

TEXTUAL NOTES ON PLATO'S *SOPHIST*\*

In editing Plato's *Sophist* for the new *OCT* vol. I, ed. E. A. Duke, W. F. Hicken, W. S. M. Nicoll, D. B. Robinson, and J. C. G. Strachan (Oxford, 1995), there was less chance of giving novel information about W = Vind. Supp. Gr. 7 for this dialogue than for others in the volume, since Apelt's edition of 1897 was used by Burnet in 1900 and was based on Apelt's own collation of W. The result was better than the somewhat confused information printed by Burnet, even in his 1905 reprint, for W for the other dialogues in vol. I. (This seems perhaps to have arisen from some misinterpretation by Burnet of Kral's method of reporting W.) But in the *Sophist* as elsewhere in vol. I collations largely due to Dr W. S. M. Nicoll added new facts about all of BDTWP and their correctors, and the search for testimonia largely carried out by Dr E. A. Duke added new facts in that area. A reviewer counts 66 changes in our text of the *Sophist*, which may perhaps be a slight over-estimate. Classification of changes as substantive or as falling into different groups is sometimes difficult, but I think plausible figures are as follows. We (myself aided in the earlier sections by Nicoll) have in 25 places made a different choice of readings from the primary mss. and testimonia. We have printed conjectures where Burnet kept a ms. reading in 17 places, but conversely we have reverted to a ms. reading where Burnet had a conjecture in 8 places. We have printed alternative conjectures to conjectures adopted by Burnet in 6 places. So we have actually departed from the primary sources on at most 9 more occasions overall than Burnet. What must be noted is that Burnet had already printed conjectures (including readings from secondary mss.) on something like 87 occasions (12 from secondary mss., 75 from modern conjectures from Stephanus onwards), so our percentage addition to Burnet's departures from the primary sources is modest. Moreover Burnet printed about 25 readings from testimonia; we have followed him in 20 or so of these cases, and this in turn implies that the primary mss. are in error at these further 20 places. It needs to be underlined that though Burnet undoubtedly deserved to be regarded as a safe and cautious editor, nevertheless he departed from the primary mss. on average about twice per Stephanus page in this dialogue. Sometimes, of course, testimonia showed him right to do this, but testimonia cover only a quite small part of this dialogue. Otherwise Burnet accepted almost 90 conjectures. For the *Politicus* the figures are fairly similar; Burnet accepted 22 Byzantine conjectures and 35–40 more modern ones. The new *OCT* there adds 15 or so more (not all new) conjectures. (On the *Politicus* in the new *OCT* see Robinson [1995].)

One is bound to say that many of these conjectures involve no more than, for example, the addition of *āv*, or a change of a single letter. But some single letter changes are not unimportant. I suspect that in different dialogues the need for changes may vary considerably, perhaps because the more popular dialogues had been more extensively corrected by scribes even before the date of our primary mss. But it has perhaps been worth prefacing discussion of textual problems with a warning that

\* I must thank my colleague, Paolo Crivelli, who has kindly offered discussion, corrections, and cautions on drafts of these notes. I owe much to conversation with many Platonists, not least Lesley Brown. Equally I am still vividly conscious of the impact of Gwil Owen's Plato class, very many years ago.

editorial opinion has generally been that in the *Sophist* the primary mss. have at best got one or two letters wrong on average twice *per* Stephanus page. The transmission of Plato's text has been miraculously good, but it is a mistake to assume that it has been perfect. Obvious omissions and glosses, some of which we shall see below, are also quite sufficiently frequent to mean that we should be on our guard for more. Readers should not hesitate to be alert for points that may still require attention.

I present points in order as they arise in the text. This throws up occasional related sequences, but also means that degrees of interest and importance, as also of certainty, will vary from moment to moment.

*Sophist 221b2–c2, 222e3, 223b1–5, 223b3: humour denied, or flippancy in divisions?*

In this area, notoriously enough, the reader has to cope with several curious apparent combinations of flippancy and exactitude on Plato's part. The theme is division. Much time is spent on 'divisions' of the *Sophist*. The divisions given are on the one hand very detailed and precise, but at the same time seem often to be comically pedantic and surely in large part satirical in tone. There are several textual problems that are perhaps not unconnected with this apparent blend of precision and humour.

We may perhaps best begin by examining the first résumé of the first division, at 221b2–c2: συμπάσης γὰρ τέχνης τὸ μὲν ἥμισυ μέρος κτητικὸν ἦν, κτητικὸν δὲ χειρωτικόν, χειρωτικὸν δὲ θηρευτικόν, τοῦ δὲ θηρευτικὸν ζωοθηρικόν, ζωοθηρικὸν δὲ ἐνυγροθηρικόν, ἐνυγροθηρικὸν δὲ τὸ κάτωθεν τμήμα ὅλον ἀλιευτικόν, ἀλιευτικὴς δὲ πληκτικόν, πληκτικὴς δὲ ἀγκιστρευτικόν· τούτου δὲ τὸ περὶ τὴν κάτωθεν ἄνω πληγὴν ἀνασπασμένην, ἀπ' αὐτῆς πράξεως ἀφομοιωθὲν τοῦνομα, ἣ νῦν ἀσπαλιευτικὴ ζητηθεῖσα ἐπὶ κλην γέγονεν.

Here we meet no textual problems, admittedly, but a typical combination of Platonic pedantry and flippancy. Division of the ἀσπαλιευτής has been undertaken as a trivially simple model for division of the *Sophist*. The résumé repeats exactly the division that has preceded it, and in the process we are not spared a repetition of Plato's false etymology of the term ἀσπαλιευτής. The true derivation of this word is presumably by abbreviation from ἄσπαλ-ἀλιευτής, since Hesychius attests the term ἄσπαλος = ἰχθύς; see Schwyzer, *Griech. Gramm.* I.476, n. 5. But Plato carefully twice constructs phrases based on ἀνασπᾶν (220e8–221a3, τὸ . . . ἀνασπῶμενον, 221c1, τὴν κάτωθεν ἄνω πληγὴν ἀνασπασμένην) provide an echo of the initial ἀσπ sound, and is presumably suggesting that the word really is ἀνασπ-ἀλιευτής, meaning 'the upwards-heaving fisherman'. This can hardly not be tongue-in-cheek; Plato is perhaps pretending never to have stooped to purchasing any commodity called by the perhaps vulgar form ἄσπαλοι. But even if one accepted a very remote chance that Plato knew the term ἀσπαλιευτής but did not know the word ἄσπαλος, the ponderous emphasis of 221a3–6 hardly allows us to think he can have been proposing ἀνασπ-ἀλιευτής seriously as correct. And yet this flippancy is part of the model first 'division'; this is a hint of things to come.

*Sophist 222e3 ἐρωτικὴς οἱ δωροφορικῆς?*

τοῦτο μὲν τοίνυν ἐρωτικὴς τέχνης ἔστω εἶδος.

Should logic prevail over humour, or vice versa? This sentence may seem straightforward, but it can be argued that it is unlikely that Plato means to say just here that

'giving gifts is a species of erotic pursuit', since that would reverse the systematic order of presentation; nothing has previously been said of *ἐρωτική* as a possible higher species of *θηρά*. So to keep the mss. text one could assume, as Campbell did, the genitive here to be one of definition, 'giving gifts *constitutes* erotic pursuit'. But this might suggest that the whole of erotic pursuit was gift-giving and all gift-giving was erotic pursuit. So to be completely logical, one might think of writing *τοῦτο . . . δωροφορικῆς τέχνης ἐρωτικόν ἔστω εἶδος*, 'let this be one species of gift-giving, namely the erotic kind'. But Baumann's change from *ἐρωτικῆς* to *δωροφορικῆς* might be simpler, 'let this be one species of gift-giving' (*sc.* which you will easily recognize).

The explanation of the corruption, as Baumann saw it, will have been a marginal gloss *ἐρωτική*; we shall see in our next note that a glossator has been at work hereabouts. *Vice versa* for an explanation of the presence of *ἐρωτικῆς*, if it was in the true text, one might suppose that Plato had slightly loosened the logic of his passage for the sake of a joke hinting precisely that all erotic pursuit was indeed bribery; and again, this might be in the spirit of the things that we shall see happening at 223b.

I incline here towards Baumann's view, but certainty is out of the question. Sometimes one chooses humour, sometimes one chooses logic.

### *Sophist 223b1–5*

We can now proceed to the next great résumé, at 223b1–5.

The primary mss. unanimously give *ἡ τέχνης οἰκειωτικῆς κτητικῆς θηρευτικῆς ζωοθηρίας πεζοθηρίας χερσαίας ἡμεροθηρικῆς ἀνθρωποθηρίας ἰδιοθηρίας μισθαρνικῆς νομισματοπωλικῆς δοξοπαιδευτικῆς νέων πλουσίων καὶ ἐνδόξων γιγνομένη θήρα . . .*

In this résumé confusion reigns, at first sight: (i) terms are present which were not used earlier; and (ii) in the mss. text there is undoubtedly some redundancy; there are too many terms in this résumé to fit the preceding division. Schleiermacher drew what is pretty certainly the correct conclusion, namely that (a) Plato had varied his terminology in making the résumé, but (b) some redundant terms were glosses added by scholiasts from the original terminology. The original term *κτητικῆς* had here, Schleiermacher assumed, been abandoned by Plato in favour of *οἰκειωτικῆς*, but *κτητικῆς* was then added in the margin or between the lines by a scholiast as a gloss, and subsequently some copyist incorporated it redundantly into the text. Similarly *πεζοθηρίας* here was a gloss on Plato's new term *χερσαίας*, and very probably *ἡμεροθηρικῆς* was a gloss on the new term *ἀνθρωποθηρίας* and *μισθαρνικῆς* a gloss on the new term *νομισματοπωλικῆς*. It is scarcely to be envisaged that *vice versa* the scholiasts would have introduced (or indeed invented) the *variant* terms if Plato himself in his résumé had followed his previous terminology. Diès in the Budé edition presumably felt that there was a possibility of defending *ἡμεροθηρικῆς* and *μισθαρνικῆς* as respectively one step more generic than *ἀνθρωποθηρίας* and *νομισματοπωλικῆς*; but on balance Schleiermacher's view remains more plausible here; the *familiar* terms are here the ones that are open to suspicion, and in any case the need to emphasize Diès's suggested extra steps seems in these instances very slight—though judgement is difficult, since a conceivable turn of Plato's humour might be leading him to pad out his résumé to absurd lengths. Seth Benardete felt that the duplicate pairs of terms had some value since each term represented a different aspect of the concept in question, but this is hard to find convincing.

Other editors have felt that the résumé, though redundant in some places, is incomplete in others. A corrector of Venetus 186 restored *χειρωτικῆς* after *κτητικῆς* to recreate a faithful report of 219 d7 and 221 b3; but *χειρωτικῆς* or its equivalent has also been omitted at 223 c6, and its absence is perhaps not acutely felt. Schleiermacher and Heindorf, however, believed that *πιθανουργικῆς* or *πιθανοθηρίας* should be restored before *ἰδιοθηρίας*, and this does seem a more acute need. ‘Persuasion’ seems to require due emphasis.

Nicholas White in his recent translation of the *Sophist* states without explanation that he omits *δοξοπαιδευτικῆς*, but (i) that this is a new term here is probably more in its favour than against it, and (ii) it presumably recapitulates *ἐπαγγελλόμενον . . . ἀρετῆς ἔνεκα τὰς ὁμιλίαις* from 223a4, so it is far from uncalled for. To pack *ἐπαγγελλόμενον* κτλ. into a newly coined compound such as *δοξοπαιδευτικῆς* is surely a typical enough Platonic trick. There could, I suppose, quite plausibly be a pun involved on ‘seeming education given to seemingly distinguished youths’ (*νέων . . . ἐνδόξων*, a4), though analogy with *δοξοσοφία* (231b6) surely confirms that ‘seeming education’ is probably the primary sense of *δοξοπαιδευτική*.

So I have in the end followed Schleiermacher’s deletions, ignored the Venetus corrector’s *χειρωτικῆς*, and accepted Heindorf’s *πιθανοθηρίας*, all with reasonable confidence (though I shall express some qualms below about the term *νομισματοπωλικῆς*).

But certainly, of course, is hardly achievable. Some general comment is perhaps in order, since conflicting considerations enter into assessing passages such as this:

(i) Philosophically

- (a) Plato might well be expected to value his method of ‘division’ very highly and consequently to recapitulate his findings very exactly. At *Politicus* 285b and *Philebus* 16d–e we are told that it is vital to know the exact number of the subspecies of any genus.

However,

- (b) Plato at other points, e.g. *Politicus* 261e, deprecates concern over exactness of terminology—which of course helps to confirm Schleiermacher’s view that it is the variant terms which are authentic here.

- (ii) Stylistically—it is obvious that Plato enjoyed etymological jokes and gleefully invented monster compound adjectives; so the urge sometimes to show off this ability to invent terms may account for outbursts of irregularity in résumés. In particular the six or seven variant ‘divisions’ of the *Sophist* seem constructed largely for the sake of satire, despite Plato’s enthusiasm for his method. Even in the more sober-seeming *Politicus* we meet the famous pun on *ὑσ/ῡστατα* at 266c8. (The pig is called *ὑς* because it moves slowly and always arrives *ῡστατα*.)

(iii) Palaeographically

- (a) A copyist faced with a lengthy string of polysyllabic adjectives ending in *-ικόν* or *-ικῆς* will have been in some inevitable danger of leaving out one or two by mistake.
- (b) On the other hand if Plato himself sometimes chose to leave out one or two steps of the résumé we might not know in all cases that he had done this, since a conscientious scholiast might easily have supplemented the missing terms in a manner like that seen at 223b1–5.

One might wonder whether to believe (i) that Plato would never reduce the number of steps in a résumé, but simultaneously (ii) that he would quite readily vary the terminology as freely as possible. But no such general principle seems in fact to apply, and the textual critic must take each case as it comes, in case quite simply Plato left some résumés less exact than others.

One embarrassment in dealing with these passages springs from Plato's apparent anxiety to deny his own inclination to humour. At 227a5–c3 in the face of many γελοῖα δοκοῦντα ὀνόματα he maintains that nothing should be thought to be, in these matters, *either γελοιότερον or σεμνότερον or εὐπρεπέστερον*. But he must have his tongue in his cheek here too. After our review of the 'upward-heaving fisherman' we can imagine that Plato would thoroughly have enjoyed taking up Epicrates' challenge to 'divide' a pumpkin.

*Sophist 223b4 νομισματοπωλικῆς*

νομισματοπωλική is found only here outside Pollux, and was assumed by LSJ following Pollux to be related to the noun νομισματοπώλης, vouched for by Pollux as a term for 'money-changer'. So LSJ gave the gloss here 'the art of money-changing', analysing νομισματο-πώλης naturally as a 'seller of coinage'. But 'money-changing' seems hardly relevant in this context, and Schleiermacher had already given the more relevant-seeming rendering 'für Geld sich verkaufend', and other translators have very reasonably followed him ('paid in cash', Fowler). For if it is correct here, νομισματοπωλικῆς seems presumably to recapitulate μισθὸν δὲ νόμισμα πραττόμενον at 223a5. On the other hand LSJ's mistake is not without an excuse, since the termination -πώλης undoubtedly usually means 'a seller of...' not 'a seller for'; compare ἀλλαντοπώλης, ἐλαιοπώλης κτλ., and compare Plato's own coinages just below, τεχνοπωλικός and μαθηματοπωλικός at 224c4 and e3. Should one therefore wonder whether to print here νομισματοπρακτικῆς, 'the art of an exactor of money'? (See LSJ s.v. πρακτώρ, and recall νόμισμα πραττόμενον from 223a4.) A learned copyist might conceivably have slipped into the error because of a memory of Ar. *Birds* 1037–8, ψηφισματοπώλης εἰμὶ καὶ νόμους νέους ἦκω... πωλήσων (but it would be very far-fetched to speculate that Plato himself could have intended any echo of *Birds*; he would have to be involved in an implausibly complex double entendre, 'selling laws for money'). It doubtless remains possible that νομισματοπωλικῆς = simply 'selling for money' is correct enough, since compound adjectives are often subject to varieties of interpretation; and yet the final judgement ought perhaps to be that -πωλική compounds are going to be frequent from 223d2–224e4 and should not be anticipated in a confusingly different sense here.

*Sophist 226b2–6, 226c3*

ΞΕ. οἰκετικῶν ὀνομάτων καλοῦμεν ἅττα που; καὶ μοι λέγε· τῶν  
 ΘΕΑΙ. Καὶ πολλὰ· ἀτὰρ ποῖα δὴ τῶν πολλῶν πυνθάνη;  
 ΞΕ. Τὰ τοιάδε, οἷον διηθεῖν τε λέγομεν καὶ διασθήειν  
 καὶ διαττᾶν καὶ βράπτειν; b5

At 226b3 the Visitor remarks 'we use some terms that count as purely domestic, don't we?' In 227a5 he will apologize for mentioning γελοῖα δοκοῦντα ὀνόματα while insisting that we must take note of them. So following 226b3 we need in b5–6 some

οἰκετικά ὀνόματα, words for household processes. So I think we simply want a rhyming chant διηθεῖν τε καὶ διασήθειν καὶ διαπτᾶν καὶ βράττειν, which is what W provides and what T<sup>2</sup> probably intended to restore. Whether there was any establishable distinction of meaning between διηθεῖν and διασήθειν will have been irrelevant; both forms existed in Plato's time, and the rhyme was what mattered. After βράττειν all the manuscripts add the words καὶ διακρίνειν; but this generalizing and not especially 'domestic' looking term, as Ast and most editors have seen, is here premature, since we still have to go on to consider ξαίνειν, κατὰγειν, κερκίζειν, καὶ μυρία ἄλλα (b9). Subsequently at c3 Fritz Gregor Herrmann is almost certainly right to restore διακριτικά, for following that the way lies plain to introduce the name διακριτικὴν at c8. But earlier than c3 we do not want any part of the generalizing διακρίνειν to appear, and the mss. have presumably again incorporated a gloss. At c3–8, if we needed to defend the mss. reading, we might perhaps suspect Plato of again demonstrating his flexible attitude to terminology by writing διαιρητικά in a (doubtless quite possible) non-abstract sense at c3, but then opting for διακριτικὴν at c8. But surely to make Plato say almost in one breath 'since these actions are διαιρητικά, let us call this skill διακριτική' does seem decidedly forced, whatever we may have said elsewhere about his fondness for variation in terminology.

#### *Sophist 228a7–8*

στάσιν ἡγούμενος . . . τὴν τοῦ φύσει συγγενοῦς ἔκ τινος διαφθορᾶς διαφοράν.

So most mss. of Galen give in his quotation of this passage, but the Plato mss. have διαφθορᾶς διαφοράν. Apelt and Burnet followed Galen; Campbell and Diès followed the Plato mss.

Apelt remarked 'in notione στασέως (non ipsius νόσου) definienda primarium locum tenet ἡ διαφορά'; he compared τὴν πρὸς τοὺς Ἕλληνας διαφοράν . . . στάσιν ἡγήσονται, *Rep* 470e. This is a correct point against Campbell. Plato is arguing that this νόσος is στάσις, not that this στάσις is νόσος. Moreover a few lines further on, at 228b3–4, we find πάντα ἀλλήλοις ταῦτα τῶν φλαύρως ἔχοντων . . . διαφερόμενα, where τῶν φλαύρως ἔχοντων must represent ἔκ τινος διαφθορᾶς and διαφερόμενα echoes διαφοράν. Then we are told at b6 συγγενὴ γε μὴν . . . σύμπαντα γέγονεν; i.e. surely, the kinship is not envisaged as about to be destroyed. If the kinship had been *destroyed* it would be harder to envisage that punishment might serve as medicine and restore the soul to health, as apparently envisaged in 229a1–6. We must presumably envisage a temporary διαφθορά of the control exercised by the reason, rather than a total διαφθορά of the kindred parts. Restraint of the ἐπιθυμητικόν will then restore the harmony between the parts. We are dealing with a curable διαφθορά due to a διαφθορά to a part, rather than with a διαφθορά which has led to a large and dangerous διαφθορά to the whole.

#### *Sophist 229a4–6*

Οὐκοῦν καὶ περὶ μὲν ὕβριν καὶ ἀδικίαν καὶ δειλίαν ἡ κολαστικὴ πέφυκε τεχνῶν μάλιστα δὴ πασῶν προσήκουσα δίκη;

δίκη Campbell: Δίκη Cobet: δίκη BTW Stob.: secl. Stallbaum

One's first impression here, and I think in the end one's best impression, is that μάλιστα πασῶν προσήκουσα must be taken with περὶ ὕβριν κτλ., that is to say we

must translate 'the science of punishment is the most appropriate of the sciences in dealing with ὕβρις etc.', just as in the next sentence we are told that διδασκαλική is appropriate περὶ ἄγνοιαν. Cobet's conjecture μάλιστα . . . προσήκουσα Δίκη is (i) unexpectedly portentous—Plato would surely reserve references to a Δίκη goddess for his myths; and (ii) displaces προσήκουσα from its apparently proper connection with περὶ ὕβριν. Defenders might doubtless argue that we can still make the required sense of the sentence on Cobet's reading because we know that Δίκη or κολαστική can easily be understood as περὶ ὕβριν sc. (e.g.) ἐπιμελουμένη or ἐπισκοπούσα, but this gives us a rambling sentence looking as if it was somewhat distorted by afterthought.

Campbell obelized †δίκη† in his text, then in his note defended δίκη in its meaning 'rightly so-called'. The word order perhaps need not be questioned, in view of Campbell's parallel from *Soph. Ant.* 94, and I left this in the 1995/7 *OCT* printings. But I am by way of afterthought now inclined to favour Stallbaum's deletion of δική as a gloss.

### *Sophist 235a7*

τῶν τῆς παιδείας μετεχόντων ἐστί τις μυρίων εἰς.

Apelt's conjecture μυρίων here for μερῶν seems practically certain. Theaetetus' agreement that there are very many kinds of μίμησις and of παιδιὰ has been secured already at 234b3, πάμπολυ . . . εἴρηκας εἶδος ἐν πάντα συλλαβὼν καὶ σχεδὸν ποικιλώτατον. Later at 235c it is envisaged that the Sophist might hide κατὰ μέρος τῆς μιμητικῆς . . . πη, and it is helpful for that point that Theaetetus should have reminded us that there are a large number of these parts. This sentence would fall back rather flatly if at 235a7 it said merely μερῶν and not μυρίων.

### *Sophist 235e6*

τὴν τῶν κώλων ἀληθινὴν συμμετρίαν

At 235a7 to refuse Apelt's μυρίων would have left rather a flat text; here to refuse Badham's κώλων and to leave καλῶν is to invite a slight confusion rather than merely flatness. 'The true symmetry of beautiful bodies' would seemingly be intelligible enough; but at 236a4–5 it is going to be implied that τὰς οὐσας συμμετρίας are precisely not the same as τὰς δοξούσας εἶναι καλὰς; the 'true' symmetries, if retained in the statues, will *not* show the bodies as beautiful, because of the angle from which they will be seen, presumably on a pediment or frieze seen from the ground, or even merely where a large statue stood on a substantial plinth. So Badham's κώλων is not just gratuitous cleverness, but avoids language that would blur the point required. Apelt's notion 'Agitur enim non tam de singulis hominis membris inter se collatis, quam de totorum hominum globis inter se comparatis' suggests a picture of rows of figures above each other; but Apelt in that case was surely thinking more of medieval architecture than of Greek. The Parthenon frieze is usually said to allow for perspective, and of course has only a single row of figures.

### *Sophist 236e3–6: false speaking*

ὅπως γὰρ εἰπόντα χρὴ ψευδῇ λέγειν ἢ δοξάζειν <φάναι> ὄντως εἶναι, καὶ τοῦτο φθελγόμενον ἐναντιολογία μὴ συνέχεσθαι . . . χαλεπόν.

Questions about the addition of <φάναι> here can be left aside till later. The prior problem is that two ways of taking the sentence have been advocated, quite apart from the possible addition of <φάναι>. This addition would merely be an extra benefit to one of those interpretations if it seemed to be the correct interpretation in the first place.

'How one ought to express the fact that it is truly possible to say or think what is false—how one can say this without becoming involved in contradiction is . . . a perplexing problem.' This is the version given in the revised fourth edition of Jowett, published in 1953. For this edition D. J. Allan was one of the revising editors, and it is probably his hand we may identify here. Jowett himself in the earlier editions had given 'Can anyone say or think that falsehood really exists, and avoid being caught in a contradiction? The task is a difficult one.'

The crucial difference here is whether we believe that Plato's Visitor said that it was (i) difficult to assert that *ψευδῇ λέγειν ἢ δοξάζειν*, false speaking or thinking, was possible, or (ii) difficult to assert that 'false things', *ψευδῇ*, could be said or believed to exist. Grammatically speaking, is *ψευδῇ* the *object* of *λέγειν ἢ δοξάζειν*, and the phrase *ψευδῇ λέγειν ἢ δοξάζειν* the subject of *ὄντως εἶναι*, or is *ψευδῇ* directly the subject of *ὄντως εἶναι* and the phrase *ψευδῇ ὄντως εἶναι* the object of *λέγειν ἢ δοξάζειν*? Heindorf, Stallbaum, Apelt, and Allan chose the former interpretation, others have chosen the latter, including Campbell, Cornford, and Diès. Diès quoted Fénelon's remark, 'Le mensonge est un néant. Ce qui est . . . faux, n'est rien.' A. E. Taylor followed Diès, 'say or think that the false really is.' N. P. White recently follows Heindorf/Apelt/Allan, 'what form of speech we should use to say that there really is such a thing as false saying or believing'.

The following considerations may help our decision.

(I) *Within* the sentence itself, the Campbell interpretation has an irritating minor awkwardness. 'What words one should use in order to say *or think* that falsehoods really exist' would be trouble-free if it were not for '*or think*' i.e. *δοξάζειν*; but the collocation *ὅπως εἰπόντα . . . χρῆ . . . δοξάζειν*, 'what words one should use in order to . . . think' is a little awkward. Admittedly this awkwardness is to some degree covered up, since we have not simple *δοξάζειν*, but *λέγειν ἢ δοξάζειν*; it could doubtless be urged that Plato regarded thought as silent speech; but it remains somewhat unwelcome; and subsequently the awkwardness continues when in the next clause, on this interpretation, *λέγειν ἢ δοξάζειν* is repeated by *τοῦτο φεγγάμενον*, which suits *λέγειν* but not *δοξάζειν*. All this is, I think, a fairly clear hint that to take *ψευδῇ λέγειν ἢ δοξάζειν* together is preferable stylistically.

(II) If we turn to the context *following* this sentence itself, it is surely not desirable that in this sentence Plato should seem too directly to be anticipating his next point. Only at 237a3 is the ultimate danger revealed: *Τετόλημκεν ὁ λόγος οὗτος ὑποθέσθαι τὸ μὴ ὄν εἶναι· ψεύδος γὰρ οὐκ ἂν ἄλλως ἐγίγνετο ὄν*. 'This statement has dared to assume ("assume", observe, not "state") that not-being is; for falsehood could not occur—come into existence—in any other way.' Falsehood could only come to be if not-being could come to be; the argument here is not that this is because falsehood *is* (part of) not-being, but because falsehood is *about* not-being, and so *presupposes* the existence of not-being. What Parmenides prohibited was saying that 'not-being is'. Plato has been leading up to the totally taboo 'saying that not-being is', via the less transparently taboo 'saying that falsehoods can be uttered or thought'. He has not, as Diès supposed, taken the step of arguing that 'falsehoods are not', trading on a possible *synonymy* of *ψευδῇ* and *μὴ ὄντα*. He has urged that there are difficulties in



describing false statements or beliefs because to believe that these exist involves *assuming* (*ὑποθέσθαι*) that one can assert or believe that 'what is not, is', where 'what is not' is not the statement but the *subject* of the statement. Plato's sequence of thought just after this point is considerably delayed by the complex problems raised by the mere expression 'τὸ μὴ ὄν' (can it have a reference, is it singular or plural, etc.?). But we return to the definition of λόγος ψευδής at 240e10ff., where it must be noted that λόγος ψευδής is not simply directly said to be λόγος μὴ ὄν as Diēs would have wished, but λόγος . . . τὰ τε ὄντα λέγων μὴ εἶναι καὶ τὰ μὴ ὄντα εἶναι. For the time being the argument is that in order to state these things, a statement has to assume that such things are possible; Plato, of course, will later explain falsehood with this formula still in mind, and λόγος ψευδής will turn out to exist after all.

(III) Perhaps clinching is a very simple point in favour of the Heindorf interpretation made to me by Dr Paolo Crivelli. This is that at later points in the dialogue ψευδής δόξα and ψευδής λόγος regularly appear together for joint discussion. For example, at 240d2–241a1 first ψευδής δόξα is discussed, d2–e8, then ψευδής λόγος is concluded to be similar, e9–10, and then at 241a8–b1 it is asserted that we 'dared to say ψευδῆ . . . ὥς ἔστιν (= ὥς ἔστιν ψευδῆ) ἐν δοξαῖς τε καὶ κατὰ λόγους'. Cf. 241e2–3. The careful parallelism of mention of ψευδής δόξα and ψευδής λόγος at these points suggests that ψευδῆ λέγειν ἢ δοξάζειν is just the collocation we should expect to find at 236e4. This is very likely Heindorf's own original motivation for his interpretation. Compare also the return of the topic when a solution is in sight: δόξη τε καὶ λόγῳ, 260b10–11, c2–4, e1–2, 4, 261c6, 263d6–264b7, d4–5.

To turn finally to the addition of <φάναι> to the first part of the sentence. ὅπως εἰπόντα χρή . . . φάναι . . . καὶ . . . φθεγξάμενον . . . μὴ συνέχεσθαι, where καὶ = 'and', is easier to follow than Heindorf's interpretation ὅπως εἰπόντα χρή . . . φθεγξάμενον . . . μὴ συνέχεσθαι, where φθεγξάμενον is rather clumsily 'resumptive' of εἰπόντα (without a connecting καὶ, since Heindorf takes καὶ before τοῦτο to mean 'vel' = 'even' or 'exactly', i.e. 'exactly this'). But for Heindorf's sense here we would want not καὶ but αὐτὸ τοῦτο). I had long ago written <φάναι> into the margin of my text, and when I was later unable to remember where I had found it an eminent scholar told me it was due to Heindorf. This I have never been able to verify, since Heindorf did not do this at the time when he wrote his *Sophist* commentary and I have not found it elsewhere in his work. There is perhaps some danger that it is due to myself rather than to Heindorf. But if it supports and simplifies Heindorf's interpretation against Campbell's at this point it seems to be worth consideration. My eminent informant perhaps merely meant that Heindorf had endorsed this overall interpretation, rather than that Heindorf had himself added <φάναι>. This still leaves much of the credit with Heindorf.

Crivelli in *Il 'Sofista' di Platone* (Florence, 1990), pp. 13–21 proposed that εἰπεῖν could be mentally supplied after χρή in e4, which I find a little difficult, but his very comprehensive discussion otherwise leads, like my briefer notes here, to the conclusion that Heindorf's line of interpretation is correct.

#### *Sophist* 237b6–7

'τὸ μηδαμῶς ὄν' τολμῶμέν που φθέγγεσθαι;

I have added inverted commas around 'τὸ μηδαμῶς ὄν', but it may be as well to say that I do not here intend to limit the interpretation to 'do we dare to utter the expression "that which in no way is"?' Certainly in the next sentence τοῦνομα τοῦτο,

τὸ ‘μὴ ὄν’, unmistakably means ‘the expression “not-being”’. But at this earlier point the Visitor perhaps wishes to say the equivalent of what we would mean by ‘do we dare to purport to refer to something under the name of “that which in no way is”?’

Compare the difference between

- (i) ‘did he refer to the man in black?’ (where we do not raise any question about the expression ‘the man in black’).
- (ii) ‘did he say (= use the expression) “the man in black”?’
- (iii) ‘did he refer to “the man in black”?’ (= purport to indicate someone by calling him ‘the man in black’, where the questioner may wish either perhaps to hint at doubt about the existence of the man in black, or to express alarm at the sinister nature of ‘men in black’, or question the appropriateness of the use or utterance of the description ‘the man in black’.)

The *New Shorter OED* glosses ‘scare-quotes: quotation marks placed round a word or phrase to draw attention to an unusual or arguably inaccurate use’. But there can also be scare-quotes to express alarm at the proximity or mere thought of an object that might deserve the quoted description. Nicholas White has a relevant note on the need for different kinds of emphasis in the *Sophist* (p. 21, n. 22 of his translation). More particularly Lesley Brown calls attention to the ‘increased use of the formal mode’ in this dialogue (1998, pp. 183–4). I have several times opted to add inverted commas around terms in the *Sophist*; I have often used the proximity of *φθέγγεσθαι* or *ὄνομα* or *ῥῆμα* as a clue. But I have often omitted possible inverted commas where little seems to be gained by them. Consistency is extremely hard to achieve. See also below on *Sophist* 257b3.

#### *Sophist* 237b10–c4

εἰ σπουδῇ δέοι . . . τί δοκοῦμεν ἄν; εἰς τί καὶ ἐπὶ ποῖον αὐτόν τε καταχρήσασθαι κτλ.

‘If it were necessary, in seriousness, that one of our audience should think carefully about a reply to the question where one should bestow this name, ‘not-being’, what do we think [would happen] (or [he would say])? On what and to what kind of thing would he apply that name?’

G. E. L. Owen (p. 244, n. 39 = p. 119, n. 38) remarked on this sentence ‘a syntactically confused text, but the sense is not in doubt’. In fact the syntax is hardly in doubt either. Heindorf, Stallbaum, and Apelt all tried to avoid punctuating after *τί δοκοῦμεν ἄν* and adduced supposed parallels where one question seems to turn by anacolouth into a different question. But *τί ἄν*; questions are quite common, and so are *τί δοκεῖ*; or *τί δοκοῦμεν*; questions. Moreover the forward displacement of *ἄν* is very familiar to readers of Plato. It often follows not the infinitive which it modifies but *δοκεῖ* or *οἶει* earlier in the sentence. Compare:

- (i) *Lysis* 216b6 οὐκ ἄν μοι δοκεῖ οὕτως ἔχειν;  
*Protagoras* 357a4 ἐδόκουν ἄν καὶ τῷ Πρωταγόρᾳ ὁμολογεῖν;  
*Republic* 515b5, b8, d1 τί ἄν οἶει αὐτόν εἰπεῖν; 516d2 δοκεῖς ἄν αὐτόν ἐπιθυμητικῶς αὐτῶν ἔχειν;  
 and for a very long forward displacement, cf. *Prot.* 354a2–7.

- (ii) Lysias, *Against Eratosthenes* xii.34

τί ἂν εἰ καὶ ἀδελφοὶ ὄντες ἐτυγχάνετε αὐτοῦ ἢ καὶ υἱῆς; ἀπειψηφίσασθε;  
where (a) after τί ἂν we can easily supply ἐποιήσατε from the previous sentence, and (b) the ἂν still affects ἀπειψηφίσασθε but is not repeated (just as it is not repeated in the passage in hand).

- (iii) Aeschylus, *Agamemnon* 935–6

ΚΛ. τί δ' ἂν δοκεῖ σοι Πρίαμος, εἰ τάδ' ἤνυσεν;

ΑΓ. ἐν ποικίλοις ἂν κάρτα μοι βῆναι δοκεῖ.

where (a) in 935 we automatically supply δρᾶσαι or πράξαι, and (b) in both 935 and 936 the ἂν has been put early in the sentence.

- (iv) Further elliptical τί ἂν; questions occur in Aristophanes, *Clouds* 154, 769, *Lysist.* 399, *Thesm.* 773–4.

(Stallbaum's supposed parallels at *Phaedr.* 269e5ff., *Symp.* 211d8ff., and *Dem. Lept.* 28 all strongly invite similar treatment, that is to say, division into two questions, one or both being mildly elliptical. Aesch. *Cho.* 994–5 τί σοι δοκεῖ; . . . σήπειν ἂν; is not materially different, implying an ellipse of <ποιεῖν ἂν;> after δοκεῖ.)

The old punctuation led White to see *three* questions here, 'Why do we think he'd use it, and in what connection, and for what kind of purpose?' but this would require τί . . . <καὶ> εἰς τί καὶ ἐπὶ ποῖον; Owen to my mind was rightly content with 'of what thing and what sort of thing should we expect him to use it?', since εἰς τί καὶ ἐπὶ ποῖον; in my view amounts to a more precise expansion of the preceding τί ἂν; question.

### *Sophist* 241a3–6

Again at this point inverted commas should probably be added to the crucial sentence as follows (though I did not see this in time for *OCT* 1995/7):

ἀλλὰ ταῦτα ὁ σοφιστῆς οὐ φήσει. 'ἢ τίς μηχανὴ συγχωρεῖν τινα τῶν εὖ φρονούντων, ὅταν προδιωμολογημένα ἢ τὰ πρό τούτων ὁμολογηθέντα;' μανθάνομεν, ὦ Θεαίτητε, ἂ λέγει;

But the Sophist will deny this. [Of course I shall deny it]—or what means is there for a careful/sympathetic thinker to concede it, when the presuppositions are such as those that have been agreed just before this? Do we understand what he means, Theaetetus?

The sentence beginning ἢ τίς μηχανή is an expostulation put by the Visitor into the mouth of the hunted Sophist. Once again the imaginary Sophist gets his voice into the dialogue, by courtesy of course of the Visitor who mimics his probable response.

ὅταν προδιωμολογημένα ἢ τὰ πρό τούτων ὁμολογηθέντα sounds ponderously tautologous, but is probably conversational hectoring—'when we have agreed to what we *have* just agreed to'. The mss. have again suffered expansion by the intrusion of a gloss. Some scribe incorporated ὅταν <ἄφθεγκτα καὶ ἄρρητα καὶ λογα καὶ ἀδιανόγητα> προδιωμολογημένα κτλ. from a gloss by an interpreter who thought that the 'previously agreed points' were the inexpressibility and unthinkability of not-being, as asserted at 238c10–11. But the 'previously agreed points' relevant at this moment are not the inexpressibility, etc., of not-being, but the more basic and more general point that 'being cannot be attached to not-being'. In order to explain falsehood at 240e1–4, Theaetetus agreed that false opinion took the form

δοξάζουσιν . . . πως εἶναι τὰ μηδαμῶς ὄντα. But this, objects the Sophist at 241b1–2, is τῷ μὴ ὄντι τὸ ὄν προσάπτειν; and *this* was agreed to be impossible in a universal statement at 238c5–6.

So Madvig was right to remove the gloss ἀφθεγκτα κτλ. since it is not strictly to the point here. Diès kept the gloss and removed the apparently prosaic τὰ πρὸ τούτων ὁμολογήθεντα; but he had mistaken the hunted Sophist's precise point, and perhaps missed the conversational flavour of his repetitive terminology.

#### *Sophist 247e3–4*

τίθεμαι γὰρ ὅρον ὀρίζειν <δεῖν>, τὰ ὄντα ὡς ἔστιν οὐκ ἄλλο τι πλὴν δύναμις.

Campbell wrote here 'there is probably an ellipse of δεῖν' and referred to his own note 'δέδεικται sc. δεῖν' at 235b9; but δέδοκται is more plausible there, and here it is probably easiest and most plausible simply to restore <δεῖν> after ὀρίζειν.—At 246b1 ταῦτόν σῶμα καὶ οὐσίαν ὀριζόμενοι, we probably met the 'concrete' sense of οὐσία, as grammarians, and not merely materialists, call it, i.e. οὐσία = τὰ ὄντα; here we probably meet similarly the 'concrete' sense, grammatically, of δύναμις = τὰ δυνατά. Alternatively it *may* be that σῶμα in 246b1 is felt as abstract, 'bodiliness', and it may be that here τὰ ὄντα can be felt abstractly as = οὐσία. 'Concretum pro abstracto' is as easy in Greek as 'abstractum pro concreto', as interpreters know to their cost, and Plato was perfectly capable of alternating them within the same phrase.—But even δύναμις = τὰ δυνατά are not, of course, necessarily concrete in the materialists' sense.

We must probably admit that grammar still will not settle the philosophical question whether Plato is talking of 'bodiliness' or 'power' as *criteria* of being or as *identical* with being. It seems to me that if he had intended to talk of criteria only, he would have done so more carefully; but this could very well be disputed, as it is by Lesley Brown (1998, pp. 192–3) on the plausible philosophical ground that for Plato 'things have powers in virtue of what they are'. As a purely grammatical suggestion Brown observes that 'a possible construal reads the text as saying that the *horos* (mark) is *dunamis* rather than that being is *dunamis*' (p. 190, n. 11). If this is a reference to Campbell's somewhat awkward punctuation τίθεμαι γὰρ ὅρον, ὀρίζειν τὰ ὄντα, ὡς ἔστιν οὐκ ἄλλο τι πλὴν δύναμις, one must note that Campbell himself still took the subject of ἔστιν to be τὰ ὄντα. Cornford considered, but then in fact rejected, the possibility of taking the subject of ἔστιν to be ὁρος. If we opt for Brown's view on philosophical grounds, we must still perhaps admit that grammatically Plato has not made his decision totally clear. At the same time one can perhaps venture the suggestion that Plato *need* not have found it totally impossible to suggest that power might be the 'essence' of being; this is a context where bold suggestions would hardly be out of place. 248c4–5 need not be inconsistent with this; if power is the essence of being it will also be the primary *mark* of being. Certainty is difficult.

#### *Sophist 248a7–e7: dialogues within the dialogue: and the attribution of 248d10–e5*

Dialogues within the dialogue occur at several points in the Sophist. Some of them have been recently discussed under the label 'the new dialectic' (Brown, pp. 182–3).

There are:

- (i) at 240a9–240b12 and at 241a4–5 sequences where the Visitor puts words into

the mouth of the imaginary hunted Sophist, enacting a dialogue within the main dialogue, in which Theaetetus is not assenting to points of the Visitor's but 'fighting off' the Sophist's attack (see Robinson [forthcoming]);

- (ii) at 243d8–244c2 there is a further internal dialogue with the general body of historical 'ontologists' who are asked directly what they mean by 'εἶναι';
- (iii) at 246e2–247e2 there is a more remote exchange with the 'materialists' who are kept slightly at a distance even when on their best behaviour; Theaetetus reports on what they would say, but probably in *oratio obliqua*, except perhaps at 247a8 where it may be that he puts 'Ναί' into their mouths, but retreats at once to καὶ ταῦτα σύμφασιν; but
- (iv) at 248a7–e5 there is a direct exchange with the 'Friends of the Forms', where the Visitor addresses them in the second person (λέγετε, 248a8) and Theaetetus replies as their representative giving their words in the first person plural, 'φαμὲν γὰρ οὖν', b1; this continues, with complications, to e5.
- (v) at 251b5–252a4 all ontologists of whatever creed, and also the 'late learners', are asked directly to agree that there is κοινωνία, and when pressed they do so very rapidly.

Not all of this has always been correctly understood. It is important to know which speaker endorses which remark at which moment. Only the first 'ontological' dialogue, (ii), has previously been clarified in printing by being marked with inverted commas. That was done by Burnet followed by Diès; Burnet himself was probably following Jowett in his translation. The 'materialists' in (iii), as we have seen, get no more than one possible word of their own, and so need few inverted commas. But the 'Friends of the Forms' in (iv) are directly addressed and give first-person replies, so in due consistency inverted commas are required for remarks addressed to or made by them. Jowett here began to place inverted commas at 248a9 but instantly gave up; his revisers went one reply further. Burnet and Diès and other translators in this area make no attempt at all—inconsistently, of course, after their previous straightforward treatment of the 'ontologists' in (ii).

There is no force in arguing that Plato wrote without inverted commas, therefore so should we; Plato also wrote without word division. Modern texts are edited for the convenience of modern readers who are silent readers—unlike the ancients, who when reading aloud will have found dividing words easier, and perhaps also found extempore dramatization easier because they were reading aloud. But for modern readers modern conventions should be used accurately wherever they can be helpful. The deterrent which may have frightened Burnet away from applying inverted commas to dialogue (iv) was partly doubtless that the Visitor and Theaetetus tend to interrupt and vary their presentation of this dialogue; the Visitor interpolates remarks of his own, e.g. at 248b6 where after an accompanying comment of his own he substitutes himself for Theaetetus in supplying the answer to his own last question. But at 248d4 'Τί δὲ . . . φατε . . . κτλ.' the Visitor is again addressing the 'Friends of the Forms' directly. At d8 Theaetetus adds a comment on what he declares would be their reply; and finally at d10–e5 the full reply is supplied by the Visitor. Then at the end of this sentence there has been trouble. Does φαμὲν at e4 belong to the same speakers as πεισθησόμεθα at e8? But there should be no controversy at the level of punctuation. φαμὲν at e4 is put by the Visitor into the mouths of the 'Friends of the Forms'. This can hardly be doubted, because it is surely against what he imagines *them* to say that the Visitor reacts with Τί δὲ πρὸς Διός; at e7.

*Τί δὲ πρὸς Διός;* is strong language for the Visitor to use. He says it of course *to* Theaetetus, not—as might have seemed rather rude—directly to the imaginary ‘Friends’ themselves, who do not speak again until they join the chorus in 251d5–252a4. *πεισθησόμεθα* at e8, ‘shall we be persuaded’, of course refers to Theaetetus and the Visitor himself, since it is the Visitor who subsequently argues that motion must be included in *τὸ παντελῶς ὄν*.

What Plato is doing with the ‘dialogues within dialogues’ is dramatizing the presentation of views which the argument of the dialogue can now go on to treat in one way or another—rejecting or absorbing them, explaining them, or explaining them away, as the case may be. It may well be that Plato must have felt more sympathetic to the ‘Friends of the Forms’ than to the ‘materialists’; but there is no need for those who insist heavily on that sympathy to attempt to destroy the dramatic presentation at e7. *Τί δὲ πρὸς Διός;* makes far more sense if the Visitor is here reacting in this dramatic context to the views of the ‘Friends of the Forms’ than if he is suddenly arresting a piece of exposition of his own, on the lines of ‘you and I, Theaetetus, do not admit change into our ontology—oh, but in heaven’s name how can we believe a thing like that?’, which is what some interpreters have wished, for example White recently, who breaks off the ‘Friends’ remark at *πάσχειν* in e4 and puts a dash there and not before *Τί δὲ πρὸς Διός;* But this, rather than dramatizing a debating situation, suggests a dithering approach on the part of the Visitor. It would tend to diminish rather than emphasize the impression Plato probably wishes to give, namely that both views must be reckoned with, even if the second is destined ultimately to win.

There can be no doubt in the subsequent discussion that the Visitor argues both (i) in 248e7–249b7 that *τὸ παντελῶς ὄν*, ‘the whole of being’, the universe as a whole—or perhaps this is meant to mean very concisely ‘the sum total of what has a complete claim to be’—must include moving things such as life, the soul, and mind, if knowledge is to exist, and also (ii) in 249b8–c8 that equally for knowledge to exist there must be stationary objects. This of course leaves the Visitor and Theaetetus in one respect ‘Friends of the Forms’; but in other respects opposed to them, if they believed that no moving things had real existence. There is no apparent solution offered to the problem here over whether being known will constitute being changed and so render the Forms unstable, in a way which might be objectionable even to the Visitor and Theaetetus. But Plato has surely dramatized this discussion in the way he has in order to show the weakness of the position of one group of ‘Friends of the Forms’, whether imaginary or possibly historical, or perfectly possibly himself when younger, if they believed there could be no motion at all among ‘real’ objects. It is against *this* that *Τί δὲ πρὸς Διός;* is the Visitor’s highly dramatized reaction. Let us not weaken the dramatic excitement of Plato’s writing here; let us not, on the other hand, deny the complexity of the problem he is dramatising. (For a comprehensive new treatment see L. Brown [1998].)

A grammatical note can perhaps be added here. (i) The appearance of *ὅτι* at 248c7 and *ὥς* at d10 does not indicate that the subsequent words are in *oratio obliqua*. Compare *Apology* 21c1–2 *ἀποφανῶν τῷ χρησμῷ ὅτι* ‘Οὐτοσί ἐμοῦ σοφώτερός ἐστι, σὺ δ’ ἐμὲ ἔφησθα’, cf. *Apol.* 29d7 and *Crito* 50c8, *ἴσως ἂν εἴποιεν ὅτι* ‘Ὡ Σώκρατες, μὴ θαύμαζε τὰ λεγόμενα’ (see Kühner–Gerth II.366–7). (ii) The infinitive *κινεῖσθαι* in 248e4 is unlikely to indicate a switch to *oratio obliqua*, as Apelt and Vlastos (p. 314) believed, since the immediately following *φάμεν* is in *oratio recta*, and still (as we have seen) in the mouths of the ‘Friends of the Forms’. It could perhaps be that in e2 *τὴν οὐσίαν* δὴ functions like *ὥστε τὴν οὐσίαν*; if not, Hermann chose to add <ὥστε>.

Madvig and Schanz preferred to add δὴ <δεῖ>; my own preference, on the whole, would be to write in e4 κατὰ τοσοῦτον <ἀναγκαῖον> assuming omission because of homoioteleuton. It is true, as Brown (p. 198) argues, that Greek can easily slip between *oratio recta* and *oratio obliqua*, but I find it awkward that this should happen here twice in such quick succession.

*Sophist 249b5–6*

συμβαίνει δ' οὖν, ὦ Θεαίτητε, ἀκινήτων τε ὄντων <πάντων> οὐδὲν μηδενὶ περὶ μηδενὸς εἶναι μηδαμοῦ.

Badham and Apelt rightly here saw that the sense of the argument, emphasized by the particle τε, links this remark to the next, and that πάντων is required here to balance πάντα in b8. If all things are stationary (genitive absolute), no one will have knowledge; similarly if all things are in motion, there will equally be no knowledge. Burnet will perhaps have rejected this supplement on the view that 'if things are motionless' could be generic in meaning, but it seems unlikely that Plato would have missed the opportunity of including πάντων here to secure the balance with πάντα in b8, and to give the rhetorical juxtaposition πάντων . . . μηδενὶ περὶ μηδενός. Cherniss (p. 352, n. 5) seems to have wanted to take ἀκινήτων . . . ὄντων as partitive genitives dependent on μηδενί, 'knowledge could belong to none of immobile things', but this seems clumsy, and might perhaps only become natural with the deletion of ὄντων. This seems to be a situation where the cost of keeping the mss. text unsupplemented would be acceptance of weaker Greek both syntactically and rhetorically; and omission because of homoeoteleuton is conspicuously plausible.

*Sophist 251a1–3: Farewell to Scylla and Charybdis*

καὶ ἐὰν αὐτὸ μηδέτερον ἰδεῖν δυνάμεθα, τὸν γοῦν λόγον ὅπηπερ ἂν οἰοί τε ὦμεν εὐπρεπέστατα διακριβωσόμεθα οὕτως ἀμφοῖν ἄμα. (I have emended διωσόμεθα codd.).

G. E. L. Owen (p. 229 = p. 108) rightly emphasized that in 250e6ff. Plato was letting the Visitor announce the 'prospect of joint illumination' of being and of not-being simultaneously. By now both being and not-being have come to seem equally full of ἀπορία; so perhaps there is a hope that if we can illuminate one of these in some way, the same illumination may help with the other. This is, of course, far from being an expectation that will succeed in all cases of double ἀπορία but perhaps (i) there may have been a proverbial notion that in searching for a second lost object one might happen to find the first, and (ii) Plato no doubt wished to predict that on this occasion he was going to show that for once this was for good reasons going to work; since our troubles are such that the coming analysis of being is indeed going to help with not-being. But if that was Plato's hope, surely it is disappointing if he then goes on to say that 'if we in fact can see neither, we shall force our way out of this mess as best we can'. It is very colourful to see being as Scylla and not-being as Charybdis, or vice versa, and to think that like Odysseus we shall 'sail our argument between them as best we can'. But that in fact would be a great let-down; merely escaping from these monsters unscathed is in this instance not good enough. Plato is by no means merely saying 'perhaps we shall achieve joint illumination, or perhaps we won't'. This can be proved, as we shall see below, by appeal to the similar passage at 254a6.

The important words are ἰδεῖν and then τὸν γοῦν λόγον. We know already that

not-being is a difficult hole to wrinkle the Sophist out of (239c6–7, εἰς ἄπορον . . . τόπον καταδεδυκεν); soon it is to be called the place of σκοτεινότης (254a6–7). We also know that some people certainly think one cannot *touch* Being; they prefer to leave it in heaven where equally one cannot *see* it (remember οὐρανοῦ καὶ τοῦ ἀοράτου 246a8ff., b7ff.). So there is certainly a danger that illumination to the extent of *seeing* (ἰδεῖν) Being and Not Being may be too much to hope for; but at least (γούν), the Visitor is surely saying, we may hope to achieve some plausible kind of λόγος about them—if not a definition, then some kind of description, or a verbal explanation, showing why the concepts of Being and Not Being are not complete nonsense.

So the verb governing τὸν γούν λόγον can hardly be διωσόμεθα. That is usually rendered here ‘we shall force our argument between’ sc. the puzzling objects. That might be grammatically possible. The passage quoted as a parallel from *Theaet.* 163c actually means ‘we shall thrust the attack aside’; and although at Xen. *Cyrop.* 7.5.39 διωσάμενος τὸν ὄχλον might conceivably mean ‘thrusting his way through the crowd’, that would still not be a parallel for the kind of accusative postulated in τὸν λόγον here. Even so we might grant that ‘thrusting our argument through’ might be a possible rendering here, if it made sense of the passage. But we have seen that it does not. What we really need here is a verb meaning something like ‘produce’ or ‘achieve’ an explanation. It must also be a verb that will harmonize with the adverb εὐπρεπέστατα (Cornford realized that the metaphor of ‘thrusting’ was considerably enfeebled if there was merely talk of doing so ‘plausibly’, but he emended the wrong word; it is the more exciting term that must disappear, since ‘plausibly’ happens to be the plausible word).

The best assumption seems to be that the core of the verb is missing. Müller thought of δι<ορθ>ωσόμεθα, but that probably should mean ‘correct’ our account, and we have no account yet to correct. I suggest τὸν λόγον . . . δι<ακριβ>ωσόμεθα or δι<αβεβαι>ωσόμεθα taken closely with εὐπρεπέστατα, ‘we shall make our account as plausibly accurate’ or ‘as plausibly definite as we can’. ἱκανῶς διακριβώσασθαι is mentioned as the purpose of the discussion at *Pol.* 292c3; or ἐναργές τι . . . βεβαιώσασθαι has been set out as an aim as recently as 250c10, and at *Phileb.* 14c1 we read τοῦτον τοῖνυν τὸν λόγον ἔτι μᾶλλον δι’ ὁμολογίας βεβαιωσόμεθα. δια-βεβαιουῖσθαι with the prefix is unknown in Plato but is found in Demosthenes and Aristotle, where though the use may be intransitive, at least the form is confirmed for Attic, and there is no obvious reason to deny it to Plato (who seems to use ἀκριβοῦσθαι and διακριβοῦσθαι interchangeably). Alternatively διωσόμεθα may merely be a relic of simple βεβαιωσόμεθα, where the scribe’s eye has skipped BEB and seen Δ for Α or, perhaps more likely, his ear suppressed vé from véné.

Thus the colourful ‘thrusting between Scylla and Charybdis’ must be given an admiring farewell; it is a figment of Campbell’s imagination. Plato is anticipating here what he will say again in three pages’ time. At 253e7ff., the philosopher is ἰδεῖν μὲν χαλεπὸν ἐναργῶς, though not in the same way as the σκοτεινός Sophist; the philosopher’s habitat is too dazzlingly λαμπρόν (254a9), though we shall soon look for him σαφέστερον. Then at 254c6 we are striving ἵνα τό τε ὄν καὶ μὴ ὄν εἰ μὴ πάση σαφηνείᾳ δυνάμεθα λαβεῖν, ἀλλ’ οὖν λόγου γε ἐνδεεῖς μηδὲν γινώμεθα περὶ αὐτῶν καθ’ ὅσον ὁ τρόπος ἐνδέχεται τῆς νῦν σκέψεως. We are not going to ‘sail our λόγος through and away from’ Being and Not Being, but capture them as well as we can precisely in our λόγος. λόγου γε ἐνδεεῖς μηδὲν exactly echoes τὸν γούν λόγον κτλ.



Two supplementary points.

- (i) διακριβοῦσθαι τὸν λόγον, if this is what Plato is proposing, would not be quite the same as διακριβολογεῖσθαι, which was something the 'ontologists' did at 245e6; they were making something of a fuss about exactitude of language. But precisely because of their challenge we must—unfussily—διακριβοῦσθαι τὸν λόγον without διακριβολογία, 'get our words as plausible as we can'. There is an echo but no incompatibility here.
- (ii) For the centre of a word going missing from the manuscripts, compare, very close by, 240c4, where Stobaeus' mss. left him with ἐπάλλεως instead of ἐπαλλάξεως, and 240d1 where BD have cut φάντασμα down to φάσμα. Add *Pol.* 310e8 ξυμφύσεως, B, for συνυφάνσεως DTW Poll. At *Laws* 6.757a2 (see *Des Places*) various witnesses have διαγενόμενοι or διαγόμενοι for the true reading of AO and Stob. L, namely διαγορευόμενοι; and that of course in turn tends to confirm that in the more controversial case at *Phaedo* 100d6 προσαγορευομένη (Wytttenbach) is rightly restored for προσγενομένη *et sim.*, in the mss. A final and indubitable example is von der Mühl's very acute restoration of συμμεταβάλλωσιν for συμβάλλωσιν at *Ar. E.E.* 1249b14.

### *Sophist 253b9–10*

ἐπειδὴ καὶ τὰ γένη πρὸς ἄλληλα κατὰ ταῦτὰ μείξεως ἔχειν ὁμολογήκαμεν.

To show that *κοινωνία γενῶν* does not imply that every single kind necessarily communicates with every other kind, the Visitor has compared the way in which certain letters do not combine, though vowels always do, and he seems also to have an analogy from music in view for the combining of some notes and the non-combining of others. Then he is normally, I presume, assumed to proceed 'since we have agreed that the Kinds too are in the same position with regard to combining with each other . . .' This is unobjectionable so long as κατὰ ταῦτὰ is read to mean 'in the same position as *letters and sounds*'. But I am tempted to think that the progress of the argument would be clearer if we had <οὐ> κατὰ ταῦτὰ here, interpreted to mean 'the Kinds are not in the same position *as each other*, in regard to combining with each other'. This is a clear statement of the position that has been agreed as a result of considering the analogies; and to be able to take πρὸς ἄλληλα <οὐ> κατὰ ταῦτὰ μείξεως ἔχειν all together seems a gain in neatness. I think I am not alone in finding this attractive.

### *Sophist 253e4*

Here τό γε διαλεκτικόν is presumably normally assumed to be a neuter abstract equivalent to ἡ τοῦ διαλέγεσθαι δύναμις or τέχνη—compare 253c7–8. But if Ammann is right, this particular neuter abstract occurs nowhere else in Plato. That is probably not a great difficulty, but perhaps once again we should resort to inverted commas, this time to clarify a grammatical matter rather than for dramatizing purposes, and print τό γε 'διαλεκτικόν', i.e. 'the title of "dialectician"' (compare 268b11, Τὸ μὲν που σοφόν, where again 'σοφόν' is clearly what is meant). Alternatively one might suspect a small omission, and write τό γε 'διαλεκτικοῦ' <ὄνομα>.

*Sophist 256a7–8*

Ἀλλὰ μὴν αὐτῇ γ' ἦν ταῦτόν διὰ τὸ μετέχειν αὐτὴν τὰ τοῦτο.

Madvig's version of this sentence seems correct. The αὐτῇ γε of the mss. would give an odd emphasis—'but *motion at least* is the same . . .' Why this emphasis? Whereas 'it is the same as *itself at least*' seems excellent.

This sentence would perhaps have been more complete if it had ended διὰ τὸ μετέχειν αὐτὴν τὰ τοῦτο <πρὸς αὐτό>. It can be argued that the point will be made clear in b1–2, but I would prefer to find that a11–b4 is a careful résumé of the whole situation rather than the first explanation of an important part of it.

*Sophist 257b3*

Ὅποταν τὸ 'μὴ ὄν' λέγωμεν . . .

Here we need 'scare quotes' but with an emphatic rather than an unduly hostile or terrifying intention. 'When we refer to those things which (correctly enough when we come to understand it) go under the description of "not being" . . .'

*Sophist 257e2–3*

Ἄλλο τι τῶν ὄντων τινὸς ἐνὸς γένους μέρος ἀφορισθέν, καὶ πρὸς τι τῶν ὄντων αὐτὸ πάλιν ἀντιτεθέν, οὕτω συμβέβηκεν εἶναι τὸ μὴ καλόν;

Burnet printed here the same as the above text, but without μέρος. That is to say, he printed τῶν ὄντων τινὸς ἐνὸς γένους ἀφορισθέν with the main text in T. Cornford gave the grammatically natural translation of that reading, and in doing so showed up its falsity. Cornford wrote 'May we not say that the *existence* of the non-Beautiful is constituted by its being marked off from a single definite Kind (*viz.* the Beautiful) among existing things, and again set in contrast with something that exists?' So Cornford believed that the not-Beautiful was 'marked off' from the Beautiful 'and again set in contrast' with the Beautiful. Now in suitable contexts to be ἀφορισθέν and to be ἀντιτεθέν could perfectly well represent different aspects of the relation of, for example, the not-Beautiful to the Beautiful; in this sentence (taking Cornford's view of it) they would indeed necessarily represent different aspects, if αὐτὸ πάλιν were to have point; but in fact nothing is made of this difference in this context, and the sentence as taken by Cornford tends to seem either baffling, or merely tautologous, if there is no important difference after all.

Moreover the next sentence, as Owen pointed out, seems to indicate that rather more had been contained in this sentence than Cornford found in it. The next sentence concludes that ὄντος δὴ πρὸς ὃν ἀντίθεσις . . . εἶναι τις συμβαίνει τὸ μὴ καλόν, 'Not-beautiful is a kind of opposition of some being against some being', and then the subsequent sentence concludes that the not-Beautiful exists no less than the Beautiful. This tends to suggest that already in e2–3 we should be hearing of the ἀντίθεσις of ὄντα to ὄντα. Campbell rather laconically observed 'the words αὐτὸ πάλιν indicate that the τι τῶν ὄντων is different from the γένος'. In fact the τι τῶν ὄντων is also a γένος, though the term is not repeated but left to be understood on the second occasion. One γένους μέρος τῶν ὄντων is opposed to another γένος τῶν ὄντων, each just as much as the other consisting of ὄντα.

But sound though Campbell's instincts were, he had to render τῶν ὄντων τινὸς γένους ἀφορισθέν as 'parted off as belonging to a certain kind of existences'. Apelt

and Cornford found this grammatically impossible, quite rightly; *γένους τινὸς ἀφορισθέν*, closely conjoined in this way, could only mean 'separated from a class', not 'separated and assigned to a class', nor as Campbell may alternatively have believed, 'separated off within a class'. Campbell refers back to 257c10 *μία μὲν ἐστὶ που καὶ ἐκείνη, τὸ δ' ἐπὶ τῷ γιγνόμενον μέρος αὐτῆς ἕκαστον ἀφορισθὲν ἐπωνυμίαν ἴσχει . . . ἰδίαν*. But there *μέρος* makes all the difference, and points to the solution here. *αὐτῆς* there is not governed by *ἀφορισθέν* but by *μέρος*, and *ἀφορισθέν* goes closely with *ἕκαστον*, indicating that each part of *ἐπιστήμη* is distinguished from each other part.

Back at e2 T has *μέρους* in the margin in either the first hand or an early corrector's hand, and W reads *τινὸς μέρους* for *τινὸς ἐνὸς γένους*. The solution is to read *τῶν ὄντων τινὸς ἐνὸς γένους μέρος*, assuming that at some point a scribe erroneously wrote *γένους μέρους*, whereupon *μέρους* either usurped *γένους* or was relegated to the margin. The meaning becomes 'Surely when a part of one class of existing things is marked off (*sc.* from the other parts of the class) and then opposed to a class which is again composed of existents, in this way the not-Beautiful comes to exist?' That is to say, one part of the class of the Different is marked out by its opposition to the Beautiful, which is itself part of the class of Beings; though Plato is able to telescope this sentence rather more elegantly than I have tried to do.

Credit for this correction must very largely go to my colleague Dr Paolo Crivelli, who on seeing '*μέρους* mg T' in the apparatus reminded me of *μέρος* at 257c11. I had previously thought of correcting *τινὸς ἐνὸς γένους* to *τι ἐν γένος*, on the assumption that an erroneous reading *τι ἐνὸς γένος* had begun the problem. But Crivelli has I think seen the truth.

(G. E. L. Owen [p. 239, n. 32 = p. 116, n. 31] saw some but not all of the truth here. (i) He was wrong to doubt that *ἄλλο τι* means *nonne*. If it did not, it could not mean here 'one of the things that are', but necessarily 'another of the things that are', which would be baffling. (ii) As we have seen, *pace* Owen, we do not so much want the not-Beautiful to be said to be 'marked off from the Different', but rather to be said to remain a *part* of the Different distinct from other parts; this can be achieved by including *μέρος*, but not by Campbell's interpretation, which in fact Owen rightly rejected.)

#### *Sophist* (1) 258a11-b1 and (2) 258e2

(1) ἡ τῆς θατέρου μορίου φύσεως καὶ τῆς τοῦ ὄντος πρὸς ἄλληλα ἀντικειμένων ἀντίθεσις.

If *μορίου* were not in the text, we should be dealing here with *ἀντικείμενα φύσεις*, namely the *φύσις* of the Different and the *φύσις* of Being. But if *μορίου* is correctly in the text, we are talking of *ἀντικείμενα μόρια φύσεων*, contrasting parts of each of the 'natures', namely the Different and Being. This is what the syntax must amount to, whether or not we add *μορίου* again at *τῆς τοῦ ὄντος* <*μορίου*>. Campbell was certainly right in mentally supplying *μορίου* here, whether or not he wanted to supplement it in the text.

It is worth quoting here parts of Apelt's note. 'Haec verba cum Campbellio sic iungenda: ἡ ἀντίθεσις μορίου τῆς θατέρου φύσεως καὶ (μορίου) τῆς τοῦ ὄντος πρὸς ἄλληλα ἀντικειμένων . . . verba illa οὐσία ἐστὶν proprie non ἀντίθεσιν subjecti loco postulant, sed μόριον τῆς θατέρου φύσεως ἀντιτιθέμενον μορίῳ τῆς τοῦ ὄντος φύσεως.' Apelt is probably not proposing to change the text at any point, but would

rightly have claimed, I think, that any other understanding would be unnatural. Just possibly Campbell was hinting that he would welcome τῆς τοῦ ὄντος <μορίου> in the text, but he too might well have thought that the sense was obvious without the addition.

I do not believe that Owen (p. 239, n. 33 = p. 116, n. 32) could maintain his 'anti-reductive' view of the passage by reinterpreting this sentence, short of actually deleting the initial occurrence of μορίου.

Similarly I doubt whether Owen's view can be supported by accepting the mss. reading ἐκάστου at e2. That the mss. of Simplicius are divided is not an argument against ἐκάστον, which one or other of the sources of our text of Simplicius preserve in each of the two places. (Diels was clearly treating the Aldine as a primary source for Simplicius here, and probably had good reason.) I do not believe that Plato in an expository sentence of the *Sophist* would have written τὸ ὄν ἐκάστου for τὴν ἐκάστου οὐσίαν, whatever might possibly occur in logic-chopping exchanges elsewhere in the *Sophist* or in the *Parmenides*. The complete phrase τὸ πρὸς τὸ ὄν ἑκαστον μόριον αὐτῆς ἀντιτιθέμενον almost certainly implies a second ἑκαστον before or after μόριον. Greek took words ἀπὸ κοινοῦ or mentally supplied their repetition, much as in fact English often does. Apelt claimed with Heindorf that it was right to understand ἑκαστον with μόριον, against Stallbaum and Campbell who understood it with τὸ ὄν; in fact both parties were right, since it is clearly to be understood with both. A second <ἑκαστον> could easily have dropped out of the text, of course, but in this instance it seems likely not to have been required in the first place, since mental supplementation seems too obvious.

Frede (1967, pp. 90–2) has a substantial discussion at this point, and comes to a similar conclusion. It would be correct to say that the immediately consecutive collocation τὸ ἑκαστον μόριον as such would be poor Greek word order, but I am not sure that τὸ πρὸς τὸ ὄν ἑκαστον <ἑκαστον> μόριον might not be a slight but quite plausible hyperbaton.

### *Sophist 258b11–c3*

ὥσπερ τὸ μέγα ἦν μέγα καὶ τὸ καλὸν ἦν καλὸν καὶ τὸ μὴ μέγα <μὴ μέγα> καὶ τὸ μὴ καλὸν <μὴ καλὸν>, οὕτω δὲ καὶ τὸ μὴ ὄν κατὰ ταῦτόν ἦν τε καὶ ἔστι μὴ ὄν.

Editors since Boeckh have universally accepted the need to add <μὴ μέγα> and <μὴ καλὸν> at this point. (Cornford's view that ὥσπερ is not answered by οὕτω δέ seems impossibly clumsy.) But perhaps in view of the Visitor's intention to show that τὸ μὴ ὄν . . . ἦν τε καὶ ἔστι μὴ ὄν the required emphasis might be better brought out by supplying <ἦν μὴ μέγα> and <ἦν μὴ καλὸν>.

### *Sophist 263b4–12*

ΞΕ. Λέγει δὲ αὐτῶν ὁ μὲν ἀληθὴς τὰ ὄντα ὡς ἔστιν περὶ σοῦ. 4–5  
 ΘΕΑΙ. Τί μὴν;  
 ΞΕ. Ὁ δὲ δὴ ψευδὴς ἕτερα τῶν ὄντων. 7  
 ΘΕΑΙ. Ναί.  
 ΞΕ. Τὰ μὴ ὄντ' ἄρα ὡς ὄντα λέγει.  
 ΘΕΑΙ. Σχεδόν. 10  
 ΞΕ. Ὅντων δὲ γε ὄντα ἕτερα περὶ σοῦ. πολλὰ μὲν γὰρ ἔφαμεν ὄντα  
 περὶ ἑκαστον εἶναι πού, πολλὰ δὲ οὐκ ὄντα.

Michael Frede has recently analysed this passage with great care in his paper 'The *Sophist* on false statements'. I have very little to add to what he says.

'The true statement states the things that are *as* they are about you' (b4–5), or equally well 'states the things that are, *that* they are about you'. The interpretation of ὡς in practice makes no difference in this sentence, but in b9 λέγει ὡς ὄντα has to be translated either 'that they are' or 'as though they are' or 'as things that are', *not* 'as they are'.

In the Greek as in the English περὶ σοῦ and 'about you' are automatically taken ἀπὸ κοινοῦ or by assumed repetition both with λέγει 'states' and also with ὄντα and ἔστιν 'are'. It is very probable, as we see a little later, that in isolated phrases Greek would tend to use λέγει περὶ σοῦ but ὄντα περὶ σέ, but that will not prevent the ἀπὸ κοινοῦ construction being the natural way of understanding the sentence here. Plato clearly cannot have felt that any inaccuracy of diction would seem to arise from the collocation of ἔστιν περὶ σοῦ.

'The false statement states things that are different from the things that are' (sc. "about you", still ἀπὸ κοινοῦ). (b7)

'So it states the things that are not as things that are.' (b9)

'But in fact [it states (sc. about you) things that are, but] they are different from [the] things that are about you. For we said that we supposed that there are many things that are about each thing, and many that are not (sc. about each thing).' (b11–12)

I think it is likely that b11–12 is a conversationally elliptical remark equivalent to Ὅντα λέγει, ὄντων δέ γε ὄντα ἕτερα περὶ σοῦ. Palaeographically in these surroundings one could easily enough suspect a lacuna and write Ὅντα λέγει into the text, but probably we need not; Cornarius' correction ὄντων for mss. ὄντως in b11 gives all we need. ἕτερα requires to be followed by a genitive, which the primary mss. failed to provide. The scribe of Ven. 186 (as Paolo Crivelli discovered for me) for ὄντως suggested ὄντος above the line; Cornarius suggested ὄντων (not plagiaristically as far as can be discovered; contrary to what Bast evidently told Stallbaum, Par. 1808 and Ven. 189 have ὄντως, not ὄντων, as again Paolo Crivelli has verified). Frede suggests convincingly that ὄντων . . . ὄντα in b11 are felt as generalizing in intention; hence a translator should put in '[the] things' or even write legitimately enough 'the things' without the brackets.

Some scholars want to keep ὄντως to give the phrase ὄντως ὄντα, to give the emphasis 'though false and not things that are, they *really* are, because they are different' (sc. 'and we have said that different things are'). I think this is unnecessary; but if it is felt essential to keep ὄντως it will become essential to add <τῶν ὄντων> to provide the required genitive after ἕτερα, and also to govern περὶ σοῦ, once again ἀπὸ κοινοῦ with λέγει (which is supplied still from b4 and b9). In the next line we meet ὄντα περὶ ἕκαστον (accusative), just as we had met περὶ ἕκαστον . . . πολὺ μὲν ἔστι τὸ ὄν at 256e. But again there is no point that is embodied solely in the distinction between περὶ + acc. and περὶ + gen. We return to περὶ σοῦ λεγόμενα at d1. A true statement, according to the Visitor, ought to ensure that the λεγόμενα περὶ σοῦ say τὰ ὄντα περὶ σέ. But of course (1) λέγεσθαι is not εἶναι, therefore λέγεσθαι περὶ is not εἶναι περὶ, and (2) though λεγόμενα must be ὄντα, nevertheless λεγόμενα περὶ σοῦ may be ἕτερα τῶν ὄντων περὶ σέ; this is how falsehoods come to arise.

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