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Open Journal for

Studies in Philosophy

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The Emergence of the Islamic Messiah
Al Mahdi and his "Ideal" State

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Abstract

This study aims to present the emergence of the Islamic Messiah Al Mahdi and his "ideal" state. Many modern preachers, clerics and thinkers are trying to find the signs of the appearance of the expected messiah given by Sharia tests and their interpretations by Islamic legal authorities. Thus, they create their own geopolitical versions, explaining modern political dynamics, based on their aspirations to build the ideal state formed under the light of the crescent. The dispositions of the Sharia norms are explained in a way that forms a logical-looking version of the emergence of a universal just state, led by the expected savior – Imam Mahdi. Muhammad ibn al-Hasan al-Mahdi (Arabic: مُحَمَّد ابْن أَلْحَسَن أَلْمَهْدِي, Muhammad ibn al-Hasan al-Mahdi) is believed by Twelver Shia to be the Mahdi, who has two other eschatologists with Jesus (Jesus) to fulfill their mission to bring peace and justice to the world. The Shivers of Twelver believe that al-Mahdi was born on the 15th of Sha'ban in 870 AD / 256 AH and adopted the Imam at the age of almost four after the assassination of his father, Hassan al-Askari. In the early years of his Imam, he is believed to have had contact with his followers only through the Four Deputies. This period was known as the Small Occult (أَلْغَيْبَة أَلصُّغْرَىٰ) and lasted from 873 to 941. A few days before the death of his fourth deputy Abu al-Hasan Ali ibn Mohammed al-Samari in 941, he is believed to have sent a letter. to his followers. In this letter from Al-Samari, he announced the beginning of the main occult (أَلْغَيْبَة أَلْكُبْرَىٰ), during which the Mahdi was not to have direct contact with his followers, but had instructed them to follow the pious high clergy he had mentioned. some distinctive merits.

Keywords: emergence, the Islamic Messiah Al Mahdi, Israel, Evangelism, Jaafarism (Shiism).

1. Introduction

Many modern preachers, clerics and thinkers are trying to find the signs of the appearance of the expected messiah given by Sharia tests and their interpretations by Islamic legal authorities. Thus, they create their own geopolitical versions, explaining modern political dynamics, based on their aspirations to build the ideal state formed under the light of the crescent. The dispositions of the Sharia norms are explained in a way that forms a logical-looking version of the emergence of a universal just state, led by the expected savior – Imam Mahdi.

If politicians are relatively flexible or refrain from such explanations, taking into account the socio-economic and political realities of their time, then the Ulema are freer to do so – they have no political responsibility and are free to indicate geographical locations or dates.

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associated with the appearance of the messiah, who are quickly exposed as a lie or an obvious manipulation. However, the latter has a strong enough influence for a relatively long time, both on politicians and on public opinion – it is able to reproduce enough unexpected and radical consequences.

For example, Madeleine Kasab, a researcher at the University of Leiden in the Netherlands, divides the signs of the Mahdi's appearance into well-known (already quoted in the main Sharia and interpretive medieval faqih texts) and the detailed features derived from individual Islamic preachers. The main reason for the emergence of the Messiah is the spread of injustice and corruption in various forms around the world.[1] According to the author Ali al-Husseini, the most characteristic of the total crisis in society are "constant blasphemy, de-Sharia lawmaking, ignoring Sharia schools, destroying religious temples, killing Muslims and clerics, the silence of scholars for good, total and evil, the spread of homosexuality, adultery, and the complete decline of morality."[2] Interpretations of the appearance of the Messiah by two Sunni preachers, Sheikh Mohammed al-Arifi and Omran Hussein, are interesting. They say he will be Sunni. They explain this fact by the fact that he will appear in Mecca. Local Muslims, professing Sunni, will oblige him to accept their way of preaching Islam. They shed light on the fact that the Mahdi is a member of Ahl al-Bayt, the family of the house of the Prophet Muhammad. The two Sunnis are of the opinion that no Shiite can carry the message of universalism and is able to create a world state. According to al-Arifi, in just one night, Allah will inspire the Messiah and prepare him for his task. The preacher is of the opinion that the Mahdi will be born an ordinary man, but will suddenly become the Messiah. God will change his status in just one day[3] (see Chukov, 2021).

2. Al Mahdi

Such reflections are intended to prepare Muslims to be constantly ready for the appearance of Al Mahdi Al Montazar, the expected messiah. The most important characteristic of the Messiah is that people will oblige him to accept their devotion, not impose it on them. Muslims will point to him, and he will not declare himself as such.

Among the detailed features of the appearance of the messiah are some contemporary events that are "embedded" within the dogmatic texts of medieval historical texts. One such event is the assassination of former Iraqi President Saddam Hussein. The latter is described as a "caliph",[4] after whose elimination, an energetic Shiite cleric will emerge who will gain great influence in Iraq. It is about the Iraqi opposition Mokdata al Sader. The latter is recognized as the powerful figure who comes after the "caliph", whose appearance is a medium-tall, black-haired

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[1] The Dawa Network, Abdul-Fattah Hamdash, There Is Only One Event for Mahdi to Appear, 01 October 2017. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ymND7DomW4U, 25.12.2020.

[2] Al Husseini, A., Who Guaranteed Nasrallah's Advent? How Did He Meet Mahdi? Orient Net, 03.11.2014, http://www.orient-news.net/ar/news_show/82399, 25.12.2020.

[3] The Truth-Seeker, Alsheikh Muhammad Alarifi, The Appearance of Mahdi Series, First Part, 24.09.2014. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XEQa5SoDLF8, 25.12.2020.

[4] Saddam Hussein is also identified as Ace Safiani. Former terrorist number one Abu Musab Az Zarqawi, who was killed by the Americans in 2006, is also a candidate for the post. He is one of the most sworn enemies of the Shiites. The reason for this statement is that the birthplace of I Zarqawi - the city of Zarqa in northern Jordan is relatively close to the valley of Wadi al Yabis, from where, according to Sharia sources, al-Safiani will appear. For more information, see: Abd Muhammad Hasan, Iqtaraba al-zuhur, Dar al-Mahajja al-Bayda, Beirut, 2006, pp. 125, 133, 25.12.2020 (see Chukov, 2021).

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man who is ravaging Iraq and causing suffering to the people of the country. Then the Mahdi appears[5] (see Chukov, 2021).

Preacher Abdul Fatah Hamdash claims that "the caliphs are fighting for the treasures of the Ka'bah." He thus explains the split in 2017 between the member states of the Gulf Cooperation Council.[6] The Sunni preacher went on to say that Iraq would be besieged by Iran and Syria by the "Romans." Under the latter, he perceives a mixed group of foreigners, formed by representatives of Europe, the United States and Russia.[7]

There is a clear discrepancy in the interpretations of Shiite and Sunni messianic visions. By using identical terms, they give them different content. For example, if there is a consensus on Saddam Hussein that he falls into the category of al-Safiani, it is not the case with Syrian President Bashar al-Assad. For the Sunnis, he provoked the fit, civil war in Syria and also embodied the sinister As Safiyani. Along with that, he is part of the other factor involved in the battle for Sham, Syria. It is about al-Companions, friends, followers. For Shiites, this term symbolizes the black (Abbasid-Shiite) flags and are respectively carriers of a positive connotation. In contrast, Sunnis find the opposite meaning in the word. They find arguments for this thesis by claiming that the word al-ashab is composed of almost the same letters as the word "asad" (in Arabic "lion"). In this logical plane, the Sunnis are convinced that this animal symbolizes the violence and persecution of civilians. Another anti-Assad argument is the appearance of Bashar Assad. He is tall, has blue eyes and blond hair, which Sunni interpreters of messianism suggest is different from the locals[8] (see Chukov, 2021).

According to the current commander of the elite Al-Quds Brigade of the Islamic Guards Corps (KIG), General Ismail Kaani, the real reason for the US invasion of Iraq in 2003 was to capture Imam Mahdi. In 2015, he noted that This happened after the US military contingent heard the calls of the Iraqis. "Oh, God, hasten the appearance of the Mahdi." The Americans realized that if he showed up, then the Shiites would defeat them. to reveal the identity of the Messiah. Kaani claims that this is why the Americans conducted long interrogations with those arrested.[9]

3. The "Ideal" State

The Arab Spring is also framed in the process of the Mahdist emergence. However, Sheikh Omran Hussein expects the real appearance of Imam Mahdi to come with the end of the

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[5] Lovely Land, Conversations of a Group of Sheikhs, About a Tall Man before Mahdi, Al-Sham Sufyani, 05.01.2018, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jDKC6bSJtdU, 25.12.2020.

[6] It is about the split between Saudi Arabia-the United Arab Emirates-Bahrain and Egypt, on the one hand, and Qatar, on the other. For more information see: Hennessy-Fiske, M., Arab Nations Cut Ties to Qatar, Deepening Rift in the Persian Gulf, The Gazette, 5.06.2017, https://www.thegazette.com/subject/news/nation-and-world/Arab-nations-cut-ties-to-Qatar-deepening-rift-in-Persian-gulf-20170605, 16.03.2021.

[7] Abu Anas, Abdul-Fattah Hamdash, We Are at the End of Time, the Conclusive Evidence of the Appearance of Mahdi, 15.11. 2016, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MTCQNQQ9Ots, 25.12.2020.

[8] True Promise is close, Hasan Altuhami, "The Last Sign for the Appearance of Mahdi – the Events of Syria", 15.08. 2017, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RfXNwapc3BY, 27.12.2020.

[9] Al-Khatib, M., Musaid Suleimani Yakshifu Kaifa Bahatat America an "al Mahdi" li i'tikalihi .com / story / 867502 /% D9, 25.12.2020

Saudi regime. One is immanently related to the other, as the Saudi dynasty rules the indicated place of appearance of Imam Mahdi – Mecca.[10]

In the popular Shiite view, the Mahdi is a vengeful figure who will first take revenge on those Sunni Muslims who prevented Ahl al-Bayt from the ruling. Practically Sunnis and Shiites argue over whose Messiah he is. As noted, the idea exists in both denominations, but the figure is different. The Messiah takes on a different profile. The Persian Ibrahim Amini collects stories from several Shiite imams, including Ali ben Abi Talib, Hassan ben Ali, Hussein ben Ali, Ali ben Hussein, Ja'far as Sadiq, Musa al Kazam, in which he clearly rejects any is a link to the expected Messiah, outside the group of Ali ben Abi Talib's successors. According to the Iranian researcher, the latter says: "The Messiah will appear at the end of time from us. There can be no Mahdi in a nation that does not expect him." [11] The dispute is of great importance. It depends on the nature of the Messiah what his deeds and functions will be. It also means what the future ideal state he is fighting for will look like.

Classical sources suggest that Mahdi will turn humanity into a huge Islamic state. At the same time, the Messiah will be especially ruthless towards existing Islamic religious educational and pilgrimage facilities. He will destroy the mosques because they have become very luxurious and are not real places of worship. The Mahdi will kill the ulema because they have failed to establish a just and correct Islamic order. In any case, the appearance of the Mahdi will lead to a sharp and total break with existing Islamic norms.[12]

When the Messiah appears, prosperity and comfort will prevail in people's lives. So great will be the "abundance and grace that twenty people will share the consumption of one pomegranate".[13]The nations will declare allegiance to the Mahdi and fight him in the name of God's commandments. According to Sheikh al-Arifi, the Messiah will conquer Constantinople and then head to Rome and then to all of Europe. The conquests will continue until the Dajala arrives – i.e., the false Messiah.[14] Then Christ will rise, come down to earth and kill Dajjal. He will then pray in Jerusalem. But he will be behind the Mahdi, who will also pray. This is a clear indication that Israel will surely be destroyed by the Mahdi, as the joint prayer of the Messiah and Christ will not take place in occupied Jerusalem.[15]

 An interesting point is that, in fact, Sunni predictions about the Mahdi are much more strongly injected with anti-Semitism. They, in turn, influence Shiite folk beliefs about the expected messiah. In fact, this is the difference between the judgment and the content of Sunni and Shiite messianism. The former emphasizes the destruction of Judaism as a religion, and then this will happen to its followers. Sunni Kuwaiti preacher Nabil al-Audi noted: "The Mahdi will meet with the mujahideen in Damascus. Syria will return to Muslim rule only when the Jews are eliminated. Even trees and stones will say, "Oh, Muslim! There is a Jew behind me. Come and kill him."[16]

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[10] ZeLZaLFlasten, Omran Hussein, after Foreseeing the Arab Revolutions, Foresees the Moment When Mahdi Will Appear, 22.08.2011, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v4SUOOI5418, 25.12.2020.

[11] Amini, I., Al-Imam al-Mahdi, The Just Leader of Humanity…. *op. cit*., https://www.al-islam.org/al-imam-al-mahdi-just-leader-humanity-ayatullah-ibrahim-amini/chapter-2-pseudo-mahdis, 25.12.2020.

[12] Cook, D., Studies in Muslim Apocalyptic, Darwin Press, Princeton, 2002, pp. 232-236.

[13] The Truth-Seeker, Alsheikh Muhammad Alarifi, The Appearance of Mahdi Series, First Part, 24 September 2014. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XEQa5SoDLF8, 26.12.2020.

[14] Alwatan Channel, Faith Program, Mansour Al-Hassani, Nabil Al-Awadi, Promised Mahdi and the False - pseudo Messiah and the Descent of Isa Jesus, Son of Mary, 16 March 2014. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dW1gmfs-MKk, 26.12.2020.

[15] *Op. cit*.

[16] *Op. cit*.

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Under the influence of authoritative Sunni preachers and faqihs, a modern rearrangement of priorities is reproduced in modern messianic Shiite perceptions. It is about the gradual surrender of As Safiani as the main prototype of evil, at the expense of Dajala, who is practically absent in traditional Shiite scriptures, although nowadays the figure is gaining more and more popularity in modern Shiite apocalyptic materials. In medieval Shiite texts, the figure of Mahdi is much more closely associated with his opponent, As Safiani. However, modern Shiite radicals are already shifting their focus to Dajala. In fact, stories about him become tools for demonizing the West as a whole, which is routinely portrayed as the incarnation of the Antichrist. In addition, Dajala himself came very close to the notion of the Jews. In fact, the development of such views has become the basis of strong anti-Israel attacks. Only years ago, this strong anti-Semitism and the approach to the destruction of the state of Israel, respectively, did not exist. Historically, it has not been in the interest of the Shiite religious leadership or al-Hauz al-Ilmiya for the Shiite religious-academic institution to promote apocalyptic expectations (see Chukov, 2021).

In the recent past, religious authorities have tried to govern "popular" Mahdism by focusing and directing messianic expectations to the more distant future rather than the immediate one. A strong and influential religious leadership could achieve this, as traditionally the return of Mahdi has never been associated with any real dates. Speculation about the Mahdi's return, when it arose, quickly shifted from al-Hauz al-Ilmiya, the Shiite religious-academic institution, to more pragmatic issues, including personal spiritual renewal or the betterment of society. However, when, to some extent, the authority of Shiite clerics eroded, popular messianic longings began to reappear. This happened at the beginning of the Baha'i movement in the 1940s.

We are currently witnessing a strong renaissance of apocalyptic beliefs in the Shiite world. The main focus is the state of Israel, not the followers of Judaism. Messianism began to "slip" out of the control of religious institutions and became a lever of influence for preachers who were not directly dependent on the state. Logically, the latter often interpret current events through the prism of socially formed populist messianism. In this way, processes known to some extent in Sunnism and Evangelism take place in Ja'farite messianism. The lowlands do not recognize the views offered by state institutions and create their own, but much more radical and elementary scenarios. These changes have important implications for Shiite social and political life. Gradually, Imamate messianism transformed from anti-Semitic to anti-Israel. The threat to the universal, social and just state of Mahdi is not the Jews as such, but their statist subject – the state of Israel. The latter is part of Dajala, the sum of all external hostile factors. It is even his vanguard, as it is located in the Middle East and in this capacity is the bearer of the direct threat against the Mahdist state.

One of the most active propagandists of the Mahdist idea in the world is the former Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad (2005-2013). His supporters go so far as to claim that he is the world representative of Mahdi. He left letters to the Messiah in the mosque in the holy city of Jamrakan, ordered the streets of Tehran to be cleared quickly because of the impending appearance of the Messiah. According to the former president of the Islamic Republic, ISIL appeared to stop the appearance of Mahdi. The terrorist organization adopted this name (you give it as an abbreviation in Arabic) because it sounded close to that of the Shiites (neck in Arabic). Ahmadinejad notes: "My government has followed in the footsteps of Imam Mahdi's world power."[17] During his first term, the former president predicted that "the expected Messiah will appear in four years."

Mahmoud Ahmadinejad has repeatedly stated: "The Mahdi is the one who runs the country." It even goes so far as to claim that "Hugo Chavez is one of the supporters of Imam Mahdi." He also began to talk about his meeting with the Messiah. Sheikh Al Misbah al Yazdi, a

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[17] Fadil, S., Hal Takhala al Imam al Mahdi an Ahmadi Nadjad, Jamahir Hezbollah? 12/27/2020.

Shiite jurist-theologian, whom Ahmadinejad takes as his margin, a source of religious norms, i.e., of fatwas, notes: "We live in a time of the reappearance of Imam Mahdi, who elected Ahmadinejad president." The same was declared by one of the most famous ulema in Kom, the Great Ayatollah Mohammed Bahjat al-Fomni (1915-2009). The latter added in this connection: "The elderly of our time will witness the appearance of Imam Mahdi", without specifying the exact date.[18]

Ahmadinejad's followers formed the Khujaji movement, which promoted the Mahdi's global government. They are making a documentary called The Emergence. It discusses the role of Ahmadinejad in preparing the Middle East for the coming of the Messiah. Books promoting the occult of the Messiah are being distributed in the book market in Lebanon, Iraq and Iran. A whole section of research is being created, which we can figuratively call "Mahdology". Among the leading titles is Abdel Mohammed Hassan's "Approach the Appearance", which states the exact date of the appearance of the Messiah, namely January 19, 2008. Similar "fundamental" studies are "The Appearance of Imam Mahdi, Peace be upon him, in 2015 according to the Qur'anic Jaber al-Balushi's "Prediction", Faris Faqih's "Now You Are in the Age of Emergence", Majid al-Mahdi's "War of the Americans against the Mahdi, Peace be upon him", Shadi Faqih's "Ahmadinejad and the Future World Revolution", "Prepare, the appearance is recent" by Hussein al-Hijazi and "The Emergence" by Abdul Mohammed Hassan of Iraq.

It is as if all these authors have succeeded in making serious contributions to the scientific field, the author of which in Iran, as we have already noted, is considered to be Ali Shariati, namely the sociology of religion. They develop a special imaginary case – a socio-psychological concept of waiting. It is directly related to the Mahdi doctrine and can be considered in three planes:

- Cognitive impact. This means forming a culture and a mass consciousness of waiting, in order for society to take the right position towards Mahdism and the emergence of the Messiah, respectively;

- The emotional impact. This means building mental resilience and fighting against the factors that erode the perseverance in the faith of the promises of the Messiah;

- The behavioral effect. This means the development and implementation of Sharia law governing Islamic daily behavior at the level of the individual, group and society.[19]

Undoubtedly, the merits of Mahmoud Ahmedinejad are enormous for the growth of Mahdology. At the same time, it is unclear whether this is his true faith in the Mahdist idea or whether it is a matter of well-calculated and well-constructed political ambitions. His constant statements about the appearance of the Mahdi turned against him the influential stratum of senior Shiite clerics. The latter, including Spiritual Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, are beginning to suspect that Ahmedinejad is trying to attack the institutionalized post-Islamic political system of Wilat al-Faqih, the guardianship of the theologian. According to its principles, the Spiritual Leader leads the state of substitution, ie. in the absence of the expected Messiah. When the latter appears, the Spiritual Leader must cede power to him (see Chukov, 2021).

Mahmoud Ahmadinejad has the greatest credit for separating anti-Semitism from anti-Israelism as the basis of Mahdist doctrine. He constantly emphasizes the immanence of the

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[18] Biography of the Great Ayatollah Sirat Ayatollah al-Azma Ash Sheikh Mohammed Taki Bahjet / Kadasa Sirahu /, Sheikh Mohammed Taki Bahyat, May His Life Be Enlightened, Wikalat al Anba Brata, 15.05.2009, http://burathanews.com/arabic/reports/66010, 1.01.2021.

[19] As Sade, M., Dirasa an taukit zahur al imam al mahdi al montazar, Study of the time of the appearance of the expected messiah, Markaz at dirasat al mokhasasa lil imam al mahdi, https://www.m-mahdi.com/main/articles-1018, 12/29/2020.

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removal of the state of Israel from the face of the earth. Such aggressive statements are usually made by Iranian leaders on the day of Jerusalem, the last Friday of Ramadan. For example, in a speech at the University of Tehran on 8 August 2012, the former president stated that "Israel is a tumor education that will soon be eliminated."[20] In fact, Ahmadinejad has repeatedly stated that the erasure of Israel is one of the hallmarks of the emergence of the Messiah.[21]

Similar threatening speeches were made on the Day of Jerusalem by the Spiritual Leader of the Islamic Republic, who even set a date for the destruction of the Jewish state. In his introduction, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei always includes the following temporal explanation: "… in forty days Israel will be destroyed. "On 11 March 2021, Iranian Defense Minister Amir Khatami declared that if Israel took a preemptive strike against Iran, the Islamic Republic would wipe out Tel Aviv and Haifa." Such a threat is permanent, especially against the background of the unprecedented attack at the same time by ten drones shot down by Yemeni Hutus rebels against various targets in Saudi Arabia. In this case, however, the Minister of Defense says that this time things are serious, as the orders were given personally by the Spiritual Leader Ali Khamenei.[22]

Tehran's anti-Israelism has grown especially since the conclusion in late 2020 of the Abrahamic treaties between the Jewish state and four Arab states, namely the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Bahrain, Morocco and Sudan. Such a move is seen as a siege of the Islamic Revolution in its battle against Israel. In this regard, Tehran is particularly sensitive to the expansion of the network of Israeli embassies in Arab and Islamic countries. For example, the statement of the assistant to the Speaker of the Iranian Parliament Hussein Abdel Lahan that "the UAE and Bahrain will have internal problems due to the establishment of a peace treaty with Israel" is a direct threat to interference in their internal affairs.[23] Especially in the second country, there is a huge Shiite community (it is even a majority in relation to the ruling Sunni minority) that is often manipulated by mullahs in Iran.

Pope Francis' visit to Iraq in March 2021 revealed a similar attitude towards neighboring Iraq. It has acquired a historical character, as it is the first in this Arab country. The fact that more than 10,000 media outlets around the world have covered it speaks volumes about its unprecedented nature. On 6 March 2021, the head of the Roman Catholic Church led the common prayer in the birthplace of the prophet Abraham, the historic city of Ur.

Even more interesting was the meeting with Iraq's top Shiite Marj'a, Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani. The statements made by the office of the Iraqi cleric and the Vatican were in line with the spirit of understanding, tolerance in rejecting war, terrorism and violence. Apparently, this corresponded perfectly to the authority of the two spiritual leaders. Beneath the surface, however, there were certain discrepancies between the two interlocutors, whose conversation lasted about forty minutes. This is clear from comments in Tehran and pro-Iranian Middle Eastern publications. Differences in thinking have also emerged between al-Sistani and Iraqi Prime Minister Mustafa Kazimi. The latter declared on 6 March a "National Day for Tolerance and Coexistence". Najaf, home to Iraq's most authoritative religious school and Ali al-Sistani have not commented on the act.

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[20] Nadzhad yuakadu anna izrail „uoram sartani sayazilu" (Najad confirms that Israel is a tumor education "that will be eliminated"), AFP, 18.08.2012, https://www.france24.com/ar/20120818-%D9%, 30.12.2020.

[21] Abdel Hamid, A., Ama karib satushhadun zual izrail min uzhud (You will soon witness the demise of Israel), Hess Press, 13.04.2009, https://www.hespress.com/%D8%, 30.12.2020.

[22] Iran Piles on Aggression, Emboldened by US-Saudi-Israeli Restraint, Debka, https://www.debka.com/iran-piles-on-aggression-emboldened-by-us-saudi-israel-restraint/, 10.03.2021.

[23] Tawakaa irani bi mashakil dakhilia fi daulatein arabian bi sabab at tatbia (Iran's expectation of internal problems of two Arab states because of peace treaties with Israel), Arab 21, https://arabi21.com/story/1342472/%D8%AA%D9, 10.03.2021.

Iraqi political circles shared aloud what the Iraqi prime minister had set as a political plan following the Holy Father's visit. The Iran-Iraq-Saudi Arabia race has always defined the profile of the leadership status quo in an important region such as the Persian Gulf. It is not just about the huge oil deposits, but also about the religious significance in the Islamic (Sunni and Shiite) world. After the elimination of dictator Saddam Hussein, the real Iraq fell into weightlessness. The competition has shifted between Shiite Tehran and Sunni Saudi Arabia. Following Pope Francis' visit, the request to rehabilitate Iraq as a regional power is more than obvious. A professor at Baghdad University said that if external and international factors helped, Iraq could regain its regional role in order to stabilize the region. He emphasized the fact that Pope Francis would not be able to make such a visit, either in Iran or in Saudi Arabia. He presents them as the poles of a religious, internal confessional dispute, as opposed to a moderate and tolerant Iraq.

Tehran was greatly irritated by the thesis, which is increasingly prevalent in the Arab media and political space. It is about the claim that through the Francis-as-Sistani meeting, the West has chosen Najaf's moderate school as a legitimate interlocutor and partner in the dialogue with the Shiites. Moreover, Najaf's moderate religious (and political, respectively) ideas are legitimate for Shiites, not those proposed by Kom. Interestingly, the "relevant" circles in the Islamic Republic noted that "similar speculations" behind attacks on Iran were expected.

The course of the preparations and the very realization of Pope Francis' visit to Iraq speaks of a corresponding reaction in Iran as well. It is likely that Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani, who in 2004 issued a single fatwa for Iraqis to vote for the first time in a US presence in Iraq (while other religious leaders called for a boycott), made a compromise. Rather, he was subjected to strong Iranian pressure to avoid outright communist results from the Holy Father's visit (see Chukov, 2019).

Ali as Sistani was born in 1930 in Mashhad, Iran. He spent his childhood in the provinces of Sistan and Baluchistan, where his family came from and which is on the Pakistani border. Interestingly, in this administrative unit, the Sistans are a minority who speak Persian and profess Shiite Islam. The Baluchis are the majority and have their own language, but they are Sunnis. This to some extent affects the family of the future Grand Ayatollah. His father, Mohammed Bakr al-Sistani, is also a Shiite cleric, with his own religious school. The latter claims to be of the descent of the third Ja'afarite Imam Hussein ben Ali. The family lives in a specific religious environment. They are a minority in a province which, by its status, is also a minority (see Chukov, 2021).

In 1951, Ali al-Sistani came to study at the school in Najaf and remained there. Only 30 years old, he became a mujtahid, which is a higher legal dogmatic title. Interestingly, in 1993, he, an Iranian, was chosen as the highest source of religious rule-making and Grand Ayatollah of the Shiite majority in Iraq by former dictator Saddam Hussein. This was at the expense of the incredibly popular Iraqi at the time, Ayatollah Mohammad Sadiq al-Sadr, the uncle of the current leading Iraqi politician and cleric, Moqtada al-Sadr.

The preliminary program of Pope Francis' visit includes the signing of a Human Brotherhood Document, modeled on the one signed two years ago between the Holy Father and Sheikh Al-Azhar, Sunni Ahmed Tayeb. At the last moment, this symbolic gesture falls away. Al Sistani's office added that this happened, but orally, not in writing.

The seven "noes" with which Ace Sistani saturated his position before the Holy Father are impressive. There are both politics and religion in them. "No" to the siege (of Palestine by Israel), "no" to violence, "no" to oppression, "no" to poverty, "no" to restrictions on religious freedom, "no" to lack of social justice, "No" to establish relations with Israel. At the end of this declaration is the outspoken anti-Israel position. It notes: "Many people in the world in many countries suffer from injustice, oppression, poverty, religious and intellectual persecution, from

the suppression of fundamental freedoms, from a lack of social justice, especially during wars, from acts of violence, from economic siege and resettlement of many peoples in our region, especially the Palestinian people in the occupied territories" (see Chukov, 2019).

The course of the preparations and the very realization of Pope Francis' visit to Iraq speaks of a corresponding reaction in Iran as well. It is likely that Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani, who in 2004 issued a single fatwa for Iraqis to vote for the first time in a US presence in Iraq (while other religious leaders called for a boycott), made a compromise. Rather, he was subjected to strong Iranian pressure to avoid outright communist results from the Holy Father's visit.

In this light, it is necessary to add that Ali al-Sistani is not a supporter of the governor theory of al-Wilayat al-Faqih al-Mutlaq, the absolute guardianship of the theologian, created as a variant of Ja'afarite "constitutionalism" by Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini. However, the Iraqi Iranian is a supporter of another version of the theory, namely Wilayat al-Faqih al-Hasa, especially the trusteeship of the theologian. It is far from the most radical denial of Iranian governing clerical radicalism.[24]

It is more than obvious that there is Iranian pressure to thwart a peace treaty between Israel and the Iraqi state. The Baghdad presidency issued a statement saying that media statements attributed to Prime Minister Mustafa al-Kazimi that a peace treaty with Israel would be signed if agreed with the Palestinians were untrue.[25]

At the same time, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's 2008 meeting in New York with twelve rabbis from the Neturei Karta religious group is symptomatic.[26] These are Jewish clerics from the Haredite Alliance for Israel, who deny the creation of the state of Israel before the appearance of their Messiah.[27] In Iranian political and religious doctrine, "good Jews" are those who ignore the state that their fellow believers have created in the "Promised Land."

4. Conclusion

Along with purely utopian constructs, one can sense the ambitions to build a powerful, theocratic-authoritarian state. It outlines the basic outlines, and the specific codified laws will be the result of the benevolence of the leader. Behind the benevolent understanding of universal and social "justice" is the relentless imposition of the Islamic religion, even on followers of monotheism (see, Chukov, 2019, 2021).

However, as imaginary as the touches of the future state of Mahdi may sound, apparently in the minds of its designers there is a profile of a statist construct, which suggests knowledge of the genesis and functioning of a state-building process.

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[24] For more information, see: Ali as Sistani gave as much as he could or as much as he was allowed, https://www.facebook.com/foreigninsider, 8.03.2021.

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The Question of Being: Greece, India and China

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Abstract

One of the main features of the European perception of reality is that it is understood in terms of Parmenides' wondering that "there is Being". This concept is crucial for the Western tradition. In Western thought, the issue of Being is presented in pairs with two possible opposites: becoming and non-being. In this article, the concept of Being as it is presented in the Ancient Greek thought will be presented in comparison with similar concepts in Indian and Chinese traditions. The main aim of the paper is to outline the peculiarities and importance of each tradition.

Keywords: Greek version, Indian version, Chinese version.

1. Introduction

One of the main features of the European perception of reality is that it is understood in terms of Parmenides' wondering that "there is Being". Is this concept peculiar for the Western understanding? What is the place of the concept of "being" in Eastern traditions?

Some authors explicitly state that the problem of Being is "one which is never sensed or glimpsed in non-Western traditions" (Aubenque, 1991: 14, cit. in O'Leary, 2007: 173). Others like Halbfass, insist that "being is a universal concern, not a distinctively Western one" (see O'Leary, 2007: 170).

In Western thought, the question of being is connected with two possible opposites: becoming and non-being. Here, the main peculiarities of understanding of being and its opposites in Greek. Indian and Chinese thought will be discussed.

2. The Greek version

Parmenides gave the first explicit formulae of the concept of being. He described *being* as single, homogenous, boundless, eternal, unchangeable and immovable.

> ... *what is, is uncreated and indestructible, alone, complete,*
>
> *immovable and without end. Nor was it ever, nor will it be; for*
>
> *now it is, all at once, a continuous one*
>
> (Parmenides, On Nature, VIII, English translation: John Burnet, 1892)

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The word which Parmenides used literally can be translated as "is-ness" or "the IS". This "is" is the totality of everything that exists. It is the eternal present that has neither past nor future. Nothing could be added to this is-ness, nothing could be removed from it.

Explaining the linguistic basis of its meaning Charles Khan distinguishes two characteristics (1978: 34-35):

> "In Indo-European languages this "is" or "the verb "be" as copula... is characterised by two features which are essential for the philosophical development. The first I call the *locative*, the second the *durative* aspect. By the locative feature, I mean the fact that the verb serves for predication in general... but specifically for statements of place... for Greek common sense a thing cannot really *be* unless it is somewhere...

> The second feature of the Indo-European copula, the durative aspect, is even more decisive for the Greek view of *being*. This is the aspect that contrast "be" with "become", *eimi* with *gignomai* as copula verb (and *as* with bhū in Sanskrit)... an opposition between *stative* and *mutative*, or *static* and *kinetic*. There is... an essential connection in Indo-European between the idea of being and idea of stability or remaining in the same state."

Although this is-ness is the only thing we have, it is not so easy to grasp it. Therefore, Parmenides splits our vision of reality into two paths: the path of the truth that is followed and achieved by contemplation, and the false path of opinion that is based on the invalid data of the senses. The path of the truth leads to the conclusion that there cannot be anything but being, the "is-ing". All visible plurality and changeability are but results of false opinion. They have no ontological validity:

> *... all these things are but the names which mortals*

> *have given, believing them, to be true* (Parmenides, On Nature, VIII, 35).

The vision of multiplicity and change is an illusion:

> "*To this One so many names will be assigned*

> *as many are the things that mortals proposed, believing that they were true,*

> *that they were born and perish, that they exist and do not exist,*

> *that they changed the place and their bright colour*" (8, 38-41)

From this splitting of the ways of knowledge follow some conclusions that are very important for Western thought. First, in terms of ontology, it gives ontological validity and importance only to that which *is*, to the being, and more or less leaves the issue of non-being out of the scope of philosophical consideration. Second, in terms of epistemology, it opposes two kinds of obtaining knowledge – via senses and via reasoning – preferring the latter one. Third, it combines both conclusions into an assertion that "*is the same thing that can be thought and that can be*" (Parmenides, III).

The identity between thought and being is essential for the accent that the consequent Western thought puts on the intelligible or rationally achievable aspect of reality.

In Eastern thought, we can also see a split between visible and true reality. The true reality, however, is neither rationally realised nor sensually perceived but is achievable through an "intuition" or "inner sense" that belongs neither to senses nor to rationality. Even though in the Parmenides poem, a goddess reveals the truth to the author while he is in a special state of inspiration, Parmenides insists on the importance of the reasoning.

Is, however, being an ideal, abstract or spiritual reality?

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"The historical background against which Parmenides did his thinking would tend to limit it to the corporeal and the real. The Ionian as well as the Pythagorean thought which Parmenides could be expected to have absorbed as he grew up could hardly have directed his attention to anything beyond the visible and extended world. It was that world that his predecessors had been striving to understand and explain. It is that world that Parmenides expressly endeavours to understand and explain in the final section of his poem. He offers, it is true, an unexpected and utterly original explanation of it. But nothing else in the entire poem seems indicated as the object of his study. In the setting in which Parmenides thought and wrote, anything other than the visible and tangible universe would seem incongruous as a subject for philosophising. In the composition of the poem, moreover, the poem envisages Parmenides as located in a world of change and highly differentiated objects, and using them as a means to rise to light. The starting point of the philosophical journey seems in this way to be represented as a world of plurality and change, a world already known in the opinions of mortals but now to be explained from the viewpoint of truth" (Owens, 1978: 20).

So, in this approach, there is no ontological split, only epistemological discrimination.

In Ancient Greek philosophy, the concept of being has two counterparts. One of them is "non-being". It is unthinkable and impossible. It is revealed as its negative opposite that has no ontological validity and meaning in itself and functions only in order to outline the characteristics of being.

The other counterpart is the concept of "becoming". According to Parmenides, change is mere appearance, an illusion. Heraclitus, however, considered it as the real nature of the world and presented the reality as all-embracing permanent transformation:

> "Heraclitus says, you know, that all things move and nothing remains still, and he
> likens the universe to the current of a river, saying that you cannot step twice into
> the same stream" (Plato, *Cratylus*, 402 a).

"Those on the other hand, who say ὠσία would agree, well enough with Heraclitus that all things move and nothing remains still. So, they would say the cause and ruler of things was the pushing power (ὠθοῦν), wherefore it had been rightly named ὠσία" (Plato, *Cratylus*, 401 d).

"I will tell you and it is not a bad description, either, that nothing is one and invariable, and you could not rightly ascribe any quality whatsoever to anything, but if you call it large it will also appear to be small, and light if you call it heavy, and everything else in the same way, since nothing whatever is one, either a particular thing or of a particular quality; but it is out of movement and motion and mixture with one another that all those things become which we wrongly say "are" – wrongly, because nothing ever is, but is always becoming" (Plato, *Theaetetus*, 152 d).

"… the doctrine of Homer and Heraclitus and all their followers—that all things are in motion, like streams" (Plato, Theaetetus, 160 d).

The concept of becoming has a linguistic foundation as well:

"In part, being was linguistically birthed. One of its progenitors was a peculiar characteristic of the ancient language known as Indo-European. This language sports a root word es- (in English, the verb "to be") that functions in a variety of ways, including as a verb of predication (e.g., "I am male"), location (e.g., "I am here") and existence ("I am"). That the root word es-, and with it, the Greek word *einai*, is already weighted in the direction of being is evident in the fact that the verb functions as a stative copula. This means that *einai* ("to be") can be conjugated in the durative tenses – the present and the imperfect – but not in the punctiliar or non-durative aorist tense. Thereby, it forms a linguistic contrast to the mutative copula ("to

become") with its predisposition toward the alternative ontological idea of Becoming" (Grenz, 2005: 15-16).

Therefore, although being and becoming are nouns, they both derived from verbs, and they both carry the connotation of dynamism. One is the dynamism of the state, of the resting in itself stability. The other is the dynamism of the process, of moving changeability. Are they mutually exclusive? Western thought offers many examples of attempts to reconcile them, one of the most important belonging to Aristotle. Nevertheless, Western thought opposes being and becoming and being and non-being preferring being on the other part of the opposition.

3. The Indian version

In Ancient Indian thought there is a concept that usually is translated as "being". This concept could be found in one of the most important Vedic hymns, the Hymn of creation, which describes the most primordial state of the universe:

नासदासीन नो सदासीत तदानीं नासीद

nāsadāsīn no sadāsīt tadānīṃ nāsīd

This initial statement of pre-beginning has many translations:

"Then was not non-existent nor existent; Nor aught nor naught existed; The non-existent was not, the existent was no; Then was not non-existent nor existent; Non-being then existed not nor being; Then even nothingness was not, nor existence; There was neither non-existence nor existence then; The non-existent did not exist, nor did the existent exist at that time" (see Stenudd, 2014). "Neither what-is-not was nor what-is was then" or... "There was not what-is-not, and there was not what-is, then" (Pacitti, 1991).

The Sanskrit terms that are used here are *sat* and its negation, *asat*. Like the term "being" the term "sat" is a derivative form of the copula "to be". The ancient Greek term ἐόντος (ὄντος) or being is a present active participle of the verb εἰμί. This verb derived from the proto-Indo-European verb *esmi*. The Sanskrit term *sat* is also a present active participle of the verb *asmi* that has the same roots.

There is, however, a clear difference between the concept of being and of the concept of *sat*. While in Parmenides's vision, the being is *the one*, that one that is the only existing, in Indian thought "sat" is an aspect of *That one* (Tad Ekam) that precedes both *sat* and its opposition *asat*. Terms of existence are not applicable to That one. In such a way, the Parmenides's *one* is simultaneously inclusive and exclusive. It includes everything that is and cannot include anything that is not, neither in the past, i.e., not yet existing, nor in the future – not still existing. The opposition of "is" is impossible. It is the totality of everything, and there is nothing but it. Therefore, it is, it is unchangeable, and it is in the everlasting moment of the present. *That one* of the Indian thoughts also includes everything that will unfold from it, but this is an equal inclusion of both *sat* and *asat*. The predicate of existence and therefore, for time and space cannot be applied to *that one*. It precedes time and space, existence and non-existence:

There was neither existence nor non-existence then.

There was neither sky nor heaven beyond it.

What covered it and where? What sheltered?

Was there an abyss of water?

There was neither death nor immortality.

There was nothing telling night from day.

The One breathed breathless autonomously.

There was nothing else.

There was darkness concealed in darkness.

All was water without shape.

The One enclosed in nothing

Emerged by the power of heat.

First to arise was desire,

The primal seed of mind.

Wise poets searching their hearts

Found the bond between existence and non-existence.

(Rig Veda, 10:129)

"The narrative begins "at that time" (tadnitm) when none of the divisions that characterize the world existed. What there was cannot be described as either *asat* "non-existent" nor as *sat* "existent". In many translations, *asat* and *sat* are taken as abstract nouns: "non-being" and "be-ing" or "non-existence" and "existence." But formally and firstly they are adjectival, and without any contrary signal in the text or the context, that is how the hymn's earliest audience would likely have understood them. Indeed, this is the interpretation of the oldest commentary on this hymn, SB 10.5.3.1: neva vd iddm dgre 'sad asln neva sad asit "In the beginning, this (world) was in no way non-existent, and it was in no way existent" (Brereton, 1999: 250).

That One (Tad Ekam), the One Reality (Ekam Sat) is the unnamed primordial source of everything. It is pre-beginning, but it is not some cosmological state that is overcome through the unfolding into plurality. As the Parmenides' being, it is the deepest and the most genuine essence of the Universe. In terms of later tradition developed on the base of Vedic hymns, it is equal to the state of turiya, unnamed oneness, the state of pure consciousness where subject and object, Brahman and Atman coincide.

In Hindu philosophy, *That one* has different names and interpretations. In a cosmic or objective sense, it is Brahman, the Ultimate Reality of the Universe. In the personal or subjective sense, it is Atman, the true inner self. As the Being of Parmenides, both Brahman and Atman are permanent, unchangeable, and true. Moreover, like the term *Being* although nouns they derived from verbs, and although they denote the unchanging reality, they have a connotation of dynamic. So, the term Brahman is a neuter noun deriving from the verb *bṛh* "to swell, expand, grow, and enlarge". The term Atman derived from the verb "etmen "breath" (a root found in Sanskrit and Germanic; source also of Old English æðm, Dutch adem, Old High German atum "breath," Old English eþian, Dutch ademen "to breathe").[1]

Close to the term Brahman is the term Brahma. While however, Brahman is a metaphysical concept, a designation for the un-personified deepest essence of the Universe, Brahma is a name of a personified god, the first one in the Hindu trinity. According to Hinduism "*The gods came later*" with the unfolding of the world. The Hindu trinity denotes the three main states of every unfolding – beginning, duration and end. Brahma is connected with the beginning, the first stage of the unfolding.

What is the connection between the concept of Brahman and being? Brahman is a concept that "sums up the Hindu view of nature of ultimate reality" "*Brahman* is the cosmic principle of existence, the ultimate unifying and integrating principle of the universe" (Chaudhuri,

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[1] https://www.etymonline.com/word/atman.

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1954: 47). As in Greek thought, it is also one, "That One", Tad Ekam, from the early Vedic hymns that is beyond time and space and even precedes gods. Brahman is "pure infinite being", but unlike the being in the Greek thought this is "not in the sense of an abstract concept common to different forms of existence but in the sense of the indeterminable creative source of all existence" (*Ibid.*, 48-49). According to Upanishads, Brahman is permanent, lasting, invariable, and eternal. It is the unchangeable essence of everything. All these characteristics are close to the Eleatics vision of being as homogenous, eternal, unchangeable and immovable.

Brahman is defined as "*sat*": existing and true. Its affirmative denotation is "Sat-Chit-Ananda", i.e., it has characteristics of existence, consciousness and bliss. Its existence, however, is different from the existence of the world of change and multiplicity. Therefore, in Hinduism beside the term "sat" there is a term "bhava" which denotes the existence of the world of multiplicity and may be connected with the idea of becoming:

"... the term *sat* as used in Advaita Vedanta is a genuine verbal and conceptual equivalent of 'being'. The word itself is the present participle of the root *as*, to be. There is another root, *bhu*, with the same meaning, which also yields a variety of nouns and participles, none of which, however, can be translated *Being* with a capital B, as befits the need of ontology. *Bhuta* at most means *a being*; and *bhava* means *becoming* or *coming to be* or, even, *the way something is*" (Arapura, 1978: 111)

Another way to distinguish the different kinds of being is distinguishing of two kinds of Brahman. Saguna Brahman is the definable Brahman, Brahman with qualities that can be described. Namely, this kind of Brahman is defined as Sat-Chit-Ananda. This positive description, however, is interpreted as denoting the beginning of our approach to the Ultimate reality. When we go deeper, we realise that the being, consciousness and bliss of this Reality are of a different kind than the characteristics of the ordinary world. Therefore, Hinduism speaks about Nirguna Brahman, i.e., Brahman without qualities or rather, the undefinable Brahman. This means that Brahman could not be grasped within the words coined to describe the visible reality. This Nirguna Brahman is not not-existing. This double negation is of course affirmation but it is a complex affirmation, which implies that there are levels of *sat*, *asat* and their connections. In its essence, Brahman is "beyond the dualities of... existence and non-existence" (Chaudhuri, 1954: 47). Therefore, in the affirmative definition it is "*satyasya satyam*": "The Real of the Real", "The Truth of the Truth" while in the negative definition it is "not non-existing". These different forms of definition express two aspects of the One and of our approaches to it.

So, Hinduism has a notion of *sat* and *asat* that resembles the Greek notion of being and non-being. When the Ultimate reality is presented in its affirmative aspect for us it is denoted as "sat" and in this case the relation between *sat* and *asat* has much in common with the Parmenides assertion about being and non-being:

The unreal (asat) can never come into existence, and the real (sat) can never cease to be (Bhagavadgita, 2: 16, tr. Swami Tapasyananda)

In its essence, however, the Ultimate reality could not be described with either of these poles, it precedes all opposites.

It is challenging to outline a term describing the notion of "becoming" in this thought. There are terms, describing the transformation of *That one* into the multiplicity of visible world but these terms usually refer to illusion of manifestation and could not be applied for the *suchness* of reality as it is in Heraclites vision.

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4. The Chinese version

In Chinese thought there are also two concepts that usually are translated as *being* and *non-being*. These are *wu*, 無, and *you*, 有. As the Bulgarian Sinologist Teodora Koutzarova outlines, the philosophical category *wu* means absence while the meaning of *you* is presence (Koutzarova, 2019: 63). Is it correct to translate them as "being" and "non-being"?

It is remarkable that in Western thought, the order gives the first place to the "being", presuming that it is the more important concept. In Chinese thought, the first place is given to *wu*, which is supposed to correspond to non-being. What are the differences between these pairs of concepts: *being and non-being* and *wu and you*?

(1) The concepts of *being* and *non-being* in Indo-European languages derived from the verb "to be" and are therefore connected with the issue of existence, while the Chinese terms *wu*, 無, and *you*, 有, mean "to have" or "to have not" and therefore "refer to the area of possessing not to the area of being" (Kobzev, 1994).

The verbs *wu*, 無, and *you*, 有, however, have an ontological implication as well, meaning both "to have"/ "to have not" and "there is"/ "there is not". In Chinese, there is a different couple of words meaning the positive and the negative aspects of the verb "to be". These are *shih*, 是, and *fei*, 非. The same is the case in some Indo-European languages as well. In Bulgarian, for example, beside the verb "to be", there is another couple of verbs: "има" / "няма" that means both that something possesses/does not possess something or that there is/there is not something. Interesting is the case of the Russian language where the archaic form of the verb "to be" is currently used solely to denote possession. It is important to note that when such verbs are used with ontological meaning, they refer predominantly to the available being, to that which can be put within the frames of space and time. Usually, some spatial and/or temporal terms should be used to denote this kind of existence or non-existence:

Somewhere or sometime there is (was) something.

In such a way, the spatial and temporal limits are explicated.

Therefore, in their ontological aspect *wu*, 無, and *you*, 有, refer to that kind of existence which is available to the senses rather than to the mental abstractions.

(2) Being and non-being are nouns, although derived from verbs, while *wu*, 無, and *you*, 有, are predominantly verbs.

At least two conclusions follow from these differences. The first one is connected with the differences between the concrete and the abstract perceiving of existence. As Étienne Gilson puts it, "The relation of [the verb] "to be" to [the noun] "being" is not a reciprocal one. "Being" is conceivable, "to be" is not. We cannot possibly conceive an "is" except as belonging to something that is, or exists. But the reverse is not true. Being is quite conceivable apart from actual existence…" (Gilson, 1952: 2).

The second conclusion refers to the inherent connotation of verbs and nouns. In Greek and Latin languages, the nouns being and non-being were coined from the verb for existence "to be". This increasingly consolidates the understanding of reality as a stable and unchangeable entity while the Chinese terms *wu*, 無, and *you*, 有, emphasise the vision of its dynamic nature.

(3) The two pairs represent two different viewpoints, two different approaches to reality – from the position of the subject (in the case of being and non-being) and from the position of the object (in the case of *wu*, 無, and *you*, 有,).

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This difference can be revealed from the literal meaning of the sentences with the verbs *wu,* 無 and *you,* 有:

天下有龍

There are dragons in the world (literally: The world has dragons)

天下無龍

There are no dragons in the world (literally: The world has no dragons)

In such a way "in Chinese, one approaches existence from something outside… which has, in which there is, the thing in question." (Graham, 1959: 81). Western thought, from the other side, is "grounded in Greek and Latin" and "has generally approached the question from the opposite direction, from the thing which "is" or "exists" (*Ibid.*).

This different perspective – from the position of the object or from the position of the subject – is, in principle, a crucial difference between Far Eastern and Western thought. While the view point of Western thought is from the position of the observer, i.e., from within out, the Far Eastern perspective is inverted: from outward to inward.

This is obvious from the meaning of the verb "to see" in both systems of thought. While in Western languages, its connotation is that the observer, the subject, observes the object, in the Chinese language its meaning is rather that the object reveals itself, is shown to the observer. Regarding the problem of being "the object of *you* (有) is the subject of "is" (Graham, 1959: 81). This different perspective leads to different possibilities for rational conclusions. In one case, the role of the subject, of the observer and his/her thoughts and imagination is greater. This gives a possibility to separate the subject and the visible object and to enter the dimension of pure abstraction. In the other case, the role of the observed object is more significant, and it must be available for the senses. Therefore, "in Indo-European Languages a thing simply *is*, without implying anything outside it and it is the most abstract entities that the Platonic tradition most willingly credits with being. In Chinese, on the other hand, one approaches the thing from outside, from the world which "has" it, in which "there is" it. From this point of view, the more concrete a thing is, the more plainly the world has it" (Graham, 1959: 98).

Therefore, one of the differences between being and non-being, on the one side, and *wu,* 無, and *you,* 有, on the other side, is a difference between the more abstract and more concrete perception of reality.

The specifics of the concepts of *wu,* 無, and *you,* 有, in Chinese thought, can be revealed in the basic text of *Daodejing*. Already in the first chapter of the text, they appear with several corresponding pairs of concepts. These are:

absence – presence

unnameable – nameable

beginning – mother

Universe (Heaven-Earth) – multiplicity

secret (fine, subtle) – limit (limited)

lack of aspirations – aspirations

It should be said that some of these pairs represent different interpretations of the same word combinations. This ambiguity of meanings is a distinctive feature of Daoist texts. In such a way, the "name" ceases to be a restrictive and fixed tool of the dual mind and approaches the requirement for the real naming – speaking beyond speaking.

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In these pairs *wu* corresponds to the first components of the dyads: the absence, unnameable, beginning, subtle, and elusive, while *you* represents the second part: the presence, named, multiplicity, manifestation, thing-ness enclosed within restricted limits.

The French philosopher François Jullien defines *wu* as "harmonising undifferentiation" and *you* as "differentiating actualisation" (Jullien, 2001). According to Chinese thought, the actualisation correlates with differentiation; transformation of potentiality into actuality means an increase of division and differentiation. The state of potentiality corresponds to undifferentiation. A distinctive feature of Chinese thought is that this state is perceived as harmonious. Therefore, Chaos here is not an opposition to the order but to the differentiation and separation. Chaos is not a dis-order but an undifferentiated state that has its own harmonious design. Another distinctive feature revealed in Jullien's translation is that both concepts present not static states, but processes. Thus, *wu* presents the world in its aspect of undifferentiated fusion, of harmonious and self-harmonising unity, i.e., unity in becoming, in genesis. *You* represents the aspect of differentiation, division, and multiplicity within the process of actualisation.

The state of fusion and unity, especially in the Daoist thought, is regarded as more essential than that of division and multiplicity. Therefore, in some cases, *wu* is considered as more primordial than *you*.

天下萬物生於有，有生於無

All things in the world are generated in presence; the presence is generated in absence. (*Daodejing*, 40)

For Daoists, absence or emptiness is very important because it allows the existence and functioning of things. It is so, however, when our approach is from the viewpoint of the differentiated things around us. When we try to understand the depth of the reality, none of the opposites precedes or surpasses the other just like it is in the Indian thought:

此兩者，同出而異名

These both arise simultaneously, but their names are different. (*Daodejing*, 1)

It is this non-duality where the opposites are not contradictory poles but complementary aspects of Oneness that reveals the innermost secret of the Daoist vision.

同謂之玄。玄之又玄，衆妙之門。

Togetherness is an innermost secret.

The innermost and the more innermost -

the door to the multiplicity of mysteries. (*Daodejing*, 1)

Therefore, neither *wu* nor *you*, neither that which is elusive nor that which is fixed within borders have that deep primordial meaning that the concept of being has in Western thought. They and their union are only an approach, a door to the mysteries, still far from the true nature of the world.

We may also compare *wu*, 無, and *you*, 有, with the other pairs of opposites in the Greek thought, namely being and becoming. Neither *wu*, 無, nor *you*, 有, have the connotation of stable, unchanged self-sufficient unity that is associated with the idea of being. Both represent the reality in terms of change and are closer to the idea of *becoming*. As Ames and Hall correctly note „As a parody to Parmenides, who claimed that "only Being is", we might say that for Daoist "only beings are", or taking one step further in underscoring the reality of the process of change itself, "only becomings are" (Ames & Hall, 2003: 13-14).

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5. Conclusion

In all the three main philosophical traditions there are variants of the concept of being. While in the Greek tradition it is outlined as the most important concept that exclude its opposites, in the Indian and Chinese tradition this concept is usually regarded in an undistinguishable pair with its counterpart – nonbeing, and the Ultimate reality is presented as transcending all opposites including the ontological ones. The Greek and Indian concepts have similar linguistic roots while the Chinese ones are the most different. The roots of the Chinese version mirror the overall dynamic nature of Chinese thought, therefore the most important here is not the idea of being but the idea of becoming or – in terms of Chinese thought itself – of change and transformation.

This brief overview of the concepts of being in these different traditions shows that we should be very careful when translating concepts of different cultures that seems similar to our owns but in fact represent different vision of reality.

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Some Remarks on Musical Symbolism of Philo's Hermeneutics in "De Posteritate Caini"

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Abstract

Philo of Alexandria can hardly be called a philosopher, especially given a certain speculative or systematic philosophy. But also, contrary to the prevailing opinion in contemporary research, it could hardly be defined as an exegete, especially given the modern content of the term. At the same time, the impression remains that the most often associated concept with his name – allegory (allegorical interpretation) is usually perceived too narrowly, and not enough attention is paid to the actual literary and hermeneutical skills of the author. Modern translations of his works often do not reflect the symbolism used by Philo at all, as is the case with music imagery in the opening paragraph of *De Posteritate Caini*. The musical theme and symbolism in Philo's work undoubtedly deserve a special and thorough study, which would go far beyond the scope of this article.

Keywords: Philo of Alexandria, allegorical hermeneutics, musical symbolism.

1. Introduction

> "It is a thoroughly philosophical proceeding to show how one and the same name has different shades of meaning" (*Post*. 60, Philo II, 1929: 361).

In the approach to Philo's *De Posteritate Caini*, too often, one simple thing seems to be missed and this seemingly elusive observation too many is that Philo not only interprets Scripture allegorically (symbolically), but also that he allows/requires his reader to interpret symbolically his own "exegetical treatises". The modern reader is often perplexed when he encounters Philo the Exegete, as he usually expects Philo to "explain" a sacred text – bearing the relative character of a hidden, obscure, intended for religious people – in some way, which is presumably clear, logical, revealing what is hidden. This principle corresponds to the rationalism of today's reader, but not to the intention of Philo (Cazeaux, 1989: 1). Also, it should be borne in mind that Philo too often not only interprets the biblical text he quotes, but interprets his own text, of course Cazeaux in this case could argue to what extent Philo's text everywhere is "the result of the exegesis that has been made" (Cazeaux, 1983: 27).

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- Philo's modern translation does not take into account Philo's own language and the musical symbolism used in *Post*. 1 remains invisible.
- The indicated musical imagery on the other hand comes to support the implicit division between seeing and hearing.
- Philo formulated his apophatic theology based on the basic belief that God could not be seen.
- The play with language in Philo is closely related to literary composition and hermeneutics in its own sense.

The musical theme and imagery in Philo's work undoubtedly deserve a special and thorough study, which would go far beyond the scope of this article. As for the language of music and ancient music theory in Philo's work, obviously the two chapters (31-32) of *De Posteritate Caini* would be central, as they are explicitly devoted to music. However, the present attempt is not to explore the musical theme itself, but to present how Philo uses the language and symbolism of music in his hermeneutics, relating it to other ideas and images. He does this not only explicitly as in the two chapters mentioned above, but also implicitly, for example, in the opening paragraph of the treatise. This introductory paragraph, which is particularly important for understanding Philo's allegorical interpretation, in turn has its connections in the tissue of the text and its structure with such key passages as the *Post*. 12-15, 87-88, 103-111 precisely through the symbolic language of music.

In this case, I will be tempted to quote an excerpt from an author, who is far closer to us historically; it would serve on the one hand as a model for a very similar use of musical language and at the same time as an approach to Philo's hermeneutics:

> "The signifying intention is embodied and known by seeking an equivalent in the system of available senses represented by the language I speak and the set of writings and culture of which I am the heir. For this mute vow that is the signifying intention, it is a question of realizing a certain arrangement of the already signifying instruments or of the already speaking significations [...] which arouses in the listener the presentiment of another and new signification and to the reverse to accomplish with him who speaks or who writes the anchoring of the new meaning in the senses already available"[1] (Merleau-Ponty, 2005: 84).

It is also very probable that Philo proceeds from a principle of the age in which he wrote, and which states that a sacred text in particular, not only says, but at the same time hides. Undoubtedly, the reader of Philo – even without paying special attention to modern concepts of language, image, expression, must be more attentive to the "play with language" that Philo demonstrates to him (Cazeaux, 1989: 4).

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[1] "L'intention significative se donne un corps et se connaît elle-même en se sherchant un équivalent dans le system des significations disponibles que représentent la langue que je parle et l'ensemble des écrits et de la culture doesn't je suis l'héritier. Il s'agit, pour ce vœu muet qu'est l'intention significative, de réaliser uncertain arrangement des instruments déjà signifiants ou des significations déjà parlantes [...] qui suscite chez l'auditeur le presentiment d'une signification autre et neuve et inversement accomplisse chez lui qui parle ou qui écrit l'ancrage de la signification inédite dans les significations déjà disponibles" (Merleau-Ponty, 2005: 84).

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2. *Post*. 1 and the need of allegorical interpretation

The problem with *De Posteritate Caini*'s opening paragraph is that the modern reader would find it difficult to feel this "play with language" in the translations. For example, musical symbolism here remains completely hidden. In the presented translation and analysis, an attempt is made to convey the ambiguity and imagery of the language used by Philo, which for the contemporaries of the Hellenistic author in Alexandria were probably obvious. It is this initial paragraph that is, on the one hand, crucial for the substantiation of Philo's allegorical interpretation, and on the other hand, it would be a good illustrative example of the characteristic imagery of the author's text itself, which is difficult to convey in modern translations. Heidegger's words can rightly be quoted here: "Dazu ist nötig, dass unser Denken vor dem Übersetzen erst zu dem übersetzt, was griechisch gesagt ist" (For this it is necessary, that our thinking first translated to what is said in Greek before translating) (Heidegger, 1950: 303).

> "And Cain went out from the face of God, and dwelt in the land of Nod, over against Eden" (*Gen*. 4:16). Now we wonder whether [these things] in the divinely manifested (διερμηνευθείσαις) books of Moses, more figuratively (more melodically, in tone) we should hear/listen (τροπικώτερον ἀκούειν), [because] the immediate image in the words (ἐν τοῖς ὀνόμασι προχείρου φαντασίας) is too out of tune with the real (πολὺ τἀληθοῦς ἀπᾳδούσης)" (*Post*. 1) (cf. the original text in: Philo, 1929: 328).

For comparison, some of the modern translations could be given, paying attention to the two key expressions used by Philo, containing in the original a certain auditory-musical symbolism:

> "Let us here raise the question whether in the books in which Moses acts as God's interpreter *we ought to take his statements figuratively*, since the impression made by the words in their literal sense *is greatly at variance with truth*" (Philo, 1929: 329).

> "Now let us raise the question whether in the books in which Moses acts as God's interpreter *we should take what he says figuratively*, since the impressions derived from a literal interpretation *are considerably in conflict with the truth*" (Williamson, 1989: 176).

The starting point for Philo is the biblical expression "from the face of God". The characteristic feature of the words from the biblical quote in *Genesis* 4:16, which prompts the author to refuse to see himself literally, is that they speak of Cain's distance from God's appearance. When this is conveyed as a departure from the face of God, it seems completely anthropomorphic, and therefore the expression could not be literally true. Here is a case of biblical anthropomorphism that forces Philo to interpret it allegorically. Thus, he puts forward the general principle that no anthropomorphic affirmation of God can be taken literally (cf. Williamson, 1989: 178). Naturally, the question here is why the Scriptures contain similar statements to that in *Gen*. 4:16? Philo answers elsewhere (*Deus*. 54), namely that they were "introduced to the teaching of the multitude (πρὸς τὴν τῶν πολλῶν διδασκαλίαν εἰσάγεται)".

In fact, Philo's reasoning in the passage in question begins with the fact that "Moses acts as a hermeneut of God (ἐν ταῖς διερμηνευθείσαις βίβλοις ὑπὸ Μωυσέως)". In this case, a serious misunderstanding could be caused by modern translations in connection with the concept of *hermeneuein*. Thus, for example, Colson and Whitaker convey in English the corresponding expression as "in the books in which Moses acts as God's interpreter" (Philo II, 1929: 329), in the same way Williamson (Williamson, 1989: 176). Philo hardly refers to Moses as the "interpreter" or "interpreter" of Scripture. From the original, here and elsewhere it is seen that it is unlikely that the concept of *hermeneuein* and its relatives will be understood in the sense of "interpretation", identical with exegesis, but rather of "expression" (cf. Pepin, 1988: 98-99). Philo praises Moses as "king and lawgiver and high priest and prophet" and "hermeneut of the sacred laws" (*Vit. Mos.*

II.3; I.1). He also calls him "the hermeneut of natural (of reality) things (ὁ τῶν τῆς φύσεως ἑρμηνεὺς πραγμάτων)" (*Her.* 213).

Therefore, Philo after quoting the words of Gen. 4:16, then asks whether this statement by Moses should be taken literally or figuratively (τροπικώτερον). The word is often used in passages where the Hellenistic author describes his method of interpreting the biblical text and draws attention to the deeper meaning beneath the literal surface. He finds reason to regard the language of Scripture, in this case, as figurative on the basis that its literal meaning gives the impression that it is very different from the real one (cf. Williamson, 1989: 179). It is necessary to pay attention to the own literal surface of Philo's text, as it contains a certain musical imagery. The first expression mentioned above is conveyed as: "we ought to take his statements figuratively", "we should take what he says figuratively". As can be seen, the phrase τροπικώτερον ἀκούειν is identically conveyed as "perceived figuratively", but nowhere does it hint at the literal meaning of the verb ἀκούειν. It should not be forgotten that he conveys the musical-technical connotations of the expression, as well as of the term τροπικώτερον. The term τροπικώτερον mentioned here is used together with a specific verb ἀκούειν, whose main meaning and its derivatives is "listen, hear" with the corresponding audio-musical connotations transmitted in English with the verbs "hear" and "listen" (LSL: 52-53, 493). Of course, it can be understood as "I know" and even "understand" and "perceive" - as conveyed in modern translations, but still it seems that Philo uses in this case the literal expression "more figurative to hear". The adjective τροπικῶς, in patristic post-Philonian Greek (apparently influenced by Philo), is now commonly used in the sense of "figurative, allegorical, symbolic" (cf. Lampe, 1961: 1413). On the other hand, τροπός in addition to the usual meanings "manner, custom", as is known, is used in the field of oral and written language to denote "manner of expression, form, style, figure, method", but in the field of music there are meaning of "melody, mood, tonality" (LSL, 1996: 1827). It is hardly possible to assume that the author does not play linguistically with the polysemantic content of this term, given this musical meaning. Then the corresponding expression could be conveyed as "more melodic to hear". In support of this assumption is the meaning of the last word of the sentence ἀπᾳδούσης, derived from the verb ἀπᾴδω, which in practice is also a musical term meaning "I do not sing in tone, I am not in tune, I sing falsely" and which is used figuratively in the sense of "I introduce disharmony, deviate, differ; I am inappropriate" (LSL, 1996: 174). Thus, if one wants to "literally" convey the text to Philo, one could safely suggest the following as an example: "we should hear/listen more melodically [because] τῆς ἐν τοῖς ὀνόμασι προχείρου φαντασίας is too out of tune with the real one (τἀληθοῦς)". The last term τἀληθοῦς is not accidentally found here and obviously originates from ἀλήθεια. The Greek word does not just mean truth, but also reality (LSL, 1996: 63-64). In philosophy it is understood as true being in distinction from the worldly phenomena which in the first instance appear as being and takes on more and more the sense of "true and genuine reality" (ThDNT I: 239). The notion of ἀλήθεια can also mean "genuineness", "divine reality", "revelation" (ThDNT I: 254). In the Greek world the question of truth implies that of the reality underlying all appearances as true reality. The understanding of knowledge as that which comprises this ἀλήθεια is shaped accordingly (ThDNT I: 692).

The next expression that deserves attention is τῆς ἐν τοῖς ὀνόμασι προχείρου φαντασίας, which is accordingly translated as: "since the impression made by the words in their literal sense", "since the impressions derived from a literal interpretation". As can be seen here in the original text, there is an ancient Greek word φαντασία (*phantasia* (Latin), fantasy, etc.), which has been widely used in modern languages. The literal meaning of the verbal noun is "appearing, appearance", or "appearance, presentation to consciousness, whether immediate or in memory, whether true or illusory" (LSL, 1996: 1915). It "means that faculty by which these impressions, more than just being inside us, get stamped upon the soul" (Goodenough, 1969: 373). In this case, it is very likely that "presentation" is a better term than "perception" or "impression" for this notion (*Ibid.*). It can also mean the ability to imagine, the creative imagination (the re-

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presentation of appearances or images, primarily derived from sensation), as well as the use of figurative language in literature (LSL, 1996: 1915-1916). Naturally, the last expression here is in a certain respect and comparison with the expression from the previous sentence ἐν ταῖς διερμηνευθείσαις βίβλοις, which, whether we translate with "God-expressed" or "God-interpreted" books, could lead us to think. Something that Ricoeur pointed out at a time closer to us: "Imagination is that dimension of subjectivity which, as a poem, gives its answer to the text. If the distance that the "thing" of the text digs into reality corresponds to the distance of the imagination, then the poetics of discourse corresponds to a poetics of existence" (Ricoeur, 1983: 99). Philo expresses this "distance" entirely through the symbolism of music: "we should listen more in tune because the handy presentation in the words is too out of tune with the real one". The need for allegorical hermeneutics (meaning not only interpretation and understanding but also expression) is so clearly justified by Philo, but at the same time it is implied that it also depends on the ability to "hear in tune" and from the imagination. In connection with a hermeneutics that starts from the text and from the "thing" of the text, Ricoeur further asserts that "the text speaks above all to my imagination, to which it offers" images "of my liberation" (*Ibid.*: 100). It could turn out that the language of Philo through the use of musical symbolism and the two terms mentioned above (φαντασία and ἀλήθεια) is much more demanding to the reader than the language of one of the prominent representatives of modern philosophical hermeneutics.

Even a cursory comparison of the translations with the language used by Philo can reveal two dimensions of the author's text that the translations do not take into account at all. The first, concerning the origin and form of Philo's work: the verb "listen, hear", used by the author immediately after the quoted biblical text, could obviously refer to a specific school or synagogue environment where a text of Scripture is read and then commented. Whether in practice Philo's specific text originated in such an environment, or whether it is merely a literary imitation of such a form, is irrelevant in this case. What the author tells us here is that the biblical text is "listened to" and not "read". The second dimension of the author's text, not shown by the translations, one might be tempted to call simply fiction, but in fact it is here that a valid approach to Philo's understanding of language, and hence to its hermeneutics, could be sought. The ambiguity of the phrase τροπικώτερον ἀκούειν "to be perceived symbolically" and "to be heard in tone" is maintained and developed by the author further through the "handy image (representation) in the words too with the real is not in tune". This artful literary work with language in this case is also a sophisticated, so to speak, "distilled" Hellenistic hermeneutic manipulation of Plato's language, where the connection between the verb "see" and the terms "eidos" and "idea" is well known. Here we "hear, perceive" the handy "image, representation" (φαντασία) in the words, which "is not in tune with the real thing". There is no doubt about the connection of this term with the specific biblical verse (Gen. 4:16), which is quoted, but naturally refers to the overall biblical affirmation of God, who appears to Israel indirectly - in the cloud, smoke, etc., and hence to the theology of God's presence and the Covenant. In this context, the non-accidental use of "listening" can be emphasized once again, for example, as Winston notes – David Cohen characterizes Judaism in general as "auditory": "Unlike Greek philosophy, which is conceptual and contemplative … In Judaism, man is called by the cosmic voice not to see God, which is impossible, but to understand and listen to it" (Winston, 1990: 2).

3. The relation of *Post.* 1 to *Post.* 12-15

Apparently, Philo has a "*style déroutant*" (puzzling style), and one that unfolds *De Posteritate* (as well as any of his allegorical treatises) usually recognizes at first glance some general moral formulas close to the cliché, "but drowned themselves in the middle of chaotic images, bizarre features, intellectual tools or reasoning more surprising than enlightening" (Cazeaux, 1988: 70). In this case, the aim is to show in a completely schematic way how Philo continues to use the musical symbolism indicated in the "microtext" of the opening verse, as if by

chance, but at the same time emphasizing "rhythmically" certain musical terms and imagery in the *Post*. 12-15. The musical motif used in the composition of the treatise in this passage, on the other hand, is related to such theological themes as the opposition of "hearing" and "seeing" God and hence his unknowability. In the *Post*. 12 Philo reintroduces a verb derived from ἀκούειν and at the same time introduces the most popular musical term not only in ancient music theory but also in ancient philosophy:

> "Cain, then, has left the face of God to fall into the hands of Justice who takes vengeance on the impious. But Moses will lay down for his pupils (τοῖς γνωρίμοις αὐτοῦ) a charge most noble "to love God and hearken to (*εἰσακούειν*) and cleave to Him" (*Deut*. 30: 20); assuring them that this is the life that brings true prosperity and length of days. And his way of inviting them to honour Him Who is the worthy object of strong yearning and devoted love is vivid and expressive. He bids them "cleave to Him", bringing out by the use of this word how concord and union (οἰκείωσιν ἁρμονίας) comes through making God our own" (*Post*. 12: 335).

In this paragraph, Philo introduces the theologically important quote from *Deut*. 30:20. Here is the verb εἰσακούειν, but perhaps for anthropomorphic reasons Philo omits τῆς φωνῆς (his voice). The verb has the meaning of "to hear something or someone", "to consent to" or "to gratify", "to obey" (ThDNT I: 222). The hearing of man represents correspondence to the revelation of the Word, and in biblical religion it is thus the essential form in which this divine revelation is appropriated. Unlike Greek mysteries and oriental Gnosticism where great stress is laid on the fact that man apprehends God by seeing. This prevalence of hearing points to an essential feature of biblical religion. It is a religion of the Word, because it is a religion of action, of obedience to the Word (ThDNT I: 216-218).

The expression οἰκείωσιν ἁρμονίας undoubtedly has musical connotations: "harmonics", in ancient terminology, is the science dealing with the ordered arrangement of notes in scales and the relationships between scales, and it is the structures underlying melody that are the concern of harmonics. It was not concerned like modern harmonic theory with chords and chord-successions. "Harmony" and "harmonic progression", as we understand such things, had no place in Greek musical practice (Barker, 2007: 7; West, 1992: 5, not. 7). The Greek term is better conveyed in English not with "harmony", but "attunement" (Goodenough, 1969: 404; West, 1992: 198; Levin, 2009: 14). It is harmonics, "that lives the most vigorous life outside its own specialized sphere, and interacts most intimately with patterns of thought characteristic of other intellectual domains" (Barker, 2007: 7). "The notion that music owes its life to mathematics, and that the universe, by the same agency, owes its soul to *harmonia* – the attunement of opposites– took hold of human imagination from its first utterance and has transfixed it for the millennia" (Levin, 2009: 6). The word οἰκείωσιν in addition to the possible reference to Stoic philosophy (Pembroke, 1971: 116-121; Long, 1974: 185-189) also has a specific musical meaning (Levin, 2009: 289, 297).

The translation of the τοῖς γνωρίμοις αὐτοῦ with "his pupils" does not seem entirely adequate, Goodenough offers his "mystical followers" (Goodenough, 1969: 212). The term is closely related to the meaning of "acquaintance" and "knowledge" and suggests rather "close persons" and "capable of apprehending", "capable of knowing" (LSL, 1996: 355; ThDNT I: 718). In Philo, it is used of the knowledge of God (*Gen*. 167; *Mut*. 17).

It is clear enough that focusing on the expression "face of God" from the quoted biblical text of *Gen*. 4:16 at the beginning of the treatise, Philo considers it anthropomorphism and a reason for allegorical interpretation. However, the "language play" he begins in this first paragraph is less prominent, emphasizing "hearing" as opposed to implicitly implying "seeing the face of God". In *Post*. 12, Philo returns to the biblical expression given at the beginning, but this time he connects it quite arbitrarily with the theologically important biblical quote from *Deut*. 30:20. In both paragraphs, we have an emphasis on "hearing", but while in Genesis 1 it is in Philo's text, in *Genesis* 12 it is in the biblical quotation itself. It is further emphasized by the conscious use of

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musical symbolism through specific musical terms and concepts. In *Post.* 1 through ἀπᾳδούσης, and in *Post.* 12 through οἰκείωσιν ἁρμονίας. The latter, perhaps not only the most significant musical term in ancient music theory, but also the most important musical symbol in ancient philosophy, was repeated at the end of *Post.* 14 through ἁρμονίας λόγους. In the very next *Post.* 15 Philo marks the beginning of an apophatic theology that will have a long history of patristics and the Middle Ages, explicitly emphasizing the impossibility of "seeing" God: "When therefore the God-loving soul probes the question of the essence of the Existent Being, he enters on a quest of that which is beyond matter and beyond sight. And out of this quest there accrues to him a vast boom, namely to apprehend that the God of real Being is apprehensible by no one, and to see precisely this, that He is incapable of being seen" (Philo II: 337).

The musical symbolism used and the emphasis on "listening", Philo uses in the composition of his text as a "counterpoint" to "seeing" to reach in *Post.* 15 to expose the theme of the unknowability of God, i.e., that he cannot be "seen". And not only that "He is incapable of being seen", but also that "His essential Nature […] we cannot touch it even with the pure spiritual contact of understanding" (*Post.* 20, Philo II: 339). Philo's hermeneutics consists not only in the rationalizing philosophical discourse (allegorical exegesis) of a certain literal, it also means "literary" biblical text, but also in the literary work both on his own text and in connecting and moving to particular biblical texts. Of course, he does this not without the use of certain symbolism, "language play" and the effort of the imagination.

4. Conclusion

Based on this initial paragraph of *De Posteritate Caini*, perhaps before proceeding with any further analysis, it is necessary for the modern reader of Philo to pay more attention to the peculiarities of the text and the language used by the author. The language of modern translations differs significantly from the language of Philo – it differs not only philologically (as the ancient Greek language), which is self-evident, but also differs purely literary and as a philosophical discourse. Philo says differently what modern translations convey. He uses language in a different way. It would be too frivolous to attribute this simply to whim or coincidence, or even more to the inability of the ancient Greek or the author to say a certain thing in the way modern languages and translators say it, respectively. It is this "other way of saying" by Philo that could lead the thought not only to the obvious artistic use of language by the author and the corresponding openness he provides (to being, reality), but also to its hermeneutic dimension. The introductory paragraph of *De Posteritate Caini*, which is particularly important for understanding Philo's allegorical interpretation, in turn has its connections in the tissue of the text and its structure with such key passages as the *Post.* 12-15, 87-88, 103-111 precisely through the symbolic language of music.

In the considered passages from Philo's treatise there are certain biblical quotations such as *Gen.* 4:16, *Deut.* 30:20 and *Exod.* 33:13, but the serious question is: to what extent does he is doing exegesis of these quotations from Scripture that are in some way related to the general logic of the biblical text, rather than quoting them "arbitrarily" to interpret and to express his own text? If it could be proved that in this case Philo does not approach "exegetically" at all by looking for some internal logic and relationship between the quotations from the Scriptures, but on the contrary, he looks for a certain image, word, name from the text of Scripture to use for the development of his own discourse. This would mean that Philo did not simply perform an allegorical exegesis of the text of Scripture, but that he used it to express and interpret his own text.

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