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On Eudemus Fr. 150 (Wehrli)

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I.

Fr. 150 of Eudemus, preserved in the *De principiis* of the 6th c. Neoplatonist philosopher Damascius,¹ has always been treated as one of our major sources for early theo-cosmogonies. Apart from some remarks on Homer and Hesiod, it contains precious information on an early version of the Orphic theogony, on Acusilaus, Epimenides, and Pherecydes of Syrus, and on the Babylonian, Persian and Phoenician theo-cosmogonies. For some of these texts, Eudemus is our only or main source. Accordingly, the fragment has proven vital to the reconstruction of these mythological narratives. These narratives, and correspondingly Eudemus' testimony on them, have become even more prominent as historians of Greek thought have tried to locate the passage from *mythos* to *logos* in these very texts. Thus the authors treated by Eudemus make their appearance in histories of Greek philosophy where they are treated not just as "theologians," as Aristotle had called them, but also as "The Forerunners of Philosophical Cosmogony."²

¹ Damascius' *De principiis* has been recently reedited by Westerink and translated into French by Combès (see Combès & Westerink).

² See, e.g., the first chapter of Kirk, Raven and Schofield.

If, however, we are interested in Eudemus' text itself, and not just in the individual entries it contains, our basic task is to say something about the nature and aims of Eudemus' work. By and large, there are two possible answers to the question concerning the nature of Eudemus' text. Either we regard fr. 150 as a part or a summary of an independent historical work, or we say that the text used by Damascius was a doxographical digression in a systematic work. Not surprisingly, both solutions have found proponents. We can conveniently sketch the alternative stances by referring to the two *Pauly-Wissowa* articles on Eudemus. In Martini's opinion it should be clear to any unbiased reader that the text comes from a "History of Theology."³ Furthermore, Martini concurs with Usener's suggestion that Eudemus' "History of Theology" is identical with *Τῶν περὶ τὸ θεῖον ἱστορίας* in six books, which we find in Diogenes Laertius' catalogue of Theophrastus' works.⁴

Wehrli, on the other hand, contends that the existence of an independent and comprehensive theological work cannot be proved. Consequently, he does not accept Usener's suggestion and finally opts for the alternative hypothesis according to which the text stems from a systematic work, most probably Eudemus' *Physics*.⁵ Wehrli's arguments consist in stating that (a) Aristotle occasionally refers to theologonical narratives in his doxographical overviews of the history of a given problem, and that (b) we can find historical digressions in the remaining fragments of Eudemus' *Physics*, as well.⁶ In what follows, I would like to consider fr. 150 with these points in mind. I shall first try to say something about the scope of Eudemus' work by examining the Damascian context. Then I shall consider the possible place of such a survey of the "theologians" within a Peripatetic context. Finally, I shall give my reasons for not finding Wehrli's hypothesis and arguments convincing.

II.

It seems to be important to start the discussion of fr. 150 by defining

³ Martini, col. 898.

⁴ Usener, 64. See also D.L. 5.48.

⁵ Wehrli 1968, col. 658.

⁶ Cf. also Wehrli 1955, 121-23 and 1983, 531. Understandably, Joseph Combès in his notes to the new edition of the *De principiis* did not feel it his task to tackle the question; he prudently speaks about "an unidentified work of Eudemus" (Combès & Westerink, 3:232).

its place and function in Damascius' *De principiis*,⁷ for the text of fr. 150 is not a direct quotation and thus, in principle, any kind of distortion is possible. Damascius might have reorganised the material collected by Eudemus, extracted just those parts which he found relevant for his own purposes, and made additions on the basis of other sources.

In the *De principiis*, Damascius elaborates his metaphysical system — which is in effect a revised version of Proclus' system — and painstakingly investigates the conceivable problems and paradoxes regarding the interrelation of different degrees of reality. From our viewpoint, it is important to note that in the *De principiis* Damascius concentrates exclusively on the highest levels of the late Neoplatonic ontological hierarchy, down to the level of the third member of the intelligible triad. Thus the four items considered are (i) "the ineffable" (ἀπόρητον), (ii) "the one" (ἓν), (iii) the triad of the henadic principles, viz. "the one-all" (ἐν πάντα), "the all-one" (πάντα ἓν) and "the unified" (ἡνωμένον), and finally (iv) the triad of the intelligible, which consists of "the intelligible being," "the intelligible life" and "the intelligible intellect." The last item of the first triad, "the unified," can be further analyzed as consisting of the triad of "the intelligible." Therefore "the unified" and the triad of "the intelligible" can also be treated as identical. Damascius continues with the lower levels in his *Commentary on the Parmenides*.⁸

For Damascius, just as for Syrianus and Proclus, the full exposition of such a system must include not only a theological interpretation of the second half of Plato's *Parmenides* but also an allegorical reading of the *Chaldean Oracles* and the so-called *Orphic Rhapsodies*. The ultimate aim of these interpretations is to show that, the different modes of expression notwithstanding, Orpheus, Pythagoras, Plato and the *Chaldean Oracles* all held the very same doctrine.⁹ Toward this end, the Neoplatonic commentators try to establish a close correspondence, in fact, identity, between the different divine beings mentioned by Orpheus and the Chaldeans, the different hypotheses of the *Parmenides* and the different levels of the Neoplatonic ontology. It is just as impor-

⁷ The question is briefly and unsatisfyingly discussed by Wehrli 1955, 122.

⁸ On the relationship between the *De principiis* and the *Commentary on the Parmenides*, see Westerink, 9–10 and Combès & Westerink (1:LViff.).

⁹ The *Suda* attributes both to Syrianus and Proclus a work with the title *The Agreement between Orpheus, Pythagoras, Plato and the Chaldean Oracles* (Συμφωνία Ὀρφεῶς, Πυθαγόρου, Πλάτωνος πρὸς τὰ Λόγια). On the history of this interpretative tradition see Brisson (1987, 43–103 and 1991).

tant for them to prove that Plato is a theologian as to show that the *Orphic Rhapsodies* and the *Chaldean Oracles* propound a complex metaphysics.

Although Orpheus, Pythagoras, Plato and the *Chaldean Oracles* are the main points of reference, the *diadochoi* reassure us on occasion that Homer and Hesiod put forward the same view.¹⁰ From this position, it is just a small step to the ultimate claim that *all* the theologians held the same doctrine. We can find this conviction expressed in some other Neoplatonic texts as well,¹¹ but it is apparently Damascius who actually undertakes a systematic and wide-ranging survey and analysis of the different theogonical traditions near the end of his *De principiis*.

Within this project, there is first a lengthy discussion of the *Chaldean Oracles* (3:108.16ff. Combès & Westerink = 1:285ff. Ruelle), at the end of which Damascius promises that on another occasion he will provide a more elaborate interpretation of the wisdom of the Chaldean sages.¹² He then continues with the following words:

... let us now, within due limits, inquire what the other theologians have handed down *about the intelligible diacosmos*, whether we can gain some even greater and the greatest possible reverential awe from them of this transcendent union. (3:159.12ff. Combès & Westerink = 1:315ff. Ruelle, *my italics*)

Particularly significant is Damascius' explicit assertion that, in accordance with the general scope of the *De principiis*, his project is restricted to the realm of the intelligible. Let us first see in what way this restriction affects his use of the sources.

¹⁰ Presumably this is what was systematically elaborated in such works as *On the Gods in Homer*, attributed by the *Suda* both to Syrianus and Proclus. See also, e.g., Proclus, *In Tim.* 316.4–11.

¹¹ Proclus *loc. cit.* "So we have demonstrated that the whole of the Greek theology (σύντασσαν τὴν Ἑλληνικὴν θεολογίαν) attributes to Zeus the creation of the whole etc." We also learn from the *Suda* (s.v. Heraiscus) that the Egyptian Asclepiades, Heraiscus' brother, outstandingly versed in Egyptian theology, also wrote about the agreement of all theologies (τῶν θεολογιῶν ἁπασῶν τὴν συμφωνίαν). It is noteworthy that on the one hand this entry in the *Suda* is based on Damascius' *De Vita Isidori* and that Damascius' source for the Egyptian theologies in the *De principiis* is none other than Asclepiades and his brother.

¹² Cf. Damascius, *In Parm.* 2.9.21f.; 11.11ff.; 132 Ruelle.

For the realization of his program he uses a considerable range of different sources. Apart from the *Orphic Rhapsodies*, which was in all probability easily available in Neoplatonic circles, he adduces material from Hieronymus and Hellanicus, Eudemus, Mochus, Asclepiades and Heraiscus. Damascius takes the different mythological genealogies reported by these authors one after the other, and provides them with an allegorical, metaphysical running commentary.¹³ I have tried to schematise the outcome of the Damascian interpretation in a diagram. I hope to be able to explain a few peculiarities of fr. 150 by pointing out some regularities in Damascius' interpretative method by the help of this table.¹⁴

Damascius first turns to the *Orphic Rhapsodies* and recapitulates Syrianus' and Proclus' interpretation. Damascius makes it clear that on some points he cannot accept the interpretation of his masters. He next outlines a less common version of the Orphic theogony for which he names a certain Hieronymus and a certain Hellanicus as his source. Neither we nor Damascius know anything further about Hieronymus and Hellanicus.¹⁵ Moreover, while he is giving his interpretation of the Hieronymus–Hellanicus version of the narrative, he sets out his own reading of the *Rhapsodies*. The only apparent advantage of Damascius' reading of the *Rhapsodies* over that of Syrianus and Proclus is that it is in agreement with the interpretation he offers of the Hieronymus–Hellanicus narrative: for both narratives, his reading allots Time, Aether and Chaos the same respective positions (see Diagram on pp. 342–43). From this we can infer that Damascius finds it important to harmonize the reading of the different versions of the Orphic theogony.

¹³ Damascius' use of the mythological material is summarily treated by Strömberg 180ff. See also Holwerda (293ff.) on the Orphic theogonies. I find Holwerda more instructive.

¹⁴ Admittedly, in the case of such a complex system, a diagram is a blunt tool. For one, the fact that the third level of the first triad (the unified) is identified with the intelligible renders the representation problematic; this I indicate with a divided line. Corresponding to this identification, the unified might or might not be allegorised with the help of a separate divinity.

¹⁵ There have been some attempts to identify these authors, or at least one of them, as Damascius himself alludes to the possibility that the two names actually refer to the same person. Recently, West (176ff.) suggested an Egyptian Hieronymus mentioned by Flavius Josephus (*Ant. Jud.* 1.94). In the present context, more interesting, albeit just as conjectural and even less likely, is Lobeck's hypothesis (340), that the reference is to Hieronymus of Rhodes, the third century Peripatetic from the school founded by Eudemus.

	ORPHICA				OTHER GREEK		
	<i>Orphic Rhapsodies</i>	Orpheus	Orpheus	Homer	Hesiod	Acusilaus	
	Syrianus & Proclus	(III, 161, 14ff.)	Hieronymus & Hellanicus	Eudemus			
ineffable							
one	Time	∅	∅	∅		Chaos	
one-all	Aether	∅	Water	∅		Erebos	
all-one	Chaos	∅	Earth	∅	Chaos	Night	
unified	Egg	Time	Time	∅			
intelligible being		Aether	Aether	∅	Chaos/Earth	Aether	
intelligible life	?	Chaos	Chaos	∅	Earth/Tartarus	Eros	
intelligible intellect	Egg/white tunic/cloud	(Eros)	Erebos	∅	(Eros)	Metis	
intelligible-intellective	Phanes		Egg	∅		(continued in E.)	
	Erikepaios		male & female	∅			
	Metis		Protogonos	∅			
intellective	[Night 1]			Night	Night vs. Okeanus-Tethys		
	[Night 2]						
	[Night 3]						

Having discussed the *Rhapsodies* and the Hieronymus-Hellanicus narrative, Damascius goes on to consider Eudemus' work, starting with Eudemus' version of the Orphic theogony. Damascius is extremely brief in this instance:

The theology described in the Peripatetic Eudemus as being that of Orpheus is silent about the entire realm of the intelligible, for it is completely ineffable and unknowable by the method of exposition and narration: it made its start from Night, from whom Homer too made his start ... (3:162.19ff. Combès & Westerink = 1:319 Ruelle)

So all that we learn about this version is that it started with Night.¹⁶ For students of early Orphism this brevity is extremely regrettable. I do not think, however, that we should hold Eudemus responsible for it; we have every reason to suppose that the account continued in Eudemus' work, but it was not taken over by Damascius.¹⁷ For, according to Damascius, Eudemus' version of the Orphic theogony does not speak at all about the realm of the intelligible, but starts only with the lower ontological levels, and these lower levels already fall outside the scope of Damascius' present inquiry.

But how can one know, it might be objected, that Night, this primeval divinity, does not represent a higher degree of reality in the version recorded by Eudemus? I think that Damascius would respond by pointing out that if Night represented a higher ontological level, this version would conflict with other versions of the Orphic theogony, and this should be avoided. On the other hand, if we consider that in the standard version, the *Orphic Rhapsodies*, Night is the daughter of Phanes, then her natural place must be the first level after the one occupied by Phanes. But according to the interpretation accepted by Damascius, the different denominations of Phanes (Erikepaios, Metis and Protogonos) occupy the lowest levels of the intelligible, and, therefore, Night's position must already be below the intelligible. Thus, if Night is the first divinity in Eudemus' account, we have to conclude that this version of the Orphic theogony does not say anything about the intelligible, but starts with the intellective. And as Damascius' present work is only

¹⁶ In *Metaph.* 12.6, 1071b26–27, Aristotle says that some of the "theologians" generate the world from Night.

¹⁷ West (116ff.) supposes that, although there is no mention of Night there, we can find the subsequent stages of the genealogy in *Timaeus* 40D6ff. For a criticism, see Brisson 1985, 402ff.

concerned with the realm of the intelligible, he had no need to quote the remainder of the genealogy from Eudemos.¹⁸

That Damascius' interest in the early theogonies is conditioned by the scope of his treatise becomes even more apparent in the cases of Acusilaus, Epimenides and Pherecydes. When in the interpretation of these authors Damascius reaches the level of the third component of the second triad, the intelligible intellect, he stops his own exposition of the theogony but adds at the same time that there are more generations adduced in his source.¹⁹ He continues the allegorical reading beyond the triad of the intelligible only in one case, when he gives a second, alternative interpretation of the Phoenician theology according to Mochus: he says that if we choose this second, less probable interpretation, the god Khousorus would represent the first order after the intelligible. Yet, in this case too, he is not interested in the lower levels as such, but wants to point out the differences between the two alternative interpretations. The one real exception to this restrictive approach is the Babylonian theogony, which we can, by the way, identify with the *Enuma Elish*. In this case Damascius does name a few more gods, without determining their place in his ontological scheme. Possibly, this can be explained by the fact that this theogony was little known and Damascius might have been interested in recording more of it. Yet, notably, the allegorical interpretation does not go beyond the level of the intelligible in this case either.²⁰

¹⁸ This move becomes even more meaningful and legitimate if the genealogy after Night in Eudemos' version corresponded with the account of the *Orphic Rhapsodies*. Note also that Night is placed below the level of the intelligible in the respective interpretations of Syrianus and Proclus.

¹⁹ "After these, from the same ones, he [sc. Acusilaus] introduces a great number of other gods, according to Eudemos' inquiries." (3:164.6-8 Combès & Westerink = 1:320 Ruelle); at the end of the Epimenides entry: "... from which again another generation proceeded." (3:162.16 Combès & Westerink = 1:320 Ruelle); for Pherecydes: "... from which [sc. fire, *pneuma*, water], after they were distributed in five nooks, arose another numerous generation of gods, called the five-nooks generation, and this is probably the same as to say the five-cosmos [generation]. There will probably be another occasion to speak about these." (3:164.21ff. Combès & Westerink = 1:321 Ruelle; trans. Schibli).

²⁰ We find another account of the *Enuma Elish* in Eusebius, who quotes Alexander Polyhistor, who, in turn, takes his information from the first book of Berossus' *Babylonika*. It is noteworthy, however, that in the judgment of the Assyrologists, Eudemos' report is far more precise. Cf., e.g., Bottéro & Kramer, 676ff.

It seems highly probable, then, that Damascius took over from his sources just as much as was necessary for his immediate purpose. He considered, in conformity with his announced program, only so many divinities from each theogony as he could allegorically interpret down to the third element of the second triad. We have thus every reason to suppose that Eudemus continued the series of divine generations beyond the first few deities set out by Damascius.

Furthermore, we also have to consider whether Eudemus' work could have included more theogonies than the seven or eight²¹ Damascius mentions. There is only one sentence that might help us in this respect. Having discussed Pherecydes, Damascius closes the examination of the Greek theogonies with the following words:

Let such and so many hypotheses expressed by the Greek myths now be taken over by us, although there are many others. (3:165.3-5 Combès & Westerink = 1:321 Ruelle)

I do not think this sentence is conclusive regarding our problem. It can either mean that this was all Damascius could extract from Eudemus, even though he was aware of the fact that Eudemus' discussion is incomplete; or rather that, although there are more theogonies in Eudemus and elsewhere, Damascius thought the ones he had already discussed would suffice. I would, nevertheless, like to draw attention to a salient omission. Even if we disregard such shadowy figures as Melampous, Linus and Abaris, we would certainly expect such a review of early mythical theogonies to consider Musaeus. Who is responsible for this omission, Eudemus or Damascius?

Now Plato, Aristotle and Theophrastus do refer to Musaeus (Pl. *Resp.* 2.363C; Arist. *Hist. anim.* 6.6 563a18; Theophr. *H. plant.* 9.19.2), though these references are not necessarily to a theogonic poem: they might refer to verses in an anthology of oracular answers. Our earliest explicit source for Musaeus' theogonic poem, probably identical with the *Eumolpia*, is Eratosthenes (2B8 DK). The only reason for West to fix the date of the *Eumolpia* as late as the second half of the fourth century, is that Musaeus does not appear in Eudemus fr. 150.²² Yet the fact

²¹Eight, if we count the Egyptian theogony, for Damascius makes it clear that Eudemus had also spoken about the Egyptian theogony, although not as "clearly" as the Neoplatonic Asclepiades and Heraiscus did (3:167.1 Combès & Westerink = 1:323 Ruelle).

²²West, 43.

that Musaeus does not appear in Damascius cannot prove that he could not have been treated by Eudemos. Furthermore, Musaeus' theogony is also discussed in the doxographical part of the *De pietate* of Philodemus, whose main source, very probably, was Eudemos.²³ Similarly, Hippias mentioned Musaeus together with Orpheus, Hesiod and Homer in the introductory sentence of his *Synagoge*, and Chrysippus interpreted him allegorically (Hippias 86B6 DK; Chrysippus *SVF* 2.316.12, 16). It would, then, be surprising indeed if Eudemos had ignored him. On the other hand, Musaeus is never treated in the extant works of the Neoplatonics as the author of a theogony. He appears in Proclus' commentaries, but only as the mythical son of the Moon and the father of initiatory rites.²⁴ Considering this, it seems to me more likely that Musaeus did figure in Eudemos but was left out by Damascius, in keeping with Neoplatonic practice.

Concluding this inquiry concerning the scope of Eudemos' work I contend that it must have been considerably more extensive than what we find in Damascius. It probably contained more theogonies than Damascius mentions and it surely enumerated more generations from the individual theogonies.

Let us now turn to a second question concerning Damascius' use of his sources. How far might he have distorted the accounts he found in his sources? This question amounts to asking how violent his allegorizing method was. First we have to note that, basically, his interpretative strategy consisted in transforming the chronological, genealogical successions into an ontological hierarchy: temporal priority in the genealogies is transformed into ontological priority.²⁵ Now this method, applied to Damascius' ontological hierarchy, seems to be rather open in the sense that it could assimilate almost any construction.²⁶ Damascius assumes fundamental doctrinal identity, yet accepts differences. If we consider, for instance, the top levels of the hierarchy, first we note with

²³ So Henrichs, 78 n. 28; with the addition that "Damascius has written out Eudemos more fully than Philodemus or his source," as, e.g., the respective entries on Epimenides show (79 n. 32). Cf. also, Kirk, Raven and Schofield, 19 n. 2.

²⁴ Cf. *In Tim.* 1.111.29; 1.165.20. The fact that Musaeus had sometimes been identified with Moses could also render his interpretation problematic for the pagan Neoplatonics. Cf., e.g., Numenius fr. 9 (Des Places) and Artapanus *FGrHist* 726 F3.3. I am grateful to László Bene for this point.

²⁵ The view according to which there is a correspondence between an ontological hierarchy and the temporal structure of a narrative is at least as old as the *Timaeus*.

²⁶ So also Holwerda.

some relief that, at least according to Damascius' interpretation, none of the theologians dared to speak about the unspeakable first principle. Thereafter the theologians had a choice. Either they started with the One, or they could "honour it with silence"²⁷ and begin with the first two henadic principles, the one-all and the all-one. It means that Damascius could place those who started their story with *one* divinity in the first group, while those who had spoken of a primordial *pair* could go into the second.

But what about someone like Pherecydes who had *three* gods right at the beginning? This does not trouble Damascius:

Pherecydes of Syros said that Zas has always existed and Chronos and Chthonia, the three first principles, I mean the one before the two, and the two after the one ... (3:164.17–19 Combès & Westerink = 1:321 Ruelle, trans. Schibli, modified)

This passage shows that Damascius was prepared to let the original account speak, even if it apparently ran counter to his own tenets.²⁸ On one occasion, however, Damascius does disagree with his source. Having established that Eudemus' version of the Orphic theogony started with Night, he goes on to discuss Homer:

... it [sc. the theogony ascribed to Orpheus] made its start from Night, from whom also Homer begins, although he did not make his genealogy continuous. For we should not believe Eudemus when he says that [Homer] begins from Okeanos and Tethys. For he too manifestly knows²⁹ that Night is the greatest divinity, so that even Zeus feels awe before her:

"for he feared to do what would be hateful for swift Night" (*Il.* 14.261)

But let also Homer himself begin from Night. (3:162.22ff. Combès & Westerink = 1:319 Ruelle)

Presumably, Damascius wanted to emphasize the preeminence of Night by this Homeric passage as well. Incidentally, this passage shows that the basic method of allegory works in both ways. Temporal priority merits a higher place in the hierarchy, whereas from the high status of

²⁷ Cf. the entry on Epimenides, 3:164.9ff. Combès & Westerink = 1:320 Ruelle.

²⁸ Plotinus, too, seems to say that Pherecydes had *one* ultimate principle (5.1.27–32). This assumption can be explained by Pherecydes' alleged relation to Pythagoras. Cf. Schibli, 15 n. 5.

²⁹ The wording φαίεται + participle is stronger than Combès' "paraît avoir su."

Night we can infer that she must have come first in the genealogy. Anyway, what is important for us is that even though Damascius disagrees, he quotes the opinion of Eudemos.

But the view Damascius attributes to Eudemos on Homer is of further interest for us. This is the point where we shall quit Damascius and turn to the Aristotelian context.

III.

The interpretation of Homer which Damascius ascribes to Eudemos is not an obvious one,³⁰ but it soon became a commonplace. It is based on two otherwise quite isolated passages in *Iliad* 14.

Okeanos, origin (γένεσις) of the gods, and mother Tethys (*Il.* 14.201)

and

Any other of the everlasting gods I would easily send to sleep, even the stream of river Okeanos, who is the origin of all. (*Il.* 14.244–6; cf. Pl. *Th.* 160D–E, 179E, 180C–D)

The view according to which Homer originated the world from the two water-gods appears in our extant sources first in two dialogues of Plato (*Crat.* 402A–C and *Th.* 152D–E), and then in Aristotle's *Metaphysics* 1.3 983b20–984a5. Plato relates the Heraclitean doctrine of flux to Homer, whereas Aristotle discusses the relationship between the doctrine attributed to Homer and Thales' first principle. As is well known, Bruno Snell has demonstrated that Aristotle's account is not dependent on Plato, but that both philosophers must have used a common source, the *Synagoge* of Hippias.³¹ Joachim Classen, Andreas Patzer and Jaap Mansfeld, elaborating on Snell's results, have convincingly shown that Hippias' method consisted in grouping different authors under different headings on the basis of the alleged identity of their tenets.³² Furthermore, Snell argued that this specific interpretation of *Il.* 14.201 can help us to identify the material taken over from Hippias.

³⁰ Kirk, Raven and Schofield (14) argue that these verses did not necessarily mean chronological priority.

³¹ Snell, 119ff.

³² Classen, 175ff.; Patzer; Mansfeld (1983, 1985a and 1986). Cf. also Kienle, 39, 43.

Can we say, then, that Eudemus' source was Hippias? True, Snell's discovery, in itself, cannot guarantee that Eudemus had borrowed his material directly from Hippias. He could just as well have derived it from Aristotle's *Metaphysics*, or, for that matter, from Plato. I would like to present some considerations that would nevertheless strengthen the first option.³³

First, if we consider the scope of Hippias' work, it turns out to be remarkably close to that of Eudemus. We have the introductory sentence of the *Synagoge* as preserved by Clement of Alexandria:

... some of these things have probably been said by Orpheus, some by Musaeus, briefly here and there, some by Hesiod, some by Homer, some by other poets, some in the prose works, some by Greeks and some by Barbarians. From all these, I have collected what are the most important and what belongs together to compose this new and many-sided work. (Hippias 86B6 DK = Clem. Alex. *Strom.* 6.2.15)

A prominent feature of this program and an important parallel to Eudemus' survey, is the attention paid to the non-Greek authors. Furthermore, Classen, Mansfeld and Patzer have demonstrated that apart from the poets mentioned by name in the prooemium, and some major Presocratics, Hippias must have also dealt with Acusilaus³⁴ and probably Pherecydes,³⁵ who figure on Eudemus' list too.

It is just as important to note, moreover, that there is some independent evidence showing that Eudemus used Hippias' historical accounts. On the basis of fr. 133ff. (Wehrli), stemming from Proclus' *Commentary on the First Book of Euclid's Elements*, it seems likely that in his work on (the history of) geometry Eudemus had taken at least some of his information concerning the pre-Platonic period from Hippias.³⁶

Even if the evidence is not enough to prove without doubt that Eudemus derived his material from Hippias, the *Synagoge*, and especially its treatment by Aristotle, is of further interest to us as we return to Wehrli's hypothesis concerning the nature of Eudemus' work. For

³³ In an addition to the original paper, Snell (128) states that "Eudem fr. 150 W. übernimmt aus Hippias die Meinung, daß Homer an den Anfang aller Genealogie den Okeanos und die Tethys gestellt hätte." I am inclined to think Snell was right, but the view needs arguing.

³⁴ From Phaedrus' speech in *Symp.* 178A–B.

³⁵ Pl. *Soph.* 242C8. Cf. Mansfeld 1986, 25.

³⁶ Cf. Snell, 128, quoted in n. 33 above; Kerferd, 48.

Jaap Mansfeld, in his discussion on Aristotle's use of Hippias, has corrected Snell on an important point. Mansfeld has made it clear that Snell "failed to take into account that Aristotle's main point is polemical."³⁷ As a matter of fact, Aristotle does not accept Hippias' quasi-allegorical method with the help of which Hippias finds the tenets of the Presocratic philosophers anticipated in the theologising authors. When in the third chapter of *Metaphysics* I Aristotle discusses Thales' view of the material principle, he declares that we cannot decide whether Homer and Thales did or did not hold the same doctrine about the origin of the world. Even though Thales was still very far from the full truth, his statements are philosophically meaningful, whereas we cannot give a scientifically responsible interpretation of Homer's poetical utterances. This is exactly the reason why we can say that Thales was the first philosopher.³⁸

It is worthwhile to consider very briefly some other passages where Aristotle mentions the "theologians."³⁹ In *Metaph.* 14.4 1091a29ff., he examines the relationship between the elements and principles on the one hand and the good and the beautiful on the other. On this point, the utterances of the theologians might, with some hesitation, be compared to genuinely philosophical stances.⁴⁰ If we allow that the figure of Zeus can be taken as in some sense analogous to the philosophical conception of the principle of good, then the "theologians" side with those philosophers who maintain that the good has no temporal priority but appears at a later stage in the history of the world. Yet, Aristotle hastens to add that this position attributable to the "theologians" is not the result of philosophical consideration, but stems from the fact that the mythological narratives are traditionally about the succession of divine rulers.⁴¹ Thus, the demarcation between the two modes of expression is further reaffirmed. That is also why Aristotle can single out Pherecydes and the Magi and claim that they "combine the two char-

³⁷ Mansfeld 1983, 47.

³⁸ Cf. Mansfeld 1985a and 1985b, 47ff.

³⁹ For a more complete discussion of Aristotle's use of the "theologians," see now Palmer.

⁴⁰ *παρὰ μὲν γὰρ τῶν θεολόγων ἔοικεν ὁμολογεῖσθαι τῶν νῦν τισίν κτλ.* See also *Metaph.* 12.10 1075b24ff.

⁴¹ Cf. Annas ad loc.; Mansfeld 1985b, 53.

acters" and do not use a mythical mode of presentation throughout: they make the supreme god part of the first generation of divine beings.⁴²

In *Metaph.* 3.4 1000a9ff. Aristotle raises problems concerning the principles of perishable and imperishable beings. Hesiod and the theologians are severely criticized here for maintaining that those who have tasted nectar and ambrosia become immortal, while those who have not cannot avoid destruction. It is noteworthy that Aristotle explicitly says here that "it is not worthwhile" to consider seriously those who have expressed themselves in a mythical form.

Mythical narratives receive the most sympathetic treatment in *Metaph.* 12.8 1074a38ff. Here Aristotle combines his assessment of the mythological authors with his doctrine on the cyclical development of the arts and sciences. "Our forefathers" have handed down to us the correct view that the first substances are gods. However, at a later stage, anthropomorphism and mythical expression have been added for pragmatic purposes. The "theologians" are not mentioned as such in this passage, but they are probably the ones who subsequently clothed the original insight in mythological garment. The philosophically meaningful idea is certainly not theirs, and what they did at best was to help its propagation. More important, the closing sentence of the passage sets an important restriction on the endoxic value of these narratives: "only thus far, then, is the opinion of our ancestors and our earliest predecessors clear to us." In other words, Aristotle acknowledges a core of truth in the myths, yet asserts that apart from the basic recognition that the first substances are gods we can extract nothing else from these narratives in terms of philosophy.⁴³

In some cases the views of the "theologians" appear in the discussion of a specific problem. Here too, an idea expressed in a mythical narrative might be treated as one of the *endoxa* to be examined in a preliminary discussion.⁴⁴ We find such a passage in *Meteorology* 2.1 353a35ff.,

⁴² The passage is discussed by Schibli (18 n. 11).

⁴³ For the cosmological interpretation of early theology, see also *De caelo* 1.3 270b4ff. and 2.1 284a2ff.

⁴⁴ The use of myths as part of the endoxic method is discussed by Johansen, taking the example of Aristotle's treatment of the Atlas myth in *Movement of Animals* 3 699a27–32. This case is one of the rare exceptions where Aristotle, at least initially, says that the mythical view is *κατὰ λόγον*—but for this we should first allegorise Atlas as the diameter of the whole. However, it soon becomes clear that the Atlas myth, even on this charitable interpretation, contains presuppositions which are unacceptable for Aristotle.

where Aristotle starts to consider the different views pronounced on the origin of the sea. Aristotle begins with a brief mention of "those ancients who concerned themselves with theology" and who said that the seas have springs, after which he turns to those who were "wiser in human knowledge."

From the above passages we can draw some important conclusions regarding fr. 150 of Eudemus.⁴⁵ First, that the poets and prose writers discussed by Eudemus constitute a well defined, self-consistent group for Aristotle: they are the "theologians," those ancient authors who concerned themselves with mythical narratives about the gods and their genealogy. Although Aristotle acknowledges that they could also speak about the physical world, this group is clearly distinguished from the philosophers. Eudemus' text, as seems obvious from Damascius, discussed this group of theologians, and it is highly improbable that Eudemus ignored the Aristotelian demarcation in his survey and treated the theologians without distinguishing them from the *physikoi* and other philosophers.

Moreover, it should be clear that Eudemus' text could not have served as a preliminary historical survey for the discussion of a point in a systematic work in philosophy, unless he seriously disagreed with his master's tenet. We may consider, on the basis of the Aristotelian passages, those problems in the discussion of which the views of the theologians, in spite of their lack of clarity, can be relevant.

Aristotle mentions the "theologians" in connection with the material cause.⁴⁶ Even if we suppose that Eudemus disregarded what Aristotle had objected to Hippias' method in *Metaph.* 1.3, it would, in such a context, make absolutely no sense to follow, as Eudemus did, the succession of divine generations. If we speak about the ἀρχαί, we would consider the *first* gods of the theologians—as indeed Hippias did—but not their succession up to, say, the seventh generation.

Second, the views of the theologians could also be considered in the discussion of the first substances or heavenly bodies. As we have seen, Aristotle allows that the mythological narratives transmit a basic truth when they speak of the first substances as gods. On this very point they

⁴⁵ Apart from *Metaph.* 983b1ff., Wehrli (1969, 122) refers only to fragments 6ff. of *De philosophia*. I do not think that the context of *De phil.*, as far as we can reconstruct it, can help us in deciding whether Eudemus' fr. 150 could or could not come from a work on physics.

⁴⁶ Cf. Wehrli 1955 ad fr. 89.

are actually proved to be wiser than the *physikoi*. But here too, Eudemus' accounts are irrelevant. For he records precisely what, for Aristotle, was a later addition that obscured the original intuition: the mythical stories about the succession of anthropomorphic gods.

Third, we have the discussion of a particular point, such as the nature and origin of the sea. Yet I cannot imagine that Eudemus' survey, which takes the theologians one after the other and tells their stories from the beginning, could be relevant to the consideration of such a particular problem. Eudemus' material seems best suited to a systematic or allegorical discussion of a succession of items more or less dependent on each other, like the Neoplatonic metaphysics. So I cannot follow Wehrli when he argues, on the basis that fragments of Eudemus' *Physics* also contain historical digressions, that fr. 150 could be part of a work on physics.⁴⁷ Indeed, it tells against Wehrli that these digressions in the *Physics* do not mention the "theologians" at all.⁴⁸

I conclude, then, that Eudemus' text was not a digression in a systematic work intended to review *endoxa* on a particular point under discussion, for, as I have tried to show, there is no such point for which the material as presented by Eudemus could be relevant. Eudemus' work was more probably a synoptical collection of the genealogical narratives of the "theologians."⁴⁹ Obviously, this does not exclude the pos-

⁴⁷ Wehrli 1955, 122.

⁴⁸ The only possible exception is fr. 89, an isolated sentence in D.L. 1.9. It seems likely to me, however, that when Diogenes says that ταῦτα καὶ; Εὐδήμος ὁ Ῥόδιος ἱστορεῖ, he does not refer to the previous sentence which contains an interesting detail mentioned in passing from Theopompus' *Philippica*, but he continues the list of those (Aristotle, Hermippus, Eudoxus and Theopompus) who can testify that the first two gods in the theogony of the Magi were Oromasdes and Areimanius. In this case Diogenes would simply be referring to Eudemus' account of the Magi that we find in fr. 150.

⁴⁹ It is difficult to see how the material was originally organized in Eudemus, as Damascius could shift the entries. For instance, he could put Orpheus first because he had just finished with the *Rhapsodies* and the Hieronymus-Hellanicus version and wanted to group the different accounts on the Orphic theogony together. Also, Homer might have been mentioned immediately after Orpheus, because Damascius claimed, *pace* Eudemus, that Night was the first divinity also in Homer. On the whole, it is possible, as David Runia has suggested to me, that Eudemus organised the entries according to the number of the first divinities. However, within the group of the non-Greek theologians, where Damascius had no apparent reason to change the original order, the Babylonians have *two* first gods, the Magi *one*, and the Sidonians *three*. But it is also possible, as Leonid Zhmud has argued, that the entries were arranged chronologically. Here, the problem is that we can only guess what relative chronology Eudemus would establish for Acusilaus, Epimenides and Pherecydes.

sibility that the data gathered by Eudemus at a later stage could have been used in systematic discussions of different problems. On the contrary, this might well have been the ultimate purpose of such a collection. I would be most inclined to think of an opusculum for school use, a data-base, as it were.⁵⁰

Once this is accepted, fr. 150 of Eudemus displays another interest. It shows the application and institutionalization of the Aristotelian distinction between "theologians" and philosophers. This distinction is so evident for us that it tends to obscure the originality of Eudemus' undertaking. Yet we have to recognise that this demarcation was not usually observed outside the Peripatos.⁵¹ Hippias' view, according to which Homer and Thales, Hesiod and Parmenides held the same doctrine, or at least can be treated on common footing, was more appealing for the Greeks. After all, that is what the history of allegorical interpretation from the early Stoics to the late Neoplatonics is all about.⁵²

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⁵⁰ I would like to stress that this conclusion is not tantamount to accepting Usener's hypothesis regarding the identification of Eudemus' work.

⁵¹ It is noteworthy that Philodemus, drawing on Eudemus, also treated the cosmogonies of the 'theologians' and those of the Presocratics separately. Cf. Henrichs, 78 n. 28 and 80f.

⁵² I would like to thank David Runia, my respondent at the conference in Budapest, Leonid Zhmud, David Sedley, Reviel Netz, Gregory Bucher and Gretchen Reydams-Schils for their attentive reading and very helpful comments.

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