night and guards their “door”.³⁸ **Dikh** here also means, according to Heidegger, the accord, “the overwhelming accordance”.³⁹ Only through the “door” of the goddess Dike leads the path to the Truth: only the accord of night and day is the path to the goddess Aletheia, which reveals to Parmenides the possible ways of experiencing being. Here we are not faced only with the thought of the ethical dimension as the preliminary condition of the act of knowledge – the thought we can also meet by Plato – but rather with the thought of the adequate cosmic situatedness of the one who gets to know something.

By Heraclitus, Dike, with the help of Erinyes, holds measure to the Sun: “**Hlio~ gar ouj uperbhsetai metra: eij de; mhy Erinue~ min Dikh-epikouroi ejeurhsousin.** “Sun will not overstep his measures; otherwise the Erinyes, ministers of Justice, will find him out.” (DK 22 B 94)⁴⁰ The emphasis is here placed on the cosmic measure Dike takes care of, but at the same time on the way of retribution; this is taken care of by the Erinyes, known as the goddesses of punishment and revenge. I think, however, that even in this case penalty should be understood in the sense of restoring the accord – the sense that is indicated precisely by the cosmological context of the Heraclitus' saying.

The meaning of the Greek word **dikaiousunh** is related to the sphere of the Greek goddess Dike, and it means first of all an “attitude” that takes Dike into account. “**Dikaiousunh** is both perception and application of **dikh**”.⁴¹ It thus unites in itself the simultaneity of cognition and action. The word **dikaiousunh** is pronouncedly philosophical: beside Plato, it is broadly used by Isocrates and Xenophon (also within the “Socratic” context) and later by Aristotle, Chrysippus and Philo of Alexandria, and after, of course, by Neo-Platonic philosophers.

From the adjective **dikaio~** derives also the expression **to; dikaion**, which expresses virtue and is often used synonymously with **dikaiousunh**. Here we have to deal with a very broad understanding of the word, just as in the case of **dikh**; Gadamer, for example, says:

“‘Dikaiois’ doesn’t imply only what we name righteous, but also honesty, propriety, fairness etc.”⁴²

The connection of key terms related to justice and even to the notion of the Good can also be found in the first elegy of Theognis from 6th century BC, where he writes to Cyrnos:

**eij de; dikaiousunh/ sullhbdhn pasÆajethvÆsti,
pa~ devtÆajhr aqagov, Kurne, dikaio~ ejvn.**

“Righteousness containeth the sum of all virtue; and every righteous man, Cyrnus, is good.”⁴³

Although the Greek elegy transfers us to another – pre-philosophical – level, we can find already here the basic relations between **dikaiousunh**, **ajrethy dikaio~** and **aqagov**, – the relations we shall later meet by Plato, which reveals us a lot about Plato's basic attitude.

III. Platonic “justice”

As far as Plato's philosophy is concerned, even in this case a lot of elements suggest that the Platonic break with the early Greek thought and **muqo~** is not

so complete as it sometimes seems; it is definitely totally inadequate to read our notional conceptions into Platonic philosophy. Among numerous connotations I would like to, first of all, emphasize two which are – in my opinion – of crucial importance not only for the understanding of Plato’s view on **dikh** and **dikaiousmh**, but also of his view on man and the world. The first is the all-embracing character of justice, since it refers to the virtue of the soul as well as to the virtue of polis and cosmos. The other implies the fact that Plato preserves the connection of the meaning of **dikaiousmh** with accordance and harmony.

The highest Platonic virtue **dikaiousmh** means beside justice also justifiability and rightness. **Dikaiousmh** is the attitude of reaching what is right. It is the real qualification of the soul or of polis as a whole, that is to say, the qualification and adjustment of all their parts in inner harmony. Plato speaks about **filia** and **sumfwnia** of the parts of the soul: “‘And again, was he not sober by reason of the friendship and concord of these same parts, when, namely, the ruling principle and its two subjects are at one in the belief that the reason ought to rule, and do not raise faction against it?’ ‘The virtue of soberness certainly,’ said he, ‘is nothing else than this, whether in a city or an individual.’ ‘But surely, now, a man is just by that which and in the way we have so often described.’ ‘That is altogether necessary.’” (R. 442 C 10 – D 6)⁴⁴

“Sober” or “prudent” is the man whose three parts of the soul are in friendship and symphony with each other – which also means that the ruling part is in accordance with the ruled ones. This holds true for individual as well as for community, and it doesn’t refer only to prudence, but also to justice. The soul attains friendship and harmony when every part of it performs its function; just as the same state is attained in polis when every social class performs its work. Goodness of justice is therefore not in denying the other, lower parts of the soul or polis, but in placing them on the right position in mutual accordance and harmony. Thus the soul reaches the state called **eujtaxis**.⁴⁵ In this

37

See DK 28 B 1, 26–28, and above.

38

Cf. DK 28 B 1, 11 and 14: **εἴηκα πυῖται Νυκ-
τος τε και; Ἡματων εἰσι κελευστων, [...]
των δε; Dikh polupoino~ epei klhida-
ajnoibouv.** “There are the gates of the paths
of Night and Day [...] and avenging Justice
holds the alternative bolts.” (English trans-
lation from: G. S. Kirk – J. E. Raven – M.
Schofield, *The Presocratic Philosophers. A
Critical History with a Selection of Texts*, p.
243.)

39

M. Heidegger, *Einführung in die Metaphysik*,
p. 174.

40

English translation from: G. S. Kirk – J. E.
Raven – M. Schofield, *The Presocratic Phi-
losophers. A Critical History with a Selection
of Texts*, p. 201.

41

Barbara Cassin, *L’effet sophistique*, Gallima-
rd, Paris 1995, p. 301, note 2.

42

Hans-Georg Gadamer, “Logos und Ergon im
platonischen ‘Lysis’”, in: H.-G. Gadamer,
Griechische Philosophie II (Gesammelte
Werke, Vol. 6), Mohr, Tübingen 1985, pp.
171–186, here p. 175.

43

The Elegiac Poems of Theognis, Book I,
147–8, in: *Greek Elegy and Iambus with the
Anacreontea*, Vol. I, edited and translated by
J. M. Edmonds, Cambridge (MA.) – London
1968, pp. 244–245.

44

– **Tivdeē swfrona ouj th/ filia/ kai; sum-
fwnia/ th/ autwn toutwn, oʃtan tov te
aʃcon kai; tw; aʃcomeww to; logistikon
onodoxwsi dein aʃcein kai; mh; stasiá-
zwsin autwē – Swfrosunh goun, h' d'ēof-
ouk allo tiveʃtin h] touto, poʃeww te
kai; ijliwtou. – Ἄλλα; men dh; dikaiov ge,
wʃ pollaki~ legomen, toutw/ kai; outw-
eʃtai. – Pollh; ajagkh. – English transla-
tion by P. Shorey.**

45

Cf. for example the syntagms **eujtaxis yuch~**
and **sumfwnia yuch~** (Def. 411.e.8–9).

sense **dikaiousunh** is also virtue as the whole or the “whole virtue” (**paša ajrethy**).⁴⁶

The cosmic aspect of **dikaiousunh**, as is suggested by the mythical understanding of Dike, is also preserved by Plato, of course within the framework of his cosmology, which is placed in the horizon of the analogy between micro- and macrocosmos. Plato, for example, says in the *Laws* that god “is always accompanied by Dike, who punishes those who don’t listen to divine law”, **tw/ de; aþi; sunepetai dikh twñ apoleipomenwn tou qeïou nomou timwrov** (*Lg.* 716 A 2–3). Proclus equates this god with Plato’s Demiurg, adding in his *Platonic Theology* that Demiurg “arranges and adorns by justice all celestial and sublunary natures” – **panta th/ Dikh/ tavte oujanïa kai; ta; upo; selhuhn, diakosmwñ** (*Theol. Plat.* 5.89).⁴⁷ The relationship between cosmological and ethical aspect is undoubtedly evident again: the beautiful order of the world (**kosmo~**) includes also man as part of the world.

Understanding **dikaiousunh** as symphony implies also the “punitive” – or, better said, “catharsic” – function of **dikh** and **dikaiousunh**; Plato thus in *Phaidon* says that justice and virtue are a kind of **kaqarsi~**, purification: **to; dÆ ajlhqev tw/ opti hÿ kaqarsiv ti~ twñ toioutwn pantwn** [sc. **fobwn, hllonwn ktl.**] **kai; hÿ swfrosunh kai; hÿ dikaiousunh kai; ajdreïa, kai; auþh; hÿ frowhsi~ mh; kaqarmov ti~ hÿ** “but truth is in fact a purification from all these things [sc. pleasures and fears], and self-restraint and justice and courage and wisdom itself are a kind of purification” (*Phd.* 69 B 8-C 3).⁴⁸ Purification is the reestablishment of symphony, whereby, of course, **dikaiousunh** as **paša ajrethv** has a distinguished meaning among other virtues. Several centuries later, Proclus writes in his *Platonic Theology*: **kaqartikh; men th~ eþi yucaï~ ponhria~ hÿ Dikh**, “justice purifies souls from depravity” (*Theol. Plat.* 1.86.24–25).⁴⁹ The contents and the meaning of “punishment” or “retribution” (which are also the possible lexical meanings of **dikh**) is “catharsis” or purification as reestablishment of accordance and harmony, filling up the deficiencies of **ponhria**.

If we understand the “Good” of Plato’s **to; ajaqon** as any good, good in every sense and first of all as “what is qualified and what qualifies for something”,⁵⁰ then we can clearly see the essential connection between **to; ajgaqon** and **ajrethy** first of all **dikaiousunh**. In this sense, the Good and Justice, understood in the above meaning, are first of all integral and originally ontological categories; they become ethical only in the derivative sense, in relation to the “good” and “just” being as the way of human being. Cognition of the Good enables the one who gets to know it to bring the soul (or polis) to **to; dikaion**.

In spite of certain changes that take place in Greek philosophy in the next centuries, the basic understanding is preserved until the late-antique Neo-Platonism, as we have already demonstrated in some cases. As far as this is concerned, we can find instructive insights in Proclus’ treatment of Horae at the very end of the ancient Greek philosophy. In his *Commentary on Plato’s Timaeus*, he says that the daughters of Themis, “from which the *whole* order arises (**afÆ hÿ paša taxi~**)”, are responsible for the following spheres: Eirene for arithmetic (**ajiqmhtikhv**) – as the order of sublunar elements –, Eunomia for geometry (**gewmetrikhv**) – as the cosmic order – and Dike for harmony (**afmonikhv**) or “music” (**mousikhv**) – as the order of spheres, of their movement and intervals.⁵¹ What is especially significant here is the connection between Dike and the art of harmony and “music” with all the dimensions of the Greek understanding of **afmonia** and **mousikhv**

3. Justice and (self)understanding of philosophy

If the contents of human virtue (**ajrethy**) is what makes the man what he is, and if justice (**dikaiosunh**) is – in a certain sense – the virtue of all virtues, then the question of justice touches the very essence of man in all of his manifest potentials, from individual to social ones. It is the question of the meaning of man, and it includes – from the viewpoint of philosophical disciplines – all the aspects from ontological to ethical and political, from cognitive to “poetical” (**poihsi~**) and aesthetical. In this sense we have to deal with a question which is always up-to-date and which leaves us without an unanimous and final answer; it is the question which forms the basis of the concept of philosophy as **filo-sofia**. At the same time this is one of the questions which offer most false, doxiastic answers; these answers result in the modern confusion of man, the confusion which has nowadays become practically an axiom, while dehumanization of man and his world – because of the loss of the metaphysical sense – has become the modern “**ajrethv**”. The antimetaphysical pogrom of the contemporary nihilism – that is to say, of the perverted metaphysics – recognizes neither its own perverted “onto-theology” nor the genuine metaphysics which is, still unachieved, perverted into its own negativity; before it gets unconcealed, it already conceals itself. Not into nothing, but into nothingness of its own becoming a doxa.⁵²

Speaking about justice and righteousness is thus nowadays problematic for several reasons. The connotative fields of these words are – from the viewpoint of genuine metaphysics – totally perverted, reduced, replaced. The introduction of newer, more genuine meanings of words – following Heidegger’s etymologizations and hermeneutic readings of history of philosophy through the history of concepts – enables first of all the destruction of prejudices, and to a lesser degree also a new insight into the problem; the very “game” of destruction and construction can namely be meaningful only as *philosophical* dialogue in the Platonic sense and is separated from its non-philosophical or

46

See for example *Lg.* 630 E 2, 899 B 6 and *La.* 199 E 4 (**sumpasa ajrethy** rather than **morion ajreth~**). Such understanding can be traced also in Aristotle: **auth men ouh hJ dikaiosunh ouj mero~ ajreth~ ajlÆo!h ajrethvestin** (*EN* 1130 a 8–9).

47

English translation: Proclus, *The Theology of Plato*, translated by Th. Taylor, Prometheus Trust, Somerset 1999, p. 356.

48

English translation by H. N. Fowler.

49

English translation: Proclus, (*The Theology of Plato*, translated by Th. Taylor, 1999) p. 102. – Proclus makes a distinction between purification of the soul and purification of the body; Dike refers only to the former: **kaqartikh; de; th~ ej swmasin ajlh taxi~ qewn**, “but another order of gods purifies from the depravity which is in bodies” (*ibid.*).

50

Martin Heidegger, “Platons Lehre von der Wahrheit”, in: *Wegmarken* (Gesamtausgabe, Vol. 9), Suhrkamp, Frankfurt am Main 1976, pp. 203–238, here p. 227.

51

See *In Ti.* 2.316.29–2.317.3. The whole passage – unfortunately we cannot study it in more detail here – runs as follows (italics F. Z.): **Oti triwn oujswn twñ mesothwn, gewmetrikh~, ajiqnhtikh~, musikh~, h men sterea; ajalogia hJek twñ triwn sugkimenh iJsoth~ th~ Qemido-, afÆh~ pasa taxi~, aiJ de; trei~ twñ triwn qugaterwn, Eujomia~ Dikh~ kai; Eijrhnh~: hJ ajiqnhtikh; th~ Eijhnh~, tw iJsw/ uperecoush~ kai; uperecomenh~, h/ kai; ej toi~ sunallagnasi crwmeqa ej eijhnh/ diÆhñ kai; ta; stoiceia hjemei: hJ de; gewmetrikh; th~ Eujomia~, hñ kai; Dio; krisin oJ Platwn prosagoreuwi, diÆh~ gewmetrikai~ ajalogiai~ kekosmhtai oJ kosmo~: hJ de; afnonikh; th~ Dikh~, diÆhñ meizona men meizona efeti logon, ej aßsona de; ej aßsona.**

52

On the historical background of contemporary nihilism before Nietzsche, see Janko Lozar, “Nihilizem pred Nietzschejem”, *Phainomena* 31/32 (2000), pp. 9–61.

sophistical “relative” by a thin, though essential line. The question is, moreover, whether – and to what degree – we are able to “get through” the hermeneutical circle which is placed in front of us from the viewpoint of the basic problem of ethics: we find ourselves within the **praxi-** which presupposes knowing of **ajrethdikaiosunh** etc., already in the moment we only start asking ourselves what this is at all. The oblivion of this question solves the problem only seemingly; it doesn’t transcend it, but leaves behind the emptiness, which becomes the home of various ideologies, instead of logos about ideas.

The analysis of early Greek understanding and meaning of the words from the semantic field of “justice” has shown that justice is here inseparably connected with cosmic harmony, with musical order (sym-phony, **sumfwnia**) and “friendship” (**filia**), which is thus essential for the very notion of philosophy. All these elements are also preserved by Plato and – after him – Platonism. In Plato himself it is generally impossible to speak about singular philosophical disciplines (ethics, aesthetics⁵³ etc.) out of their basic connection with his ontology, and the same undoubtedly holds true for his “philosophy of justice”. In this sense, righteousness cannot be something optional, something that exists or doesn’t exist, but is something that interferes with the basic “construction” of man and the community in which he lives. As far as this is concerned, the loss of righteousness is in itself a “punishment”, for it means the loss of balance and the state of “stress” which are reflected in the later Hellenism and its aspiration for **ajtaraxia**. The latter is – on the personal as well as “social” and cosmic level – implied already in Platonic **dikaiosunh**.

The claim for philosophy was in its beginnings meant as an “eternal” claim, or to be more precise: as the eternal task of man if he is to be man in the most sublime meaning of the word. But in the meanwhile – as early as in the very beginning – many a thing intruded into philosophy or stole into it under the name of philosophy. This problem accompanies philosophy from the very beginning: distinguishing between the genuine philosophy and what is only called that way. This is what Plato speaks about when he makes distinction between philosophers and the “actors” of wisdom and (**mimhth;- wj twj ojtwn**, “the imitator of beings”, *Sph.* 235 A 1, and **mimhth;- dEwj tou sofou**, “the imitator of wisdom”, *ibid.* 268 C 1) or non-philosophers (**ojmh; filosofo-**, *Ti.*, 47 B 4) or what Aristotle has in mind when he discerns between philosophers on one side and “dialecticians” and sophists on the other: **shmeion dev oij gar dialektikoi; kai; sofistai; to; aujto; men upoduontai schima twj filosofwj h; gar sofistikh; fainomenh monon sofia ejsti** (*Metaph.* G 2, 1004 b 18). Philosophy “tends” – in its own reduction – to be transformed into what is not of its own (for example into philology, science or physics, sophistry, historiography or doxography, mysticism), without even noticing it or wishing at least to seclare its status of non-philosophy or anti-philosophy. How to endure the tension between freedom and meaning, how to avoid the self-abolishment of philosophy through interpretation? What can Hermes still tell us from the viewpoint of Dike, without being forced to renounce himself? In himself, Hermes is an “anarchist”. In other words: if hermeneutics has no guidance, it can lead to arbitrary particularizations. However, is it possible at all, that it be without guidance? Is it not, in this case, that its “hidden” guidance is the very arbitrariness? Is it not that its **ajrchvis** precisely **ajh-arcia**? And on the other hand, can guidance be something arbitrary at all? For although the guidance is arbitrariness, it is not arbitrary in itself. To what extent can an “ungenuine” guidance be *chosen* as guidance? Or is it something else that is the matter of choice – as in *Parmenides*: **ejstin h; ouk ejstin**, “it is or it is not” (DK 28 B 8, 16) –, while the issue of **ajrchv** still remains the decisive issue of philosophy?

Guidance of course calls for certain criteria. The problem is not only the absence of criteria; it is rather that criterion, nihilistically understood, is precisely non-criterion. In this sense, it is possible to talk about the “right”, “genuine” **ajrchy** but also about the untrue, false viz. perverted “**ajrchv**”. The latter of course also justifies anarchism as the struggle against the false or self-proclaimed **ajrcav**. The criterion of “genuineness” is the truth, but the question as to what truth is remains ambivalent. On the one side it is a Parmenidean-Platonic dilemma, which demands decision for or against philosophy, and on the other side it is a Pilatean question⁵⁴ which tends to avoid the answer.

Virtues, and among them especially justice, mean “divine goods” (cf. Plato, *Lg.* 631 C-D), while the “amicable” and “non-prominent” Hermes in his ambiguity of *night and day, which go together*, stands for the world in its entirety. It is for this reason that he can bring Persephone from the underworld, that he can give Odysseus the magic herb, which protects him from Circe (cf. *Od.* 10, 302). Both Hermes and Dike – each in their own way – point toward harmony, whereas “harmonization” also implies a shift, a turn – it is always “to someone’s detriment”. As Heraclitus would put it: **ajjanatoi qnhtoi qnhtoi; ajjanatoi, zwnte~ ton ekeinwn qanaton, ton de; ekeinwn bion teqnewte~**, “immortal mortals, mortal immortals, living their death and dying their life” (DK 22 B 62).⁵⁵

In Plato all the formulations which usually prove difficulties for interpreters in evaluating the “seriousness” of dialogues or their specific parts, indirectly referring to “Hermes”. These are expressions such as practice (**gummasia**) and play (**paidia**), and also the question of the reach of “Socratic” irony (**eijwneia**). Excessive emphasis of these elements may result in an impression that Plato is interested only in dialectics as an empty method, or even in “negative dialectics”. Herein, however, lies hidden Hermes’ trickery: acutely serious, “existentially” crucial questions – and these are undoubtedly the questions related to Dike and the Good – can be discussed from various viewpoints and on different levels. On a certain level, the element of play cannot be missing, particularly because philosophy is not only about – as Plato knows very well (cf. *Phdr.* 277 B 5-C 7) – knowing the truth of the matter (**tov te ajhqe~ ekastwn**), but also about the knowledge of the nature of souls (**perivte yuch~ fusew~**) which he addresses. In this respect Hermes’ skillfulness is irreplaceable: “the hermeneut is to be compared to the messenger-god Hermes, bearing the tidings of the gods to men. By the tidings of the gods Heidegger means the various epochal destinies, the configurations which are given to Being, in the diverse epochs of Being. The hermeneut is one who can read and interpret (*auslegen*) and then present (*darlegen*) those destinies, understanding them as destinies.”⁵⁶

53

On this see for example Franci Zore, “The Platonic vision of the aesthetic world and the aesthetization of the world nowadays”, **Cronikav Ajqhtikh~ / Annales d’esthétique / Annals for Aesthetics**, vol. 41A (2002), pp. 179–186.

54

“What is the truth?” (Jn. 18, 38), cf. Hans-Georg Gadamer, “Was ist Wahrheit”, in: *Wahrheit und Methode II* (Gesammelte Werke, Vol. 2), Mohr, Tübingen 21993, p. 44 ff.; F. Zore, *Početak i smisao metafizičkih pitanja. Studije o povijesti grčke filozofije*, p. 102 ff.

55

English translation from: G. S. Kirk – J. E. Raven – M. Schofield, *The Presocratic Philosophers. A Critical History with a Selection of Texts*, p. 208.

56

John D. Caputo, *Radical Hermeneutics: Repetition, Deconstruction, and the Hermeneutic Project*, Indiana University Press, Bloomington – Indianapolis 1987, p. 103.

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Franci Zore

Hermes i Dike

Razumijevanje i cilj platoničkog filozofiranja

Sažetak

Pitanja filozofskog razumijevanja i pravednosti bitno su povezana od samih početaka grčkog filozofiranja. Baš kao što filozofska heremenutika ili **ἡρμενεύειν** ima svoj pretfilozofski izvor u grčkome bogu Hermesu, platoničko razumijevanje pravednosti (**δικαιοσύνη**) ima ga u božici Dike. U svojoj ambivalentnosti Hermes tako naznačuje mogućnost razumijevanja kao i mogućnosti zavođenja ili zloupotrebe razumijevanja, koje – u horizontu sokratičke i platoničke filozofije – znači zapravo nedostatak razumijevanja. U platoničkoj filozofiji, naime, spoznaja i etički stav blisko su povezani. Ali ako se taj etički stav ponajvećma razumije kao pravičnost, potonja se ne smije razumjeti u ponešto reduciranom značenju slaganja ljudskih djelovanja s državnim zakonima; ono čime se trebamo baviti jest unutarnje slaganje i harmonija čovjeka i njegove duše, a što također znači slaganje čovjeka sa svijetom u kojemu živi. S tog gledišta, potencijalni hermeneutički 'an-archizam' može se ponovno – ovoga puta drukčije – usmjeriti prema pitanju **αἴτιον** transponirati iz sfere puke teorije u samo biće ljudskoga života, koje se – u platoničkoj filozofiji – tretira kroz pitanje o duši.

Ključne riječi

Grčka filozofija, platonizam, pravednost, razumijevanje, hermeneutika

Franci Zore

Hermes und Dike

Verständnis und Ziel des platonischen Denkens

Zusammenfassung

Die Fragen des philosophischen Verstehens und der Gerechtigkeit stehen seit den Anfängen der griechischen Philosophie in einem wesentlichen Zusammenhang. Die philosophische Hermeneutik oder **ἡρμενεύειν** hat ihren präphilosophischen Ursprung im griechischen Gott Hermes; das platonische Verständnis der Gerechtigkeit (**δικαιοσύνη**) wiederum geht auf die Göttin Dike zurück. Das ambivalente Wesen des Hermes verweist auf die Möglichkeit des Verstehens, aber auch der Verführung im Sinne eines missbrauchten Verstehens, womit im Horizont der sokratischen und platonischen Philosophie eigentlich ein Nichtexistieren von Verstehen gemeint ist. In der platonischen Philosophie liegen nämlich die Erkenntnis und die ethische Position eng beieinander. Fasst man diese ethische Position aber hauptsächlich als Gerechtigkeit auf, so darf man diese nicht in etwas reduzierterem Sinn als die Übereinstimmung menschlichen Handelns mit den staatlichen Gesetzen verstehen; uns interessiert vielmehr die innere Übereinstimmung und Harmonie des Menschen in seiner Seele, und das bedeutet auch die Übereinstimmung des Menschen mit der Welt, in der er lebt. Von diesem Standpunkt aus kann man den potenziellen hermeneutischen „An-archismus“ erneut – diesmal allerdings auf andere Weise – auf die Frage der **αἴτιον** ausrichten und aus der Sphäre reiner Theorie in das Wesen selbst des menschlichen Lebens transponieren. Dieses Wesen des menschlichen Lebens wird in der platonischen Philosophie anhand der Frage nach der Seele behandelt.

Schlüsselbegriffe

Griechische Philosophie, Platonismus, Gerechtigkeit, Verständnis, Hermeneutik

Franci Zore

Hermès et Diké

Compréhension et finalité de la philosophie platonicienne

Résumé

La question de la compréhension philosophique et celle de la justice sont intrinsèquement liées depuis les débuts de la philosophie grecque. La compréhension platonicienne de la justice tire son origine pré-philosophique de la déesse Diké, tout comme l'herméneutique tire la sienne du dieu grec Hermès. L'ambivalence d'Hermès implique la possibilité de comprendre mais aussi la possibilité de séduire ou d'abuser de cette compréhension, ce qui, dans l'horizon de la philosophie socratique et platonicienne, signifie en fait un défaut de compréhension. Dans la philosophie platonicienne, la connaissance et la position éthique sont intimement liées. Si cette position éthique s'entend comme la justice, celle-ci ne doit pas être entendue dans le sens, quelque peu réducteur, d'une harmonie entre les actions de l'homme et les lois de l'Etat. Nous devrions plutôt nous occuper de l'harmonie intérieure de l'homme et de son âme, ce qui signifie en même temps l'harmonie entre l'homme et le monde dans lequel il vit. De ce point de vue, « l'an-archisme » herméneutique potentiel peut s'orienter, d'une nouvelle façon cette fois-ci, vers la question de l'archè et se transposer d'une simple théorie en existence même de la vie humaine, traitée dans la philosophie platonicienne à travers la question de l'âme.

Mots-clés

philosophie grecque, platonisme, la justice, compréhension, herméneutique