

Graziano Ranocchia, Christoph Helmig, and Christoph Horn (Eds.), *Space in Hellenistic Philosophy. Critical Studies in Ancient Physics*, De Gruyter, Berlin 2014.

Tamara Plećaš

The collection of essays under the name *Space in Hellenistic Philosophy* is the result of the international workshop taken place in Naples in April 2012. The participants, as can be seen from the title, mainly discussed the concept of space, but also the concepts related to it, and Hellenistic philosophers and their contribution to the subject acted as the focus of their discussions. The reason for such a decision is given in the observation that philosophical attention is mostly put on the Presocratic authors, then Plato and/or Aristotle when we nowadays discuss Ancient physics. Besides that, authors agree that the reflection given by Hellenistic philosophers on this particular subject was valuable and innovative, and because of that their contribution shouldn't be marginalized. Although these essays are written in different style, which is inevitable, they share the mutual characteristic of analytical and problem-focused approach, which is taken to be the advantage of this volume.

191

The first chapter deals with Aristotle's conception of place, and is written by Keimpe Algra. The author examines wide chronological framework from Aristotle to Sextus Empiricus. In first paragraphs he deals with Aristotle's conception of place, and in the latter ones with its reception among different scholars in the Hellenistic period. Algra systematically examines Aristotle's account, and raises important objections against Aristotle's often puzzling conception of place. Also, Algra gives valuable comments on Hellenistic authors (Eudemus of Rhodes, Theophrastus of Eresos, Strato of Lampsacus, Xenarchus of Seleucia, Cleomedes, Alexander of Aphrodisias, and Sextus Empiricus) while examining their contribution to this particular problem and their relation to Aristotle, and also the insight into some solutions provided by contemporary authors. For the most part, the author criticizes well-known Morrison's solutions, finding them mostly unsatisfactory.

Stoic contribution to the problem of space is discussed in the following two essays. The first one deals with the theory of the one of the most prominent Stoic philosophers – Chrysippus, and the other one with Posidonius' account. Chrysippus' conception of space is considered in the paper written by Michele Alessandrelli, where we encounter the semantic analysis of the main concepts of space in Stoic physics, and the argumentative elaboration of Chrysippus' theory. A particular attention is given to the analysis of a quite enigmatic concept of spatial reality *viz.* χώρα, also explaining

reasons why Chrysippus introduced this concept on the basis of two controversial definitions. On the other side, Teun Tielman explores Posidonius' theory of void, and he tries to master the contradiction between the statement claiming that the void which surrounds cosmos is infinite, and the statement found in Aëtius, according to which Posidonius claimed that the void is finite.

In the next three essays we are given an insight into the theory of space which was held by Epicurean philosophers. Epicurean and Aristotelian position was thoroughly examined and problematized in the essays written by David Konstan and Holger Essler. In the first one, Konstan (re)considers Epicurus' interpretation of the conception of space and space properties, and he sees himself to be closer to Brad Inwood's than to influential David Sedley's, or Keimpe Algra's argumentation. In his analysis, Aristotle's position is opposed to the Epicurean one, which is a usual way of introducing this particular problem because Aristotle (following Plato's and Parmenides' legacy) thought that void can't exist, since the universe is *plenum*, while Epicurus considers space as empty, at least according to Konstan's interpretation. On the other side, Essler deals in his paper with philosopher Philodemus (who is claimed to be an interpreter of Epicurus' work), and with Philodemus' interpretation of the concept of space that can be found in his treatise *On Gods*, though not as explicit theory. Although it cannot be proven that Philodemus had knowledge of the Aristotles' *Metaphysics* and meteorological works, it is shown that he was familiar with problematics of these works and with Peripatetic teachings referring physics and biology. According to Essler, Philodemus' awareness of his opponents' views (Aristotle and Peripatetics), and also his capacity to use their arguments and combine them to fit in his own account, makes him an original and innovative author. Finally, Carlos Lévy in his interesting essay writes about the concept of *spatium* from Lucretius to Cicero. Titus Lucretius Carus was a Roman poet, and he was considered to be under the Epicurean influence. The author's task was to examine Lucretius' degree of innovation when using the concept of *spatium*, comparing it with former Latin poetic tradition, so as to analyze the transformation of *spatium* into a philosophical concept, and finally, to compare Lucretius' and Cicero's usage of the concept of space. Analyzing Latin texts written before Lucretius, Lévy concludes that *spatium* was mainly used to signify time period, and that

Lucretius created a different, theoretical and philosophical notion.

The last essays consider views of the Greek skeptical philosophers, namely Aenesidemus and Sextus Empiricus. Richard Bett deals with philosopher Aenesidemus, and as the main sources for his analysis he takes Sextus' and Diogenes' versions of the fifth trope which despite some differences share common elements. Bett provides a negative answer to the question whether we can encounter any particular Aenesidemus' conception of place or space, which is not such an unusual attitude, regarding the fact that skeptical philosophers were supposed to have none doctrinal teachings. The main goal of Aenesidemus' was to attack his philosophical opponents, and to destroy their confidence in their own concepts and arguments. On the other side, Emidio Spinnelli writes about Sextus Empiricus (with a focus on his *Outlines of Pyrrhonism*), and this paper together with the older Keimpe Algras' essay (from 2007) represents an interesting, thorough and detailed analysis of Sextus' position and his contribution to the philosophical notion of place.

In the end, the essay which concludes this volume is doxographical reverberation of the Hellenistic discourse on space, written by Jaap Mansfeld, and is mainly focused on Aristotle's and Aëtius' heritage. In other words, the author wanted to show that the methodology of discussions taken by Hellenistic authors on the philosophical notions of void, place and space is for its most part Aristotelian.

Finally, the personal closing remarks regarding this volume are as follows. It is known that Hellenistic schools, especially Epicurean and Stoic, valued ethical issues more than any others, but that doesn't mean that they didn't emphasize the significance of physics for their philosophical systems, and that is shown in present papers. Among Hellenistic authors, the concept of space was discussed and thematized in heterogeneous ways, and this particular attempt of collecting various theories and opinions in one place, specifying similarities and differences between these conceptions, authors and philosophical schools, is of great importance. These essays are doubtlessly a valuable contribution to better understanding of the main physical and philosophical concepts regarding Hellenistic period. Important philosophical and semantic issues were raised, some of them yet to be answered, and discussed, hopefully in the near future.