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PhD Thesis: *The Gift of the gods. Survey on Philebus 14a-17a*

The present study is motivated by the interest for the famous and complex section of the *Philebus* which alludes to the so-called *gift of the gods*, consisting in the revelation that "the things that are said to always are " (*Phil.* 16c9), namely the ideas, derive from the *one* and the *many* (ἐξ ἑνὸς καὶ πολλῶν, *Phil.* 16c9), and for this reason have connatured (σύμφυτον, *Phil.* 16c10) in themselves a finite element and another unlimited (πέρας καὶ ἀπειρίαν, *Phil.* 16c10). To act on the background of such a doctrine there is the reason for the interweaving between the ideas. In fact, the notion of multiplicity to which Plato alludes cannot in any way be of a fisicistica nature, since this would entail the fragmentation of ideas by their own instances, and the consequent loss of their unity. A similar multiplicity takes place rather as a result of the complex system of intra-eidetic relations in which each idea is to be inserted. In the course of the analysis, the most interesting thing to prove will be that the unity of each idea is not compromised by the internal articulation, and therefore by the multiplicity that it presents. For Plato, ideas constitute Enadi or monads, that is, absolute and indivisible ontological units. However, the ideas are also manifold, since each of them has a complex structure, which constitutes the οὐσία and that is the task of dialectics to unravel and reproduce in the speech.

With these premises, the analysis will begin, in the first chapter, following the consideration of the fact that both in the *Parmenides* and in the *Philebus*, within a similar theoretical framework, if not entirely identical, the simultaneous attribution of opposite predicates In relation to sensitive bodies is judged by Socrates as a natural phenomenon. And, as a natural, it cannot generate any surprises, since it finds justification in the simultaneous participation in the ideas of those entities. Any problems related to this trivial way of understanding the *one-many* union are easily defused through the use of copulation preaching. If, in relation to the sensitive dimension, the simultaneous attribution of unity and diversity does not represent a philosophically relevant problem, otherwise, in the case of intelligible bodies, the question of the one and the many is not at all easy to settle : the latter are in fact subject to the process of division resulting from the plot in which they are involved. In particular, the difficulty is due to the fact that participation at intra-eidetic level does not

occur in an indiscriminate way, but on the basis of criteria governing relations within the Eidetico Cosmos. As a result, διαίρεσις must also be conducted in accordance with these criteria, and for this reason ' The great commitment that is associated with the division of these units and those of this type is a source of controversy ' (*Phil.* 15a).

The second chapter will draw attention to the fact that here in the *Philebus* the nature of this intra-eidetic relationships seems to assume a numerical profile and the dialectic is conceived as the ability to establish the relationships between ideas on numerical bases. It is good to clarify, however, that in this context the concept of number should not be understood in a quantitative, but qualitative or relational sense, since it is understood as synonymous with *logos*. On these bases, the notion of *measure* seems therefore to play a decisive role in relation to the possibility of carrying out a dialectical investigation of the real. Indeed, the task of the dialectic is to relate the entities on the basis of the relations present within the sphere eidetic. For this purpose, with regard to the entities which, from time to time, intend to investigate, he takes an idea and proceeds to identify the numerical quantity placed between his unit and the undetermined multiplicity. In this way, to emerge is the exact composition of the idea, that is to say how many and what are the relationships that it holds with other ideas. Following a similar investigation thus conducted κατὰ εἶδη, the entity in question is to be measurable, of it is known as the measure of the parts that compose it, on the basis of which it is possible to relate it to other entities, according to a precise numerical ratio. On the contrary, an investigation that does not take into account these "numerical" reasons, and is conducted on the basis of the uncertainty that characterizes the sensitive world implies that the institutions are considered from the point of view of incommensurability.

The analysis carried out in the first and in the second chapter will therefore allow to place the doctrine of the *Gift of the gods*, subject to the entire third chapter, with respect to the main reasons around which the argumentative weaving of the whole dialogue is articulated, namely the *one-many* problem, the discussion on the nature of pleasure, the quadripartite ontology, the role of dialectic and good. With this doctrine Plato introduces the method of his philosopher, the dialectic, in fact, and attributes to it the character of the divine. In this way one of the deepest platonic beliefs is reiterated: the one according to which the philosopher is divine man, therefore, equally divine must be his method. The dialectic must fulfil the task of making clear what, albeit unconsciously, is assumed "always" that is to say the union of *one* and *many*.

In the fourth and final chapter we will try to demonstrate how in the last dialogues of Plato, starting from the *Theaetetus* and the *Parmenides*, is developed an ontology based on a logic that privileges the holistic and structural perspective towards that fisik and mereological. With regard to the presence of this unitary aspect and at the same time manifold in relation to the institutions, we will see how it responds to a need of an epistemic nature, that is to say the possibility that the entities themselves are to be knowable. Knowledge is addressed in fact to objects unitary, as ontologically subsisting and self-identical, but, at the same time, multiple, that is, articulated within them, so as to allow the formulation of a knowledge of informative around it. Within this theoretical constellation, the configuration of the idea as *one-many* (ἐξ ἑνὸς μὲν καὶ πολλῶν, Phil. 16c9), as determined by the *gift of the gods*, can only respond to the need for it to provide an articulated *logos*.