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"Beyond the heavens"

By Friedrich Solmsen, Chapel Hill, N.C.

Τὸν δὲ ὑπερουράνιον τόπον οὔτε τις ὕμνησέ πω τῶν τῇδε ποιητὴς οὔτε ποτὲ ὑμνήσει κατ' ἀξίαν. ἔχει δὲ ὧδε – τολμητέον γὰρ οὖν τό γε ἀληθὲς εἰπεῖν, ἄλλως τε καὶ περὶ ἀληθείας λέγοντα – ἡ γὰρ ἀχρώματός τε καὶ ἀσχημάτιστος καὶ ἀναφὴς οὐσία ὄντως οὖσα, ψυχῆς κυβερνήτῃ μόνῳ θεατὴ νῷ ... τοῦτον ἔχει τὸν τόπον (Phaedr. 247 c 3ff.). Judging by the first sentence here quoted the "place beyond the heavens" should be a good subject for poetry[1]. Plato himself introduces it in the course of Socrates' second speech, which is cast in the form of a myth. If myth and poetry are the appropriate media for this conception, students of Plato may easily conclude that it would be futile to look for a serious "philosophical" significance of this τόπος. Any such conclusion would be unfair to Socrates' determination to "speak what is true" (τό γε ἀληθὲς εἰπεῖν) because "truth" is the subject to be discussed. It is probably safe to understand "truth" as a reference to the Forms which occupy this region – the region itself is shortly afterwards (248 b 6) called the "plain of truth". Myth and truth, to be sure, are an uncommon combination in Plato[2]; but if "truth" here presents itself like an island in a sea of exuberant mythical imagery, Plato must have his definite reasons for coming forward with it in this unusual environment.

As far as I am aware, Platonic scholars have not expressed surprise at the strange association of myth and "truth". Still, R. Hackforth[3] in the exegetical commentary attached to his translation somehow comes to grips with a problem which he does not formulate and, as far as I can make out, not actually perceive. He refers more than once to the "myth", even speaks of "allegory" in the description of the region "outside the heavens", but he also points out that "this is not the first occasion on which true Being ... has been given a local habitation". The earlier occasions he has in mind are the passages in the 'Republic' where the νοητὸς τόπος and the αἰσθητός are introduced and contrasted and where we learn that the soul may rise to the former when, like the prisoners in the Cave who return to the light, it frees itself from its condition of bondage to sense impressions and opinions. From the 'Republic' Hackforth goes on (via Soph.

1 G. J. De Vries (*A commentary on the Phaedrus of Plato,* Amsterdam 1969, 133) looks at the words "no poet has celebrated ..." as a literary motif, of which the Odyssey (α 351f.) offers the first and Horace's *carmina non prius audita* (*C.* III 1, 2f.) the most famous example. Anyone taking this view would have to consider the reference to the future poets as a notable variation (τῇδε too is an unusual feature, but context and subject matter would account for it).

2 See the admirable observations in W. H. Thompson's commentary (*The Phaedrus of Plato,* London 1868 and 1973) ad loc.

3 *Plato's Phaedrus* translated with Introduction and Commentary by R. Hackforth (Cambridge 1952) 80ff.

248 a, where I cannot find anything in the least relevant) to Timaeus 30 c ff., where the Forms have a higher status than the World-Soul and therefore *a fortiori* than individual souls. He does not fail to observe that in the 'Timaeus' too Plato sets forth his thoughts ἐν μύθου σχήματι. The ὑπερουράνιος τόπος in the 'Phaedrus' symbolizes for Hackforth the same priority of status that he gathers Plato wished to convey in the 'Timaeus'.

In turning to the 'Timaeus' Hackforth was on the right way. On the whole, however, hard as I have tried to profit from his comparisons and suggestions, I have not succeeded and have in particular been unable to persuade myself that "the relative status of Forms and souls" is the question to which the passage in the 'Phaedrus' makes a contribution[4]. Nor do I consider the νοητὸς τόπος as truly comparable. Surely, there is an "ascent" of the souls also in the 'Phaedrus' and here too it results in their acquaintance with something accessible only to νοῦς. But at this point the similarity ends. The word ὑπερουράνιος specifies a relation to the οὐρανός, i.e. to the physical world, emphasizing for the "place above the heavens" a character and connotations quite different from the νοητὸς τόπος[5].

As indicated, I too resort to the 'Timaeus' but the thoughts that I consider relevant for Phaedrus 247 c are to be found in the section on "space". Here (52 b 4ff.) Plato concludes a most penetrating and profound disquisition by deciding that while all sense-perceived, physical objects must be in "space" (χώρα) and have their "place" (τόπος), it is utterly wrong to associate the same mode of existence with the ὄντως ὄν or as he in the same context calls the Forms the ἄυπνος καὶ ἀληθῶς φύσις ὑπάρχουσα (52 b 7; cf. c 5). Plato's involved arguments, rendered even more difficult and at times downright obscure by the idiosyncrasies of his phrasing, have been elucidated with brilliant success[6]. Quite clearly, Plato here rejects all thought of assigning a "local habitation" to

4 My objections to Hackforth apply *mutatis mutandis* also to Léon Robin who in the Budé edition of the *Phaedrus* (5th ed., Paris 1961, ad loc.) suggests that the relation of the ὑπερουράνιος τόπος to the region of the stars symbolizes the superiority of dialectic to astronomy known to us from Book VII of the *Republic*, an interpretation arrived at by an excessive use of imagination.

5 I say this with confidence although I am aware of *Resp.* VI 509 d 2ff. and IX 591 a f. – Cf. in general Paul Friedländer, *Plato. An Introduction* (Engl. trl. by H. Meyerhoff, New York 1958) 194f.

6 F. M. Cornford's explanatory sections on the "Receptacle" and on "Chaos" (*Plato's Cosmology*, London 1937, 190–210) remain basic even though some details have not proved immune to criticism. Cornford refers (p. 192 n. 3) to Aristotle's views on τόπος but never to the ὑπερουράνιος τόπος. Of later contributions I cite here only H. Cherniss' paper on 49 c 7–50 b 5 (AJP 75, 1954, 113ff.) and his contribution to *Mélanges Mgr. Diès* (Paris 1956, 49ff.) which advances a new interpretation of 52 c 2–5. It seems worth observing that while Cornford is quite correct in stressing the contrast between Plato's conception of Time and of Space (pp. 102f.), they have a negative aspect in common. The Forms are as little in Space as they are in Time.

the Forms as incompatible with their nature. In this instance too the mythical form of his account does not prevent him from invoking the help of the δι' ἀκριβείας ἀληθὴς λόγος (c 6) to safeguard the *illocalitas* (as it later came to be called[7]) of the Forms. Another noteworthy feature is the first person (ὀνειροπολοῦμεν ... φαμέν, 52 b 3) which Plato uses when describing the tendency to postulate a "place" for all that *is* and to deny reality to anything for which no place can be specified. Surely, as Aristotle puts it, τὰ ... ὄντα πάντες ὑπολαμβάνομεν εἶναί που· τὸ γὰρ μὴ ὂν οὐδαμοῦ εἶναι (Phys. IV 1, 208 a 29)[8]. Skeptically inclined people outside the Academy would almost certainly pester Plato with questions where his much talked of εἴδη were to be found, but it is by no means impossible that even some of his followers or disciples (whatever we mean by these words) felt qualms about entities that were left without a location. For others, one would think, to accept this tenet was not harder than to believe in realities that could not be seen and that lacked almost all characteristics familiar to us from the objects of daily experience.

Evidently, the "truth" of the 'Timaeus' is not the same as the "truth" of the 'Phaedrus'. One wonders whether Plato for once responded to the tendency just mentioned, feeling that the (persistent?) questions: "where are the Forms" should receive some kind of answer. It certainly is a very peculiar answer; and a very peculiar and most unexpected "place" has been chosen[9]. The advantages of settling the Forms "above the heavens" and outside the physical Cosmos are obvious, and so is the gain connected with the introduction of this "place" in the context of a sublime vision presented in a myth. But if we find this conception wonderfully in harmony with the spirit and tenor of the entire myth where so much that is not physical – especially acts of the soul – is described in the most vivid colors and with a maximum of concrete physical detail, we must not forget the emphatic promise to "tell what is true". For we have no right to question the serious intent of this sentence and whatever view we may take of other items of thought or imagery in this myth, the ὑπερουράνιος τόπος calls for an appreciation in special terms.

On the relation between the tenets of the 'Timaeus' and our passage in the 'Phaedrus' we cannot say much without becoming involved in problems of relative chronology. Most Platonic scholars would be convinced that the 'Phaedrus', even if later than the 'Republic', must yet be earlier than the 'Timaeus'.

7 The *loci classici* for this term are found in Claudianus Mamertus, *De statu animae* (e.g. I 17; 64, 8 Engelbrecht in CSEL 11; III 5; 161, 22). For the idea cf. the commentary of R. Beutler and W. Theiler in *Plotins Schriften* übersetzt von R. Harder on *Enn.* VI 5, 8, 28 (Vol. II b, p. 417), where E. Bickel, *Illocalitas* in *Immanuel Kant Festschrift zum zweihundertsten Geburtstag* (Albertus Univ., Königsberg i. Pr. 1924) 9ff. might be added.

8 Note also ibid. 27–33: even Hesiod's account begins with the emergence of Earth from Chaos because everything else needs a place to exist.

9 This was clearly realized by Simplicius (*In Arist. Phys.* 546, 10 D.), whose perceptive observations deserve attention.

Before venturing my own word of wisdom on this thorny subject, I wish to present two passages of Aristotle's 'Physics'; for unless I am mistaken, both of them acquire a new interest when examined with Phaedrus 247 c 3ff. in mind.

1) In the chapters on τόπος Aristotle sets forth that from one point of view place "encompasses" the body contained in it while from another it is itself encompassed because the surfaces of the body mark off and "define" the place occupied (IV 2, 209 b 1–16). In the former case it would be something akin to "form", εἶδος; in the latter it might be regarded as "matter" because matter too is given shape by Form.

περιεχόμενον is the word applicable to matter as well as to place. With no little violence Aristotle equates the "Receptacle" of the 'Timaeus' with his own "matter" (ὕλη)[10]. About twenty lines later he declares that what *is* must always be somewhere and continues: Πλάτωνι μέντοι λεκτέον, εἰ δεῖ παρεκβάντας εἰπεῖν[11], διὰ τί οὐκ ἐν τόπῳ τὰ εἴδη καὶ οἱ ἀριθμοί, εἴπερ τὸ μεθεκτικὸν ὁ τόπος, εἴτε τοῦ μεγάλου καὶ τοῦ μικροῦ ὄντος τοῦ μεθεκτικοῦ (a proposition which Aristotle found in the "so called unwritten doctrines" and which is fortunately immaterial to our purpose), εἴτε τῆς ὕλης, ὥσπερ ἐν τῷ Τιμαίῳ γέγραφεν (209 b 33–210 a 2).

2) The Infinite (as we read Phys. III 4, 203 a 1ff.) has engaged the thought of all serious physical thinkers and has even been elevated to the status of a principle (ἀρχή). For the Pythagoreans it was a principle of sense-perceived objects, whereas Plato finds it both in the objects of sense and in the Forms. Moreover, again unlike the Pythagoreans, who declare τὸ ἔξω τοῦ οὐρανοῦ to be infinite, Plato holds ἔξω μὲν οὐδὲν εἶναι σῶμα, οὐδὲ τὰς ἰδέας διὰ τὸ μηδὲ ποὺ εἶναι αὐτάς (a 8f.).

Evidently the ὑπερουράνιος τόπος has been ignored in both passages. In the former this may be excused on the ground that Aristotle's mind is focussed on the "unwritten doctrines" and the 'Timaeus', and in the 'Timaeus' again on the section which we have summarized. For this section, all misrepresentations and distortions of Plato's thought notwithstanding, the words οὐκ ἐν τόπῳ τὰ εἴδη are a perfectly correct summary of Plato's pronouncements regarding the

10 Cherniss, *Aristotle's Criticism of Plato and the Academy* (Baltimore 1944) 165ff., esp. 170ff. has analyzed the misunderstandings which result from Aristotle's foisting on Plato the concept of a substratum analogous to his own. David Keyt, AJP 80 (1961) 291 who goes his own way, introduces unnecessary complications. He distinguishes four views on τόπος early in Aristotle's account where in truth only two are formulated and assigns a "character" to Plato's "Receptacle", a theory so completely at variance with Plato's own words that it can only be due to a confusion between χαρακτήρ and "character".

11 As Hans Wagner has pointed out (*Aristoteles, Physikvorlesung,* Berlin 1967, 539), it is not easy to see from what Aristotle "digresses". Having just stated that what exists is obviously ἐν τόπῳ, he may have recalled the standard description of the Forms as "being" *par excellence* but failed to make clear this operation of his thoughts. Alternatively, the passage might be regarded as an afterthought and as such closer to 209 b 11 (cf. Wagner, loc. cit.).

Forms. In the second passage no preoccupation with a particular work of Plato can account for what strikes us as a flat contradiction of Phaedrus 247 c 3ff.

Three explanations offer themselves:

1) Aristotle may not have read the mythical section of the 'Phaedrus'. Despite the reference to this section in Rhetoric III 7, 1408 b 20, where it serves as an example of poetic style, and despite the close agreement of Aristotle's rhetorical system with the blueprint in Phaedrus 266 d–272 b (cf. 277 b 8ff.)[12], this explanation cannot be called downright impossible, but it is indeed far from probable. No more believable does it seem that Aristotle whom most of his readers would credit with phenomenal powers of memory should simply have forgotten so impressive a motif of the myth in the 'Phaedrus'.

2) Aristotle may have known but discounted the ὑπερουράνιος τόπος because for him, as for modern interpreters of the 'Phaedrus', its presence in a myth – and in a myth which unlike the myth of the 'Timaeus' did not embody a cosmology – deprived the idea of philosophical significance. If this was his opinion, his failure to pay attention to the promise of τό γε ἀληθὲς εἰπεῖν would be of a piece with the inaccuracies and inadvertences so common in his treatises (and would of course again have its parallel in the attitude of modern interpreters). Another and more legitimate reason for Aristotle's discounting of the passage would be that he knew – or believed – the 'Phaedrus' to have been written prior to the 'Timaeus' and looked upon Plato's declaration in Timaeus 52 b ff. as his well considered opinion and final word, which rendered previous localizations of the Forms null and void. In this case the assertion: ἔξω ... οὐδὲ τὰς ἰδέας, almost provocative in its denial of what we read in the 'Phaedrus', might even be intended to warn us against accepting the ὑπερουράνιος τόπος as representative of Plato's convictions[13].

3) At the time when Aristotle put down the passages in Phys. III and IV he could not know the 'Phaedrus' because it had not yet been written or, if written, not yet been published. Many Platonic scholars would be aghast at this idea. I too confess that while I am prepared to consider the 'Phaedrus' a late work, in fact as late as the arguments advanced by Jaeger suggest[14], I should not have

12 Cf. George Kennedy, *The Art of Persuasion in Greece* (London 1963) 82. 92 and pass.; G. M. A. Grube, *The Greek and Roman Critics* (London 1965) 93ff. as well as my own discussion CP 33 (1938) 402ff. with further references.

13 Cf. Anders Wedberg, *Plato's Philosophy of Mathematics* (Stockholm 1955) ch. III section 8.

14 Unfortunately Jaeger's suggestions in *Paideia* III (Engl. trl., New York 1944) 185 are not quite easy to harmonize with those ibid. 147. In the "Notes" (108f., p. 320) Jaeger thinks it "most probable" that the *Phaedrus* was written between Aristotle's dialogue *Gryllus* and Isocrates' *Antidosis*, i.e. between 362 and 353. Although not entirely clear and not free of inconsistencies, Jaeger's arguments are weighty and his opinion seems sound. It is a matter for regret that little attention has been paid to it (Hackforth, op. cit. 5 lists Jaeger with others favoring a late dating of the *Phaedrus*, adding no comment, an odd contrast to the extensive discussion and scrutiny which he gives to a highly speculative reconstruction of the literary relations between Plato and Isocrates).

put it quite so late and that while most of the 'Physics' is in my opinion early, I should not have thought of Books III and IV as quite so early. But our knowledge and judgment in these matters lack firm ground[15]. There have been many surprising developments in the chronology of Plato's dialogues, and none has changed its place as often as the 'Phaedrus' since the days when Schleiermacher and others regarded it as the earliest of all Platonic works. No other dialogue is so complex and none presents us with the same puzzling combination of quite early and quite late elements.

Of these three explanations the second would probably recommend itself to more classical scholars than either the first or the third. I do not wish to criticize this preference but would argue that before a final conclusion can be reached still another passage of Aristotle should be taken into account. This third passage is not in the 'Physics' but in the De caelo (I 9, 279 a 18–23):

Our Cosmos – generally referred in this context as οὐρανός – is finite and contains the entire amount of all five Aristotelian elements, whose "natural places", which are also the goals of their "natural movements", are within its confines. Having done his utmost to secure these fundamental tenets against any conceivable doubt or objection, Aristotle continues: διόπερ οὔτ' ἐν τόπῳ τἀκεῖ πέφυκεν, οὔτε χρόνος αὐτὰ ποιεῖ γηράσκειν, οὐδ' ἐστὶν οὐδενὸς οὐδεμία μεταβολὴ τῶν ὑπὲρ τὴν ἐξωτάτω τεταγμένων φοράν, ἀλλ' ἀναλλοίωτα καὶ ἀπαθῆ τὴν ἀρίστην ἔχοντα ζωὴν καὶ τὴν αὐταρκεστάτην διατελεῖ τὸν ἅπαντα αἰῶνα ... As Aristotle can hardly wax so enthusiastic about the Platonic Forms, the only subject he may have in mind are deities, and on the divine nature of τἀκεῖ the interpreters seem to be unanimous. Some would even think of the god(s) as mover(s), a view precluded by a passage at the end of this section (a 33 – b 3), where it is stated that there is nothing stronger than the body engaged in circular motion (i.e. the aether) and that for this reason nothing could move this body[16].

It must be admitted that the presence of the gods in the area outside the heavens is as great a surprise as their appearance at this point of the text. The textual problem has caused a very extensive scholarly debate; fortunately it is peripheral to our interests in this study and we may turn at once to the surpris-

15 Jaeger is not the only scholar who favors a "very late" date for the *Phaedrus*. See e.g. O. Regenbogen, *Kleine Schriften* (Munich 1961) 248ff. Cf. De Vries, op. cit. (above n. 1) 11; Walter Bröcker, *Platos Gespräche* (Frankfurt a.M. 1964) 524ff.

16 In the sentence of 279 b 1 the "circular body" must be the grammatical subject. It is impossible to assume a change of subject and complete reorientation between the οὔτε clauses in a 34f. and this sentence. Cf. my *Aristotle's system of the physical world* (Ithaca, N.Y. 1960) 308 n. 20. For textual and other questions relating to 279 a 18 – b 3 – or indeed a 11 – b 3 – I refer to the balanced treatment and the bibliography in Paul Moraux' Budé edition (*Aristote, Du ciel,* Paris 1965) XCff., esp. XCIVff. Taran's (Gnomon 46, 1974, 129) criticism of Moraux is not baseless. Aristotle cannot here speak of the "êtres célestes"; but for the reasons already touched upon divine "movers" are likewise out of the question.

ing aspects of the content[17]. The thoughts embodied in 279 a 18–23 produce a certain shock because the preceding chapters have led us to expect "nothing" outside the Heavens. Extraordinary intellectual energy has been expended on proving that the total amount of all elements, the sum of all bodies must be within this Cosmos, a tenet which for Plato (Tim. 32 c 5–33 b 1) had been a teleological postulate, whereas Aristotle, thanks to his doctrines of natural places and natural movements, is able to provide more strictly scientific proofs for it[18]. However arguments and doctrines that settle the fate of physical objects cannot extend to incorporeal eternal beings. The gods are above the laws of physics, and none of the arguments used in the preceding chapters of De caelo I could prevent their existence anywhere within the Cosmos or simply ἐν οὐρανῷ, where early Greek belief had given them their home. No physical event, no time, no change or movement materializing in their surroundings could touch them. Still the idea of removing them "above" this world, out of all contact with objects familiar to us from daily commerce or daily sight, has special attractions. Moreover, Aristotle's decision had a precedent, and since the entities previously associated with this realm were for him non-existent, his own supreme realities might as well succeed to the honor. Being like the Forms ἀχρώματος, ἀσχημάτιστος ... οὐσία ὄντως οὖσα ... μόνῳ θεατῇ νῷ (and whatever further description of this type might be added), they fully qualified.

If we wonder what bearing the passage in De caelo has on the three explanations proposed above, it is immediately apparent that the chances of the first, not too good in any case, are reduced even further; for that Aristotle should have conceived these ideas about τἀκεῖ independently of the 'Phaedrus' is very hard to believe. Anybody inclined to the third explanation would logically have to conclude that the 'Phaedrus' had become known between the composition of 'Physics' III and IV and the origin of the sentences in De caelo I 9. This again seems unlikely. Without doubt, the second of our three explanations comes off best. For if Aristotle looked at Tim. 52 b 4ff. as cutting the ground from any hypothesis suggesting a "place" for the Forms, he could yet with a perfectly good conscience associate the "beyond" with the highest realities of his own system. For the conception of this "beyond" has been revised.

There is a significant difference between Plato's ὑπερουράνιος τόπος and

17 Repeated attempts to fit 279 a 11–b 3 into the over-all argument of *De caelo* I have confirmed my conclusion that a unified and intrinsically coherent train of thought can be constructed only at the price of accepting very improbable sequences of thought and a most artificial explanation of the main sentences. I am not prepared to make this sacrifice of common sense, nor can I find it revolting to allow a "break" or to recognize an "afterthought". Once we admit the break, some kind of unity would be saved, and at a 25 Aristotle would by a rather brusque κατὰ τὸν αὐτὸν δὲ λόγον return to the divine οὐρανός and its divine "first body", applying to them some of the characteristics that he has previously used of the divine entities ἔξωθεν.

18 See esp. I 8 and the sections of I 9 preceding 279 a 11. The arguments refuting the existence of an infinite body (I 5) are relevant too.

Aristotle's ἔξω τοῦ οὐρανοῦ[19]. For, as we have seen "outside the Heavens" there is no place, and τἀκεῖ are – the normal local connotations of ἐκεῖ notwithstanding – "not in place". This makes it philosophically safe to think of eternal and non-physical reality as existing in the beyond. Although Aristotle in the passage under discussion rises to a high pitch of enthusiasm, he is not like Socrates in his inspired hymn on the good Eros, composing a myth but presenting truth and science unalloyed. Nevertheless for anyone recalling the more than cavalier treatment of the ὑπερουράνιος τόπος in the 'Physics', Aristotle's return to the realm "outside" does not lack an ingredient of irony[20].

Another important difference between the Platonic and the Aristotelian conception should be recorded. Plato in the myth of the 'Phaedrus' takes the ἀχρώματος καὶ ἀσχημάτιστος οὐσία ὄντως οὖσα for granted. Its existence and peculiar character have been firmly established in other dialogues; only on its place has he to announce a new "truth". Aristotle might almost be said to proceed in the opposite direction. Having by his doctrine of natural places discovered an environment which excludes place, time, movement, and of course also body[21], he uses this environment to clarify and define the nature of his deity. Besides being not in place, divine beings must be unaging, unchanging, eternal. The absence of time and movement (in the broader sense of change) guarantees these qualities, and since what is immune to change is also immune to suffering, God must for ever enjoy the best life (279 a 18–22)[22]. From the positions established in De caelo I Aristotle arrives at a concept of the divine which combines with, and complements that emerging from his arguments in 'Physics' VIII and 'Metaphysics' Λ. There is agreement in all essentials. For whether he does or does not cause motion matters little for the Aristotelian god (although for the Cosmos and all of us it makes the difference between

19 It is immaterial that Plato too uses these words and does so with a certain aplomb; at 247 c 2 he chooses them to announce the description of the ὑπερουράνιος τόπος.

20 Cf. Jaeger, *Aristotle* (Engl. trl.) 301f.; Moraux, op. cit. LXXV and others cited by him ibid.

21 279 a 11–17. Since these conclusions (regardless of whether or not they are a part of the original draft) are quite legitimate in the context and since a 18–22 embodies thoughts based on a 11–17, the widely held opinion that this entire section is taken from Περὶ φιλοσοφίας (for concise information on it see Moraux, op. cit. LXXV and n. 1) has its difficulties. Some borrowing from this dialogue may well be admitted but when we have to decide how far it extends – and in particular how far before a 30 it may begin – we cannot disregard the logical connection between a 11ff. and the preceding argumentations. Aristotle's language tends to be enthusiastic when in the course of his thought he arrives at a θεοῦ θεωρία, which is after all man's supreme activity (*Eth. Eud.* VIII 3, 1249 b 16ff.); cf. as manifestations of such enthusiasm *Metaph.* Λ 7, 1072 b 14–30; *Eth. Nic.* X 7, 1177 b 27–1178 a 8.

22 It is tempting to compare ζ 42ff.: θεῶν ἕδος ἀσφαλὲς αἰεί / ...· οὔτ' ἀνέμοισι τινάσσεται οὔτε ποτ' ὄμβρῳ / δεύεται οὔτε χιὼν ἐπιπίλναται, ἀλλὰ μάλ' αἴθρη / πέπταται ἀνέφελος, λευκὴ δ'ἐπιδέδρομεν αἴγλη; for this passage too leads up to the "best life" enjoyed by the μάκαρες θεοί for ever. The similar structure of Aristotle's "hymnic" passage makes us wonder whether its phrasing has been influenced by the archaic analogue.

existence and non-existence)[23]. Slightly more serious is that in Phys. VIII 10, 267 b 17–26 we receive the impression that the deity is at the circumference, which could not be the same as ἔξω. On the other hand, if we confine our attention to the esoteric works and leave dialogues such as Περὶ φιλοσοφίας out of the discussion, the arguments in De caelo are the only ones that show how it is possible for the deity required by 'Physics' and 'Metaphysics' to exist and to continue for ever (for what these two works show is not so much the physical possibility as the logical necessity of the Prime Mover)[24].

23 See 279 a 28ff. and *Metaph.* Λ 7, 1072 b 13f.

24 In *Physics* VIII eternal movement, which is necessary if τὸ ὄν is to remain in its right condition, requires as mover something eternal that is "unmoved"; this, besides being ἀκίνητον and ἀμετάβλητον, must also be "partless" (ἀμερές), i.e. without extension and incorporeal (10, 267 b 17–26). In *Metaphysics* Λ the principle of all changes must be eternal and without matter (at 6, 1071 b 20ff. this is the precondition of eternity); in ch. 7 Aristotle becomes specific about the "best life" (ἥδιστον καὶ ἄριστον; cf. 279 a 21), which as we know, the god enjoys for ever. This in turn coincides with the τέλος and τέλειον of *Eth. Nic.* (X 7). At the apex – the ἀκρότατον – cosmology, metaphysics and ethics converge.

If the god moves ὡς ἐρώμενον (*Metaph.* Λ 7, 1072 b 3), the best and most pleasant life which he enjoys and which must continue without effort (ἄπονον; cf. *De caelo* II 1, 284 a 14f. 27–35) is in no way impaired.

I wish to thank my colleague David Sider for his helpful comments.

[A copy of Carlo Natali, *Cosmo e divinità* (L'Aquila 1974) reached me after this paper had been completed. In his careful analysis of *De caelo* 279 a 11–b 3 (pp. 145ff.) Natali explains correctly why the gods may here be introduced. On b 1–3 and a few other points where we diverge I cannot expect my brief remarks to influence his opinion. A fuller discussion of this section seems needed but the prospects of reaching general agreement are far from good. – Another welcome publication which I have just received is Leonardo Taran's paper: *Plotinus and the* ὑπερουράνιος τόπος (Classica et Mediaevalia 30, 1974, 258ff.). His reference to *Epinomis* 981 b 5 (p. 361) deserves attention. I had wished for a study of this kind while I was engaged on my paper.]