



LISA BRESSAN

ARISTOTLE'S *METAPHYSICS* BOOK K IN
PAUL NATORP'S NEOKANTIAN PERSPECTIVE

ABSTRACT: In the modern age, the particular fact that qualifies book K of Aristotle's *Metaphysics* as the only text in which the object of the science of being *qua* being is identified with the object of theology made the scholars to doubt its authenticity. The most important stance in this regard is that of P. Natorp, who, in the famous essay of 1888 "Über Aristoteles' *Metaphysik* 1-8 K, 1065 a 26", recovering and studying in the light of the Neokantian philosophical perspective some observations of the leading scholars of Aristotle, such as V. Rose, L. Spengel, F. Überweg and W. Christ, tried to demonstrate its inauthenticity. For Natorp, since the *ὄν ἀπλῶς* or *ἡ ὄν* and the *ὄν τι καὶ γένος τι* are opposite entities, and since the one excludes the other, a science dealing with being in general is superior to all those sciences treating a particular field of being and cannot be identified with any of them, not even with the most important one. As a matter of fact, Aristotle genuine conception about the structure and meaning of metaphysics is that the *πρώτη φιλοσοφία* must also deal with the unmovable and immaterial being, but not only with it. On the contrary, this reading should be considered as the result of the interpolations made in the text by one of the compilers of the *Metaphysics*. Natorp observes that the most significant among these interpolations concerns the whole book K, which, according to the scholar, should lead to expunge the work of Aristotle (cf. P. Natorp, "Thema und Disposition der aristotelischen *Metaphysik*", *Philosophical Monatshefte*, 24, 1888, p. 37-65, 540-574).

RÉSUMÉ: À l'époque moderne, la particularité qui qualifie le livre K de la *Métaphysique* d'Aristote en tant que le seul texte où l'objet de la science de l'être en tant que être est identifié avec l'objet de la théologie fait douter les spécialistes de son authenticité. À ce propos, la prise de position la plus considérable est celle de Paul Natorp qui, dans son célèbre essai de 1888, "Über Aristoteles' *Metaphysik* 1-8 K, 1065 a 26", en approfondant les observations des autres spécialistes d'Aristote – à savoir V. Rose, L. Spengel,

LPh 1, 2013

ARTICLES

F. Überweg et W. Christ – à la lumière de la perspective philosophique néo-kantienne, cherche à démontrer son inauthenticité. Selon Natorp, étant donné que τὸν ἀπλῶς ou ἡ ὄν et τὸν τι καὶ γένος τι sont des opposés qui s'excluent réciproquement, une science qui s'occupe de l'être en général doit être supérieure à toutes les sciences qui s'occupent d'un particulier domaine de l'être et cette science ne peut pas être identifiée avec aucune entre ces dernières, même pas avec la plus importante. En réalité, la conception authentique d'Aristote à propos de la structure et de la signification de la métaphysique est celle selon laquelle la πρώτη φιλοσοφία doit concerner l'être immobile et immatériel, mais elle ne doit pas regarder seulement celui-ci. Au contraire, cette lecture doit être considéré comme le résultat de plusieurs interpolations du texte qui ont été réalisées par des compilateurs de la *Μεταφυσική*. Natorp observe que la plus significative entre ces interpolations concerne l'entier livre K qui, à son avis, devrait amener à la décision de le supprimer parmi les œuvres d'Aristote (voir P. Natorp, "Thema und Disposition der aristotelischen Metaphysik", *Philosophical Monatshefte*, 24, 1888, p. 37-65, 540-574).

KEYWORDS: Aristotle; Metaphysics; Book K; Natorp; Neokantism; *Grundphilosophie*; First Philosophy; Being *qua* Being; Theology; God

Book K of the *Metaphysics* plays a major role in the historical transmission of Aristotle's philosophy, because it demonstrates the interpretation of metaphysics as theology. It contains the famous passage in which being is identified with the divine being: being *qua* being is the separated being (χωριστόν), that is the ultimate and supreme principle (πρώτη καὶ κυριωτάτη ἀρχή); consequently, the science of being *qua* being, that is first philosophy, is the science of the divine being (τὸ θεῖον) and, therefore, theology (θεολογική).¹

During the XIX century, however, this peculiar fact began to raise some doubts about the authenticity of book K.² The most important

¹ See Aristot. *Metaph.* K 7, 1064a 28-b1.

² Cf. V. Rose, *De Aristotelis librorum Ordine et Auctoritate*, Berlin, Reimer, 1854 (who first expressed the thesis of the inauthenticity of book K); L. Spengel, "Über die Reihenfolge der naturwissenschaftlichen Schriften des Aristoteles", *Abhandlungen der Bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften*, 3, 1849; F. Überweg, *Das Altertum*, in Id., *Grundriss der Geschichte der Philosophie*, Berlin, Mittler und Sohn, 1854; W. Christ, *Studia in Aristotelis Libros Metaphysicos*, Berlin, G. Bethge, 1853. Natorp is, however, the first to resume strongly the issue, already raised in the Renaissance, about the relation between ontology and theology in Aristotle's metaphysics. As S. Menn noted in his interesting article on "Zeller and the Debates about Aristotle's *Metaphysics*", in G. Hartung (ed.), *Eduard Zeller. Philosophie- und Wissenschaftsgeschichte im 19. Jahrhundert*, Berlin-New York, W. de Gruyter, 2010, p. 93-122, after the logical-epistemological criticism of the mechanical philosophers of the XVII century like Descartes and Gassendi, at the end of the XVIII century the interest in the *Metaphysics* increases again with the writers

stance was the point of view expressed by Natorp, who marked a turning point in the studies about the reception and the interpretation of the structure and the meaning of the whole Aristotelian metaphysics.³

influenced by Kant, in particular Buhle (the editor of the Bipontine Greek-Latin edition of Aristotle, 1791-1800), Tennemann, Tiedemann, and Fülleborn. But these writers can be astonishingly rude about the *Metaphysics*, mixing summaries with dismissive criticism. They take the *Metaphysics* as a proto-version of the Wolffian metaphysics that Kant criticized in the first *Critique*. The first modern writer to treat the *Metaphysics* with proper respect, and to make it the key in understanding Aristotle's philosophy, is Hegel in his *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*. Beginning in the 1820's and especially in the 30's and 40's there is an explosion of editions, commentaries, and monographs on the *Metaphysics*, as well as detailed and sympathetic accounts in larger histories of ancient, or all, philosophy (cf. i.e. C.A. Brandis, in *Aristotelis et Theophrasti Metaphysica*, Berlin, Reimer, 1823; K.L. Michelet, *Examen critique de l'Ouvrage d'Aristote intitulé Métaphysique*, Paris, J.A. Mercklein, 1836; V. Cousin, *De la Métaphysique d'Aristote*, Paris, Ladrangé, 1838; F. Ravaisson, *Essai sur la Métaphysique d'Aristote*, Paris, impr. Royale, 1837-1846; A. Schwegler, in *Die Metaphysik des Aristoteles*, Tübingen, Fues, 1847-1848; H. Bonitz, in *Aristotelis Metaphysica*, Bonn, Narcos, 1848-1849). All of these authors are well aware of the issue of the unity or non-unity of the *Metaphysics*, but their interest is not about the ontology-and-theology problem. Instead they try to reply in one way or another to the problem of composition raised by Samuel Petit and then Johann Gottlieb Buhle. Petit in his *Miscellanea* of 1630 notes that the *Metaphysics* is not listed in Diogenes Laertius' catalogue of Aristotle's works. So he tries to find titles in Diogenes Laertius that might be identified with single books or short book-sequences in the *Metaphysics*. Building on Petit, Buhle in 1788 makes a sceptical attack on the authenticity of the *Metaphysics*, admitting that Aristotle wrote a treatise on first philosophy but denying its identity with the text we have. The problem about ontology and theology is instead present in another author of the Renaissance, namely Francesco Patrizi. In his *Discussiones Peripateticae* of 1581 he argues that the *Metaphysics* is not one treatise but two Aristotelian treatises intermixed, ABKAMN on 'wisdom' or 'first philosophy' or 'theology' and ΓΔΕΖΗΘΙ on the universal science of being, which later writers will call ontology. This difficult becomes a major concern again with Natorp in 1888, and will dominate scholarship on the *Metaphysics* ever since (see Menn, *Zeller and the Debates*, p. 93-105).

³ Every later scholar or expert who proposed a personal interpretation of Aristotle's metaphysics and of the origin and the meaning of book K was obliged to take account of Natorp's interpretation, which maintained that the science of being in its general sense cannot be identified with the science of a particular being. See also, among the others, W. Jaeger, *Studien zur Entstehungsgeschichte des Metaphysik des Aristoteles*, Berlin, Weidmann, 1912; H. von Arnim, "Aristoteles' K und B", *Wiener Studien*, 44, 1929, p. 32-38; P. Merlan, "Metaphysik: Name und Gegenstand", *The Journal of Hellenic Studies*, 77, 1957, p. 87-92; P. Aubenque, "Sur l'inauthenticité du livre K de la *Métaphysique*", in P. Moraux-J. Wiesner (eds), *Zweifelhaftes im Corpus Aristotelicum. Studien zum einigen Dubia*, Berlin, W. de Gruyter, 1983, p. 318-344; V. Décarie, "L'authenticité du livre Kappa de la *Métaphysique*", in Moraux-Wiesner, *Zweifelhaftes im Corpus Aristotelicum*, p. 295-317; G. Reale, *Il concetto di filosofia prima e l'unità della*

In his essay of 1888, *Thema und Disposition der aristotelischen Metaphysik*, Natorp states that the main difficulty of Aristotle's *Metaphysics* consists exactly in the double interpretation of the task given to philosophy (φιλοσοφία), which appears to be at the same time science of being in general and science of a particular kind of being, that is the divine being. About this, Natorp points out that

since the ὄν ἀπλῶς or ἡ ὄν and the ὄν τι καὶ γένος τι are opposite entities, and since the one excludes the other, [...] a science which deals with being in general and with being *qua* being, and which is therefore prior to sciences which only deal with a particular kind of being, cannot be identified with one of these sciences, not even with the most important one.⁴

According to the scholar, however, this double interpretation of the task of philosophy should not be ascribed to Aristotle, since his genuine conception is that the πρώτη φιλοσοφία must *also* deal with the unmovable and immaterial being, but *not only* with it. On the contrary, this reading should be considered as the result of the interpolations made in the text by one of the compilers of the *Metaphysics*. Natorp observes that the most significant among these interpolations concerns the whole book K, which – especially in chapters 1-8 – shows a greater attention to transcendent questions and, consequently, a smaller interest in the metaphysical problem of knowledge of nature.⁵

Metafisica di Aristotele, Milano, Vita e Pensiero, 1961, p. 215-257; E. Martineau, “De l'inauthenticité du livre E de la *Métaphysique* d'Aristote”, *Conférence*, 5, 1997, p. 445-509. It is obvious, finally, that the question of the inauthenticity of book K has been studied by all the experts who investigated into the problem of the meaning of the whole Aristotelian metaphysics, and whose names cannot be all enlisted here.

⁴ P. Natorp, “Thema und Disposition der aristotelischen *Metaphysik*”, *Philosophische Monatshefte*, 24, 1888, p. 37-65; 540-574, esp. p. 49-50: [...], da ὄν ἀπλῶς oder ἡ ὄν und ὄν τι καὶ γένος τι, einander ausschliessende Gegensätze sind, [...] eine Wissenschaft, die vom Seienden überhaupt und als solchem handelt, gleichermassen übergeordnet, sie kann nicht zugleich mit einer derselben, und sei es die wichtigste, vornehmste, identisch sein.

⁵ Therefore, Natorp is in contrast to Brandis' and Ravaisson's points of view. Although they both consider book K not as a mere summary but as an independent work, the former maintains that it was written before the related issues of the first philosophy developed in BΓΕ (and this explains its obscurity and its uncertainties, cf. C.A. Brandis, “Über die aristotelische *Metaphysik*”, *Abhandlungen der königlichen*

Before looking at the critical analysis of *Metaphysics* K drawn by Natorp in his essay of 1888, “Über Aristoteles’ *Metaphysik* K 1-8, 1065 a 26”,⁶ which shows the textual reasons responsible for its inauthenticity, it is convenient to explain how, in Natorp’s Neokantian philosophical perspective,⁷ his thesis of the inauthenticity of book K is related to his interpretation of the topic and the structure of Aristotle’s *Metaphysics*.

In Natorp’s point of view, the topic, that is the linker between the various parts of the *Metaphysics* (as if they were members of a unique and coherent body), is to be found – according to Aristotle himself – in the first book, precisely in *Metaphysics* A 1-2, and consists in determining “what is the nature of the science we are looking for, and what is the

Akademie der Wissenschaften, hist.-phil. Klasse, Berlin, 1834, p. 63-87), while the latter considers it a later rewriting of the first philosophy, meant not to belittle the previous work, but to lay the foundations of a new exposition of the first philosophy (and this explains his increased depth, clarity and simplicity, cf. Ravaisson, *Essai*). According to Natorp, book K is certainly more flowing and much easier to read, but this is the result of a convenient attitude assumed by its author, who passes over the most difficult points (the argumentations of B and Γ are the most complex). Furthermore, the affected linearity of its style, which differs from the “typical Aristotelian conciseness”, makes us think of the paraphrasers’ talkativeness. As a direct consequence of this, Natorp observes – in contrast with Ravaisson – that Aristotle cannot have taken a step back (from the point of view of the contents) from the exposition of BΓE to the less complete exposition of K. On the other hand, if book K constitutes a simple outline – as maintains Brandis – its argumentation should be concise and obscure, packed with ideas, and not linear and clear as it actually appears. In addition, the realization of this outline, that is the argumentation of B, should be much more coherent, organized, stylistically compact, whereas it is rather obscure and complex.

⁶ See P. Natorp, “Über Aristoteles’ *Metaphysik* K 1-8, 1065 a 26”, *Archiv für Geschichte der Philosophie*, 1, 1888, p. 178-193.

⁷ As it is known, Paul Natorp is one of the three main exponents of the Neokantian philosophy of the Marburg’s School, together with Hermann Cohen e Ernst Cassirer (cf. H. Dussort, *L’École de Marbourg*, Paris, Presses Universitaires de France, 1963; J. Vuillemin, *L’héritage kantien et la révolution copernicienne*, Paris, Presses Universitaires de France, 1954; F. Châtelet (ed.), *La filosofia del mondo scientifico e industriale (1860-1940)*, Milano, Rizzoli, 1975; U. Renz, *Die Rationalität der Kultur. Zur Kulturphilosophie und ihrer transzendentalen Begründung bei Cohen, Natorp und Cassirer*, Hamburg, Meiner, 2001). As regards to Natorp’s philosophical perspective, see C. Micheli, “Il problema dell’a priori nella filosofia di Paul Natorp”, *Sapienza*, 32, 1979, p. 30-48; G. Gigliotti, *Avventure e disavventure del trascendentale. Studio su Cohen e Natorp*, Napoli, Guida, 1989; Ead., “Objekt und Methode. Das Problem der Psychologie in Natorps Philosophie”, in P. Schmid (ed.), *Grenzen der kritischen Vernunft*, Basel, Schwabe, 1997, p. 95-114.

mark which our search and our whole investigation must reach”.⁸ According to the Neokantian scholar, Aristotle meant to find a science which is knowledge of causes and first principles, that is of what is *allgemeinste* and *abstracteste*. This science is the *philosophische Grundwissenschaft* (πρώτη φιλοσοφία), mentioned by Aristotle in *Metaphysics* Γ 1, whose object is the ὄν ἢ ὄν, that is being *qua* being, which could be assimilated, according to Natorp, to the Kantian ‘object in general’ (*Gegenstand überhaupt*).⁹

In the *Critique of pure reason*, Kant explains the problematic nature of the concept of ‘object in general’, which is directly related to the core of critical philosophy:

all our representations are in fact related to some objects through the understanding, and, since appearances are nothing but representations, the understanding thus relates them to a something, as the object of sensible intuition: but this something is to that extent only the transcendental object. This signifies, however as something = x, of which we know nothing at all, [...]. This transcendental object cannot even be separated from the sensible *data*, for then nothing would remain through which it would be thought. It is therefore no object of cognition in itself, but only the representation of appearances under the concept of an object in general, which is determinable through the manifold of those appearances.¹⁰

⁸ Aristot. *Metaph.* A 2, 983a 21-23 (trans. by W.D. Ross, in *The Complete Works of Aristotle*, The Revised Oxford Translation, ed. by J. Barnes, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1984, *ad loc.*): τίς μὲν οὖν ἡ φύσις τῆς ἐπιστήμης τῆς ζητουμένης εἴρηται, καὶ τίς ὁ σκοπὸς οὗ δεῖ τυγχάνειν τὴν ζήτησιν καὶ τὴν ἄλλην μέθοδον.

⁹ See Natorp, “Thema und Disposition”, p. 39.

¹⁰ I. Kant, *Kritik der reinen Vernunft*, 250-251 (trans. by P. Guyer-A.W. Wood, in I. Kant, *Critique of pure reason*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1998): “alle unsere Vorstellungen werden in der Tat durch den Verstand auf irgendein Objekt bezogen, und da Erscheinungen nichts als Vorstellungen sind, so bezieht sie der Verstand auf ein Etwas als den Gegenstand der sinnlichen Anschauung: aber dieses Etwas ist insofern nur das transzendente Objekt. Dieses bedeutet aber ein Etwas = x, wovon wir gar nichts wissen, noch überhaupt [...]. Dieses transzendente Objekt lässt sich gar nicht von den sinnlichen *datis* absondern, weil alsdann nichts übrig bleibt, wodurch es gedacht würde. Es ist also kein Gegenstand der Erkenntnis an sich selbst, sondern nur die Vorstellung der Erscheinungen unter dem Begriffe eines Gegenstandes überhaupt, der durch das Mannigfaltige derselben bestimmbar ist”.

Therefore, Kant establishes a difference between the object of experience, that is the phenomenon, which is the object for us, what we are given, and the transcendental object, which refers to a precise function of the process of knowledge of objects of experience, that is the unifying and objectifying activity of the pure apperception, which synthesizes and organizes the multiplicity of experience.

However, the empirical object and the transcendental object are not two different entities: in fact, even if they never come to an identity, the one turns into the other. The empirical object represents the result of the cognitive process of the subject, the completed unification of the sensible *data*, whereas the transcendental object represents the function of the synthesis, of this reduction into unity. Therefore, the transcendental object is not to be considered as an object of knowledge placed side by side of empirical objects, but as something necessary for their formation: it is the result of a particular way of considering the process of formation of our knowledge of objects, whose focus is the subject's ability of receiving and coordinating the sensible *data*, reducing them into unity and giving them a necessary nature which allows us to talk about them.

Consequently, the empirical object and the transcendental object are not two different species of object inside the common genre represented by the object in general, but they are to be seen as two different ways of considering the cognitive process of the subject. These two points of view generate the concept of object in general as synthetic principle of human experience.¹¹

According to Natorp, the expression 'being *qua* being' could be assimilated to the Kantian expression 'object in general' since it is the Aristotelian concept which comes closest to the ultimate law of thought, that is to what makes every knowledge possible, to what allows the formation of the object. Nonetheless, this law of thought should remain

¹¹ See A. Organte, "Dal 'nihil negativum' di Baumgarten all'oggetto in generale' di Kant", in G. Micheli-G. Santinello (eds), *Kant a due secoli dalla Critica*, Brescia, La Scuola, 1984, p. 275-282.

a mere requirement, which can never be satisfied by one of real factual positions. In fact, while every determined empirical position has its own structural limits, the requirement of the law is valid beyond every limit, in the field of unlimited. Since it represents the ultimate ground of all the entities mentioned, it must be superior – in its origin and logical extension – to all the other determinations. Consequently, also being *qua* being as well as the principle of substance should indicate “a law concerning how to proceed in constructing objects of experience, a law concerning a process of knowledge that is indeed infinite and without terminus”.¹² On the contrary, Aristotle assumes that the object is given: object is precisely how we must conceive it. He thinks that objects in themselves, and conceived as completely determinate, must be constituted in the way that our knowledge posits them. Rather, the claim that an object ‘is’ thus and so can only mean that “it is to be determined by us, at whatever stage we have already reached and under whatever presuppositions of our knowledge, in that way, but that it can be further determined indefinitely”.¹³

Yet, as Natorp points out, even if Aristotle did not think that an investigation into the object in general is related to the conditions and the laws of the possible objects of experience, when, wondering whether it belongs to one and the same science to treat of both the first principles of being or substance and the principles of proof, he answers that the ultimate principles of knowledge are precisely those that apply to being as such, he accords with criticism. In fact, if

an object must, in accordance with the laws peculiar of knowledge, be thought in relation to and for the sake of knowledge, it follows that the primary laws of

¹² P. Natorp, *Platos Ideenlehre. Eine Einführung in den Idealismus*, Hamburg, Meiner, 1902, p. 407 (trans. by V. Politis-J. Conolly, in P. Natorp, *Platos' Theory of Ideas. An Introduction to Idealism*, Sankt Augustin, Akademie Verlag, 2004): “dass er bedeutet ein Gesetz des Verfahrens, den Gegenstand in der Erfahrung erst aufzubauen, unendlicher, abschlussloser ist”.

¹³ *Ibid.*: “Er ist für uns, auf der je erreichten Stufe, unter den jeweiligen Voraussetzungen unsrer Erkenntnis, so zu bestimmen, er bleibt aber dabei, und zwar ohne Ende, weiter bestimmbar”.

knowledge are equally primary laws of objects, in so far as there are objects of knowledge at all.¹⁴

As it is clear, therefore, Natorp's reading of the whole Aristotelian *Metaphysics* is deeply influenced by Neokantian interpretation of being *qua* being. From one hand, he approves and judges as authentic in their meaning those passages which consider the investigation of first philosophy as an investigation into being in general and into substance, as basis of all the particular sciences. From the other hand, he disapproves and judges as inauthentic all those passages in which first philosophy is equalled to a particular science, that is theology, in which the law of thought is satisfied by a particular factual position and being is reduced to a particular being, that is the divine.

Consequently, Natorp esteems that the authentic books of *Metaphysics* are first of all book B, since – in the illustration of the aporias – Aristotle seems to determine the task of the science we are looking for, and book Γ, in which Natorp finds his definition of the science we are looking for as “eine generelle Wissenschaft vom dem, was überhaupt Gegenstand sei”.¹⁵

Since this science concerns principles, causes and elements of a single nature in itself, that is substance, (οὐσία), Natorp maintains that the main issue of metaphysical investigation is substance, as what comes conceptually first, from which everything else is derived (ἤρτηται), according to the concept.¹⁶ In this sense, the object of the science we are looking for, that is the *Grundphilosophie* (πρώτη φιλοσοφία), seems to be the πρώτη οὐσία, that is the fundamental concept of substance itself.¹⁷

According to Natorp, this conception is stated in a clear, coherent and explicit way in the central investigation of the work, beginning from

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 392: “weil der Gegenstand doch in der Erkenntnis und für sie, den eignen Gesetzen der Erkenntnis gemäß gedacht werden müsse, so seien also die ersten Gesetze der Erkenntnis auch die ersten Gesetze für den Gegenstand, als Gegenstand der Erkenntnis überhaupt”.

¹⁵ Natorp, “Thema und Disposition”, p. 40.

¹⁶ See Aristot. *Metaph.* Γ 1, 1003b 17.

¹⁷ See Natorp, “Thema und Disposition”, p. 40-41.

book Z and including books ZHΘ,¹⁸ which he considers authentic. In these books, the investigation into substance takes only account – in Natorp’s view – of perceptible substances, but in the perspective of non-perceptible substances, whose investigation is postponed in books ΛMN, which are included in the authentic plan of Aristotle’s work.¹⁹

On the contrary, the scholar judges some passages of book E and the whole book K inauthentic, for they are in contrast with his interpretation of Aristotle’s *Metaphysics*. In these texts, in fact, Natorp maintains that the philosophical science is, from one hand, the science of being in general and, from the other (but in the same sense actually), the science of a particular kind of being, that is of what is unmovable and eternal.²⁰

As far as book K is concerned, therefore, Natorp aims to demonstrate that its author included in it something more about the

¹⁸ See Aristot. *Metaph.* Z 1, 1028a 14, 30; 1028b 2, 7.

¹⁹ See Natorp, “Thema und Disposition”, p. 543-545; 554-558; 561-571.

²⁰ As far as book E is concerned, the first chapter is – according to Natorp – a mere repetition of Γ 1-2, but since it doesn’t give a rigorous definition of the object of the quest, that is substance, it represents a step back rather than a step forward if compared to the previous investigation. The passages containing the contradictory formulation of first philosophy and the classification of theoretical sciences are to be taken off. Despite this removal, however, the remaining part of the first chapter of E can be considered an independent work, with evident bonds neither with the previous books (ABΓ), nor with the following ones. As a matter of fact, it represents a project which came before the introduction to first philosophy and which constitutes perhaps an outline revised and corrected by Aristotle himself in his later rewriting of books B and Γ, and discarded afterwards (cf. *ibid.*, p. 546-549). As to chapters 2-4 of book E, the whole of their argumentation can be explained as an attempt to account for the difference between the different senses of being established in book Δ. They appear to have been written by a compiler, who found it strange that, in stating its object, the science which was to deal with being, did not take account of three of its meanings. That is why he wrote and included some passages drawn from Aristotelian assumptions. Since the compiler seems to know the logical meaning of being *per accidens* of *Metaphysics* Δ 7, as well as its physical and more precise meaning contained in *Physics* II 5, he is likely to be a minor Peripatetic (cf. *ibid.*, p. 549-554). Taking all these reasons into account, therefore, Natorp maintains that the whole book E, whose partial author could even be Aristotle himself, should be all the same removed from the original compositional structure of the *Metaphysics*. About the problems of authenticity concerning book *Epsilon* of Aristotle’s *Metaphysics*, see E. Berti, in Aristote, *Métaphysique Livre Epsilon (VI)*, Introduction, traduction et commentaire (forthcoming), and references therein.

transcendent, from the illustration of the aporias (in the part corresponding to the exposition of *Metaphysics* B). Consequently, in the passage of *Metaphysics* K 1, 1059a 34-38 we can read:

but again the science we are looking for must not be supposed to deal with the causes which have mentioned in the *Physics*. For it does not deal with the final cause (for this is the good, and this is found in the field of action and movement; and it is the first mover – for that is the nature of the end – but in the case of things unmovable there is no first mover).²¹

This argument, which should correspond to the illustration of one of the two thesis of the first aporia,²² as it is illustrated in *Metaphysics* K, works already – in Natorp's interpretation – on the assumption that the science we are looking for should deal with what is unmovable, and only with it. As a matter of fact, not the causes but only the end, considered also as first mover – is taken into consideration. But the end cannot belong to the science we are looking for, because it belongs to the field of action and of movement and not to the world of unmovable things, which are the object of the mentioned science.

However, aside from the inappropriate interference of the conception considering first philosophy as the science of the unmovable, what appears neglected in this passage is – according to Natorp – the concept of substance, whose crucial role in the investigation seems to be often pointed out by Aristotle. Natorp maintains that, in *Metaphysics* B 2, 996b 12, Aristotle demonstrates in a significant way and by means of an argument which is coherent with his conceptions (Γ 2 and Z 1), that the

²¹ ἀλλ'οὐδὲ περὶ τὰς ἐν τοῖς φυσικοῖς εἰρημέναις αἰτίας τὴν ἐπιζητουμένην ἐπιστήμην θετέον· οὔτε γὰρ περὶ τὸ οὐ ἔνεκεν (τοιούτων γὰρ τὸ ἀγαθόν, τοῦτο δ'ἐν τοῖς πρακτοῖς ὑπάρχει καὶ ταῖς οὖσιν ἐν κινήσει καὶ τοῦτο πρῶτον κινεῖ – τοιούτων γὰρ τὸ τέλος – τὸ δὲ πρῶτον κινήσαν οὐκ ἔστιν ἐν τοῖς ἀκινήτοις).

²² Precisely in the first thesis, corresponding to *Metaph.* B 2, 996b 1-26, which states that it does not belong to one science to treat all the principles; from one hand because the principles are not contrary – whereas the science of the contraries is one –, from the other hand because unmovable realities do not have among their principles the either the efficient or the final cause and therefore the science studying these reality does not treat the mentioned principles.

substance has the right to represent the most important object of the science we are looking for.²³

According to Natorp's, the speculative attitude of the author of K, which is extremely different from Aristotle's, becomes even more apparent in the fifth aporia. While the difficult point of B (2, 997a 34-998a 19) consisted in establishing whether the science we are looking for must only deal with perceptible substances or also with non-perceptible substances such as the Forms and the intermediates, in K it consists in deciding whether the science we are looking for deals with perceptible substances or not with them, but with certain others.²⁴ Natorp considers obvious that Aristotle – especially in the preliminary passages of his metaphysical investigation – was far from thinking that the science which deals with being in general should not deal with the perceptible being. Quite the opposite: in *Metaphysics* Z 2 the investigation is temporarily confined to perceptible substances, whereas the question about the existence of other kinds of substances is mentioned but postponed.

On the contrary, in Natorp's view, the author of K considers the supersensible the only significant object of the science we are looking for. He states, in fact, that

the Forms do not exist. But it is hard to say, even if one supposes them to exist, why the same is not true of the other things of which there are Forms, as to the objects of mathematics. I mean that they place the objects of mathematics between the Forms and the perceptible things, as a third class of things besides the ideal and the things of this world; but there is not a third man or horse besides the ideals and the individuals.²⁵

As Natorp points out, this passage contains several problematic points. Firstly, the author is thought to deny decidedly and definitely the

²³ See Natorp, "Thema und Disposition", p. 181-182.

²⁴ See Aristot. *Metaph.* K 1, 1059a 38-b 1.

²⁵ Aristot. *Metaph.* K 1, 1059b 3-9: τὰ μὲν οὖν εἶδη ὅτι οὐκ ἔστι, δῆλον (ὅμως δὲ ἀπορίαν ἔχει, κὰν εἶναι τις αὐτὰ θῆ, διὰ τί ποτ' οὐχ ὥσπερ ἐπὶ τῶν μαθηματικῶν, οὕτως ἔχει καὶ ἐπὶ τῶν ἄλλων ὧν ἔστιν εἶδη· λέγω δ' ὅτι τὰ μαθηματικὰ μὲν μεταξὺ τε τῶν εἰδῶν τιθέασιν καὶ τῶν αἰσθητῶν οἷον τρίτα τινὰ παρὰ τὰ εἶδη τε καὶ τὰ δεῦρο, τρίτος δ' ἄνθρωπος οὐκ ἔστιν οὐδ' ἵππος παρ' αὐτόν τε καὶ τοὺς καθ' ἕκαστον [...]).

existence of the Forms, whereas Aristotle has never opposed such a violent refusal to Plato's doctrine, without explaining and discussing the reasons for his refusal. Secondly, the 'third man argument' (τρίτος ἄνθρωπος) used by the author of K, is interpreted as a way not to refer to the technical argument used by Aristotle to criticize the doctrine of the Forms,²⁶ but to put in doubt the existence of the intermediates. In other words, the 'third man' is not to be read here as the common predicate of both the intelligible and the perceptible man (predicate which is itself a Form, that is a third man existing beside the first Form of man and of perceptible man), but as the intermediate between these two entities. According to Natorp, the author of K seems to adapt Aristotle's argument in order to support his thesis, whose purpose is to demonstrate that the science we are seeking only deals with what is separate and unmovable, and therefore it does not treat the objects of mathematics. These objects, in fact, are not 'intermediate' objects between perceptible and intelligible entities (since the intermediate do not exist) and – whatever they are – none of them can exist separately from the matter, nor does it deal with the perceptible substances, for they are perishable.²⁷

Natorp maintains that, in the seventh aporia, the author of K shows with the greatest evidence his real intention K, that is to completely support the idea that considers immaterial substance as the only object of first philosophy. He states, in fact, that

²⁶ See Aristot. *De ideis* fr. 4 Ross (= Alex. Aphr. in *Metaph.* p. 84, 2-7; 84, 21-85, 3 Hayduck); *Metaph.* A 9, 991a 17, where Aristotle calls 'third man' an objection already known in the Academy. It is known, in fact, that this objection is the rigorous reformulation of an argument dating back to Plato himself (see Pl. *Prm.* 132A-B).

²⁷ See Aristot. *Metaph.* K 1, 1059b 11-14: τούτων γὰρ οὐθέν ἐστιν οἷον αἱ μαθηματικαὶ ζητοῦσι τῶν ἐπιστημῶν· οὐδὲ μὴν περὶ τὰ μαθηματικὰ ἢ ζητούμενη νῦν ἐστὶν ἐπιστήμη (χωριστὸν γὰρ αὐτῶν οὐθέν)· ἀλλ' οὐδὲ τῶν αἰσθητῶν οὐσιῶν; cf. Natorp, "Über Aristoteles' *Metaphysik*", p. 183-184.

we seem to seek another kind of substance beside the sensible substances, [...] and this is our problem (τὸ προκείμενον τοῦτ' ἔστιν ἡμῖν), i.e. to see if there is something which can exist apart by itself and belongs to not sensible thing.²⁸

According to Natorp, Aristotle never considered the immaterial substance as the ultimate and unique purpose and object of first philosophy: this conception is stated nor in *Metaphysics* A nor in B, and neither in *Metaphysics* E 1 or Λ. In this view, the interpretation given by the author of K could depend on the fact that he was greatly influenced by the transcendence of the final chapters of Λ but he did not really catch their real meaning. Finally, the scholar points out that also the omissions of book K show the systematic exclusion of matter from the metaphysical quest – which only treats the immaterial being. In fact, K does not contain the passage corresponding to the thirteenth aporia of book B, concerning being as ‘potency’ (δυνάμει ὄν), as well as the problem of movement, previously connected – in the first list of aporias of B – to the problem of potentially being.²⁹ In Natorp’s interpretation, therefore, book K is not a work by Aristotle, even if it reproduces the aporias in their main content and speculative style (quoting even literally some passages of B), but it is as an independent imitation marked by a speculative attitude which is often Platonizing.³⁰

²⁸ Aristot. *Metaph.* K 2, 1060a 10-13: ζητεῖν μὲν γὰρ εἰκοκαμεν ἄλλην τινά, καὶ τὸ προκείμενον τοῦτ' ἔστιν ἡμῖν, λέγω δὲ τὸ ἰδεῖν εἴ τι χωριστὸν καθ' αὐτὸ καὶ μηδενὶ τῶν αἰσθητῶν ὑπάρχον; see Natorp, “Über Aristoteles’ *Metaphysik*”, p. 185.

²⁹ See Aristot. *Metaph.* B 1, 996a 10-12.

³⁰ For the same reasons expressed by Natorp – exclusion of the matter and of everything connected with it, Platonizing attitude, identification of philosophy and the science of the divine –, in his *Aristoteles*, W. Jaeger instead of considering the chapters 1-8 of K as inauthentic, supported its authenticity by means of a historical and genetic interpretation of Aristotle’s philosophy. While in the *Studien* (1912) Jaeger took into account Natorp’s interpretation of book K and criticized Natorp’s arguments from a philological point of view, in the *Aristoteles* (1923) he does not criticize those arguments, but solves them through his genetic method. According to his interpretation, K 1-8 belongs to the early period of Aristotle’s philosophy, when the philosopher did not consider the concept of being *qua* being as the object of metaphysics (and so as the object of the dialectic illustration of different senses of being), but as “never changing and eternal reality”. In other words, chapters 1-8 seem to be a draft of the course of metaphysics corresponding to books BΓΕ, dating back to a previous period, in which

As to chapters 3-6 of book K, they show, according to the Neokantian scholar, a greatest fidelity to their model, that is to book Γ.

the immaterial conception of reality is exactly the original characteristic of the primary metaphysics. In *Metaph. K* Aristotle is thought to use the term χωριστόν giving it the same meaning chosen by Plato when he attributes it to Forms: τὸ χωριστόν is a reality subsisting for itself and not as an attribute of a sensible thing (μηδενὶ τῶν αἰσθητῶν ὑπάρχον), it is eternal and essential, existing for itself in a transcendent way (ἄϊδιος οὐσία χωριστὴ καὶ καθ'αυτὴν). These Platonizing expressions, which – “in a rigorous Platonic way” – separate the pure concept of being from the matter, differ from the later draft of the work, and are therefore evidence, in Jaeger's view, of its “golden authenticity” (cf. W. Jaeger, *Aristoteles. Grundlegung einer Geschichte seiner Entwicklung*, Berlin, Weidmann, 1923). In this way, according to Jaeger, in the first period of Aristotle's thought the knowledge of the supersensible substance is reached directly through a sort of intuitive knowledge, a residue of Platonism. Later on, during the years of teaching in the Lyceum, Aristotle worked out his doctrine of the sensible substance characterized by the primacy of form. But this doctrine, contained in books ΖΗΘ, is initially extraneous to the core of the *Metaphysics*. In a third moment, Aristotle tried to unify the two doctrines, conceiving metaphysics not as an intuitive knowledge, but as a demonstrative knowledge of the existence of a supersensible substance, as required by the theory of the sensitive substance (this is the so-called *Spätmetaphysik*). The concept which allowed this unification to Aristotle is the new concept of being *qua* being, as capable to unite in itself all the different meanings of being. But, as Jaeger points out, this way to reconcile metaphysics as theology and metaphysics as ontology is impossible, because there is a contradiction between the two conceptions. As theology, metaphysics is a particular science, while as ontology it is a universal science. Aristotle himself noted this contradiction, and tried to overcome it in the final passage of *Metaphysics Epsilon* 1. In Jaeger's opinion, this passage is a later addition made by Aristotle himself to the text of *Epsilon*, but it does not eliminate the contradiction, it makes it even more obvious. Jaeger concludes therefore that “the philosopher can't have resolved the aporia, which presented itself only after Aristotle fused the two draftings. In fact both the deductions of the concept of metaphysics were not a single act of spiritual creation: two essentially different thought processes are embedded into each other”. The idea of a metaphysics split into two parts, divided between ontology and theology, repropose Natorp's interpretation. But Natorp considers as authentic only the conception of metaphysics as ontology, towards which his preference goes, while Jaeger attributes both the two conceptions to Aristotle, as constituting two acts of thought, the first – the Platonic one – most ancient –, the second – the Aristotelic one – more mature and original. About the relation between Natorp and Jaeger, cf. E. Berti, *Aristotele nel Novecento*, Roma-Bari, Laterza, 1992, esp. p. 37-43, resumed in E. Berti, “La *Metafisica* di Aristotele: onto-teologia o filosofia prima?”, in A. Bausola-G. Reale (eds), *Aristotele. Perché la metafisica*, Milano, Vita e Pensiero, 1994, p. 117-143. In this article the author argues that it is not difficult to recognize in Jaeger's interpretation the influence of the Neokantianism, although Jaeger, like his friend Stenzel, tried to question the Neokantian interpretation of Plato given by Natorp. These two works are taken into account by G. Reale, *Introduzione* to P. Natorp, *Tema e disposizione della Metafisica di Aristotele*. Con in appendice il saggio *Sull'inautenticità del libro K della Metafisica*, trans. by V. Cicero, Milano, Vita e Pensiero, 1995.

In his view, the main difference concerns the connection between the principle of non-contradiction and the concept of substance, which he considers the core of the whole speculation about the formal principles. According to Natorp, the absence of this connection cannot be attributed to Aristotle: if so, he would have formulated a great number of unimportant and unnecessary remarks leaving out the fundamental point, which is the inner demonstration between the formal principles and the principles of reality. On the contrary, this lack must be ascribed to someone who neglected these important remarks because he had a poor speculative instinct and he had not caught their meaning.³¹

³¹ Recently, some scholars pointed out that the difference between the two treatises is far more radical, for it concerns the meaning of being itself (cf. Aubenque, *Sur l'inauthenticité du livre K de la Métaphysique*, and E. Berti, “La ‘riduzione dei contrari’ in Aristotele”, in Id., *Studi aristotelici*, L’Aquila, L.U. Japadre, 1978, p. 209-231). As a matter of fact, after stating that the term being is said *πολλαχῶς* and not *καθ’ ἓνα τρόπον* (1060b 32-33), the author of K maintains that being *καθ’ ἓν τι καὶ κοινὸν λέγεται πολλαχῶς* (1061b 12), creating therefore a real contradiction in terms. The author, in fact, worrying about the necessity to show that being is – despite its multivocality – the object of a single science, ends up stating that categories are modifications of being *qua* being (1061a 8), and supporting the thesis that the totality of being is reduced into a singular and common principle (*παντὸς τοῦ ὄντος πρὸς ἓν τι καὶ κοινὸν ἢ ἀναγωγή*, 1061a 11-12). In other words, in *Metaphysics* K 3 the hypothesis that the being is the object of a unique science is formulated in order to infer that the being can be predicated according something common (*κοινόν*), and that it is a genre. The verb *ἀνάγεσθαι* – used in *Metaph.* Γ 2 to express the reducibility of the contraries to the unity and the multiplicity – refers here to the connection between the different meanings of being and the first of them, that is to the predication *πρὸς ἓν* (1061a 10-17). In the course on *Aristoteles. Metaphysik Θ 1-3. Von Wesen und Wirklichkeit der Kraft* (1931), Heidegger introduces exactly the reduction of the meanings of being corresponding to the different categories to the *οὐσία* – reduction based on the scholastic *analogia attributionis*, as “participation” of the different meanings to the first –, with a reference to those passages of book K cited above, where the author indicates the reduction with the term *ἀναγωγή* and defines the *οὐσία* as a *κοινόν*. Heidegger still follows F. Brentano, *Von der nach Seienden mannigfachen Bedeutung des Aristoteles* (1862), not as regards to the reduction of the four meanings of being to the being *per se* – here he refuses this –, but as regards to the reduction of the categories to the *οὐσία* as ‘entia’, as the very essence of being. This reduction allows to conceive God as the “supreme concretion of *οὐσία*”, as the *ente per essentia*. For this reason ontology is reduced to theology (cf. *Die Grundbegriffe der Antiken Philosophie*, course of 1926). The same interpretation of Aristotle’s metaphysics is in *Metaphysische Anfangsgründe der Logik* (1928), where Heidegger explicitly mentions the definition of first philosophy as science being *qua* being, given by Aristotle in *Metaph.* Γ 1, and that of philosophy as theological science, given in *Metaph.* E 1. He says that “philosophy as first philosophy has a dual character, it is science of being and science of the divine”. Then

In addition, these chapters too are considered to be corrupted by the conception – far more Platonizing than Aristotelian – that no truth can be found in the earthly and changeable things, so that the true must only be looked for in what is never changing and cosmic.³² Therefore, the author of K misunderstands the passage of *Metaphysics* Γ 5, 1010a 28, where Aristotle points out that general and universal remarks cannot be deduced from the simple observation of the sensible reality (or of some small parts of it). For example, we cannot say that everything is subject to a never ending movement, since in the sensible world too there is something unmovable, which is the universe (οὐρανός). What the author of K means, on the contrary, is that the things of this earth – τὰ δεῦρο, which should correspond to the expression ὁ περὶ ἡμᾶς τοῦ αἰσθητοῦ τόπος, “the region of the sensible world which immediately surrounds us”, of *Metaph.* Γ 5, 1010a 28 – change and do not remain in the same state. Therefore, it is absurd to make them the basis of our judgement about the truth. For in pursuing the truth one must start from the things that are always in the same state and suffer no change.³³

As to the comparison with E – especially with chapter 1 – Natorp finds no significant differences, but the textual problems are repeated in an uncritical way, becoming even more serious in the imitation realised by the author of K. As in *Metaphysics* E 1, in *Metaphysics* K 7 too there is a distinction between the general science and the specific sciences: the former treats being *qua* being, while the latter only deals with a particular kind of being.³⁴ The text of *Metaphysics* K 7 mentions, therefore, the theoretical sciences which only treat a precise kind of being, above all physics, as science of that which is inseparable from matter and has in itself a principle of movement. Nonetheless, the author of K – along the lines of E – points out that “since there is a science of being *qua* being

he states that this duality is the problem already raised by Natorp in 1888. On the origins and developments of Heidegger's interpretation of Aristotelian metaphysics as onto-theology, cf. Berti, *La Metafisica*, p. 395-405.

³² Cf. Natorp, “Über Aristoteles' *Metaphysik*”, p. 188-189.

³³ See Aristot. *Metaph.* K 6, 1063a 10-17.

³⁴ See *ibid.* K 7, 1064a 2-3.

and capable of existing apart, we must consider whether this is to be regarded as the same as natural science or rather as different”.³⁵ But physics deals with things that have a principle of movement in themselves, mathematics is theoretical, and it is a science that deals with things that are at rest, but its objects cannot exist apart. Therefore another science, that is the science of being *qua* being, will be the science of that which can exist apart and is unmovable, if there is a substance of this nature. This means, according to Natorp, that the fundamental philosophical science is – from one hand – the science of being in general, and – from the other hand – a science having as object a particular kind of being, the being unmovable and separable from matter.

On the basis of his philosophical perspective, Natorp notices a contradiction in this double interpretation of first philosophy, since being in general – that is being *qua* being – and a particular kind of being – that is the divine – are opposite and the one excludes the other. In fact, a science dealing with being in general is superior to sciences treating a particular field of being and cannot be identified with any of them, not even with the most important one. This science must therefore give evidence to the metaphysical reality of every kind of being, establishing its existence as well as its essence.³⁶

Natorp observes, however, that the corresponding passage of *Metaphysics* E 1 – if it is correctly read – does not admit the interpretation given by the author of K. In *Metaphysics* E 1, in fact, Aristotle is supposed to maintain that if there is another kind of reality – different from beings constituting the specific objects of physics and mathematics – the science of this must be prior and must be first philosophy, or better, first philosophy in general. This means that this fundamental science – just like the specific theoretical sciences – should deal with things which are material and subject to movement, but *also* (καί) with things which are unmovable and immaterial, establishing their existence and essence just

³⁵ *Ibid.* K 7, 1064a 28-30: ἐπεὶ δ’ ἔστι τις ἐπιστήμη τοῦ ὄντος ἢ ὄν καὶ χωριστόν, σκεπτόν ποτέρον ποτε τῆ φυσικῆ τὴν αὐτὴν θετέον εἶναι ταύτην ἢ μᾶλλον ἐτέραν.

³⁶ See Natorp, “Thema und Disposition”, p. 50.

as it does with the other kinds of being.³⁷ According to Natorp, on the contrary, the interpretation contained in K results exactly from the fact that its author neglects the *καί* of lines 1026a 16 of book E, taking away its most obvious meaning and focusing on its context.

In this respect, Natorp points out that the problem is not whether the divine is object of the fundamental philosophy or not, for he considers it a typical Aristotelian feature. In a passage of *Metaphysics* A 2, in fact, Aristotle – trying to define the object of wisdom – accepts also the opinion of those who consider it “science that deals with divine objects; [...] for God is thought to be among the causes of all things and to be a first principle”.³⁸

Nonetheless, Natorp writes that “God is only *one* of the causes, *one* of the principles, while the object of the science we are looking for is represented by causes and principles *in general*”.³⁹ In this perspective, it is true that first philosophy rises to the supreme rank of sciences exactly because it also investigates into the divine, but it treats this being in the same way as it treats the other beings, that is demonstrating their existence and essence. Only if there were something more to discover about the divine, this would become the object of a specific philosophical science, namely the object of “a second philosophy, (*δευτέρα φιλοσοφία*), like physics”.⁴⁰ However, Natorp denies this possibility in Aristotle's thought, and states that the knowledge of divine only consists in the demonstration of its existence and essence made by first philosophy. Consequently, there is not a specific science about God, there is not a theology different from first philosophy, and it is

³⁷ See Aristot. *Metaph.* E 1, 1026a 10-16.

³⁸ *Ibid.* A 2, 983a 6-11: ἦν τε γὰρ μάλιστ' ἂν ὁ θεὸς ἔχοι, θεία τῶν ἐπιστημῶν ἐστὶ, καὶ εἴ τις τῶν θείων εἴη, μόνη δ' αὐτῆ τούτων ἀμφοτέρων τετύχηκεν· ὁ τε γὰρ θεὸς δοκεῖ τῶν αἰτίων πᾶσιν εἶναι καὶ ἀρχὴ τις, καὶ τὴν τριαύτην ἢ μόνος ἢ μάλιστ' ἂν ἔχοι ὁ θεός. ἀναγκαιότεραι μὲν οὖν πᾶσαι ταύτης, ἀμείνων δ' οὐδεμία.

³⁹ Natorp, “Thema und Disposition”, p. 52: “nur, weil Gott eine der Ursachen, eines der Principien ist, Ursachen und Principien überhaupt aber den Gegenstand der fraglichen Wissenschaft bilden”.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 52.

impossible to identify first philosophy with theological philosophy, since the divine is not *the* object, but *one* of the objects of first philosophy.

This way, Natorp interprets the final section of *Metaphysics* E 1 – which considers the science mentioned above as the first science – in accordance with the Neokantian philosophical perspective, and judges it universal and fundamental for all the other sciences. This science is the science dealing with being *qua* being, and it is

universal in this way (since it gives the common grounds of all the kinds of being), and it will belong to it to consider being *qua* being – both what it is and the attributes which belong to it *qua* being.⁴¹

According to Natorp, the author of K, on the contrary, in his effort to preserve the identification of universal doctrine and theology, changed the meaning of these simple and clear words, writing that “there must necessarily be a science of this substance (the separable and unmovable substance) and this science must be different and prior to natural science (ἐτέραν ἀνάγκη καὶ τὴν ἐπιστήμην αὐτῆς εἶναι καὶ προτέραν τῆς φυσικῆς)”.⁴² This way, the πρώτη φιλοσοφία comes to be considered as περὶ τι γένος and universal at the same time, as well as its object is both a particular substance and the οὐσία in general.⁴³

Natorp states that the fallacy of this interpretation is demonstrated not only by a correct reading of *Metaphysics* E 1, but also by the Aristotelian conception of divine, which is rather ‘sober’, since Aristotle did not name ‘theology’ an unconditioned scientific doctrine of God, nor

⁴¹ Natorp, “Thema und Disposition”, p. 54: “[...] und sie ist allgemein, eben sofern sie die fundamentale ist, (d. h. diejenigen Fundamente legte, die allen γένη τοῦ ὄντος, gemeinsam sind), und ihr fällt die Forschung zu über das Seiende als seiend, sowohl seinem Wesen als seien abhängigen Bestimmungen nach”.

⁴² Aristot. *Metaph.* K 7, 1064b 11-14: εἰ δ’ ἔστιν ἑτέρα φύσις καὶ οὐσία χωριστὴ καὶ ἀκίνητος, ἐτέραν ἀνάγκη καὶ τὴν ἐπιστήμην αὐτῆς εἶναι καὶ προτέραν τῆς φυσικῆς καὶ καθόλου τῷ προτέραν. According to Natorp, the highest degree of confusion is reached by pseudo-Alexander, who writes: “this substance must be prior to natural substance, and the science of this must be the first and universal philosophy” (αὕτη ἢ οὐσία προτέρα ἔσται τῆς φυσικῆς καὶ ἢ περὶ ταύτην ἐπιστήμη ἔσται φιλοσοφία καὶ πρώτη πάντων καὶ καθόλου), Alex. Aphr. in *Metaph.* p. 447, 23-25 Hayduck.

⁴³ See Natorp, “Thema und Disposition”, p. 64-65, note 46.

did he identify his philosophical doctrine with a 'theology'. In fact, this would have meant lowering his speech to the level of myth, which Aristotle always uses in clear contrast with science.⁴⁴

In Natorp's view, therefore, when Aristotle makes ready to legitimize, in a philosophical way, the concept and the existence of God, he confines himself in deducing and in qualifying it as one of the substances. It is certainly the most eminent and necessary substance – in order not to reduce the totality to a 'bad tragedy' – but, from a conceptual point of view, it is a substance exactly like the others.

This way, Natorp maintains that the Aristotelian doctrine of God suits completely the doctrine of substances, as a constitutive part among the others, accordingly to the project of *Metaphysics* E 1. This project states that the fundamental and universal science of being is given the task to establish whether there are – in addition to the perceptible substances – also some unmovable, immaterial, supersensible substances, in the field of which human knowledge could – within its limits – find the divine, an instance which, in the scholar's view, does not involve any identification between theology and πρώτη φιλοσοφία.⁴⁵

According to Natorp, the identification between πρώτη φιλοσοφία and theology dates back to immediately after Aristotle's death, and it is to attribute to the Peripatetic school, where a theologizing tendency was spreading. Furthermore, it should be remembered that in ancient times nobody ever doubted about the Aristotelian origin of the identification between πρώτη φιλοσοφία and theology. Alexander of Aphrodisias, in his

⁴⁴ According to Natorp, if we leave out the mentioned passage in E 1 and the corresponding one in K 7, the expressions θεολόγος, θεολογία, θεολογείν do not refer to a scientific doctrine of God or gods, and then to a philosophical science; their most appropriate meaning is on the contrary related to poetical tales about gods, and therefore to myths, corresponding to the expressions μυθολόγος, μυθολογία, μυθολογείν used in *Meteor.* B 1, 353a 35; *Metaph.* B 4, 1000a 9; *Metaph.* A 3, 983b 28; *Metaph.* Λ 6, 1071b 27; Λ 10, 1075b 26. Therefore, the term 'theology' is considered to be generally related by Aristotle to a *prescientific* stage in the process of thinking, a stage which comes even before the most ancient physicists: see Natorp, "Thema und Disposition", p. 55-58.

⁴⁵ See Natorp, "Thema und Disposition", p. 58.

commentary to the *Metaphysics*, ascribed the designation of the metaphysics as θεολογική – referring probably to E 1 and K 7– to Aristotle himself;⁴⁶ Syrianus and Asclepius maintained that this is Aristotle’s idea, the latter substituting the term θεολογική with θεολογία;⁴⁷ Clemens of Alexandria stated: “Aristotle calls this kind of science (*scil.* τὸ θεολογικόν) metaphysics (μετὰ τὰ φυσικά)”.⁴⁸

In conclusion, it has been shown how Natorp’s thesis on the inauthenticity of book K results from the general interpretation he gives to the topic and the structure of Aristotle’s *Metaphysics*. We have tried to show that this interpretation is also influenced by the Neokantian philosophical perspective, so that the concept of being *qua* being, which represents the unifying link between the different parts of Aristotle’s work, is assimilated – within the limits – to Kant’s idea of ‘object in general’. Consequently, from Natorp’s point of view, also Aristotle’s metaphysical investigation becomes an investigation into being in general and the substance, which are the grounds of all specific sciences and correspond therefore to the ultimate law of thought, that is the law which makes every knowledge possible and allows the constitution of the object. This way, the science of being *qua* being cannot be reduced to

⁴⁶ Cf. Alex. Aphr. *in Metaph.* p. 127, 23 Hayduck. In other passages he establishes an analogy between “the pursued science we mean to study, that is wisdom” with theology (Alex. Aphr. *in Metaph.* p. 171, 5-7 Hayduck: ἡ μὲν ἐπιζητούμενη ἐπιστήμη καὶ προκειμένη νῦν αὐτὴ ἐστὶν ἡ σοφία τε καὶ ἡ θεολογική, ἣν καὶ Μετὰ τὰ φυσικά ἐπιγράφει). Furthermore, he also states in a more explicit way that the peculiar object of metaphysics, and so “of what Aristotle himself used to call theology” is the study of being *qua* being (Alex. Aphr. *in Metaph.* p. 237, 3-5 Hayduck: προθέμενος ἐν τῇ Μετὰ τὰ Φυσικά πραγματεία, ἣν καὶ σοφίαν καὶ πρώτην φιλοσοφίαν, ἔστι δὲ ὅτε καὶ θεολογικὴν ἔθος αὐτῷ καλεῖν, περὶ τοῦ ὄντος ἢ ὄν θεωρῆσαι). As a matter of fact, Alexander seems to waver between this conception of metaphysics as the first science, which is identified with theology, and a conception – more faithful to Aristotle’s thought – of metaphysics as a general science, including theology as one of its species. In this respect, see P. Donini, “Unità e oggetto della metafisica secondo Alessandro di Afrodisia”, in G. Movia (ed.), *Alessandro di Afrodisia e la Metafisica di Aristotele*, Milano, Vita e Pensiero, 2003, p. 15-52, and references therein.

⁴⁷ See, respectively, Syrian. *in Metaph.* p. 878, 27 Kroll; Ascl. *in Metaph.* p. 519, 31 Hayduck.

⁴⁸ Clem. Al. *Strom.* I, 28, 176.

the science of a particular factual position or of a specific being such as the divine.

Nonetheless, some passages of *Metaphysics* are in contrast with this thesis and are therefore considered inauthentic by Natorp. While in E it is still possible to glimpse, behind the interpolations, Aristotle's authentic thought, in K this is absolutely impossible.

In Natorp's interpretation, in fact, since book K shows a theologizing tendency, which culminates with the conception that the main philosophical science deals at the same time with both being in general and a particular kind of being, that is the unmovable and immaterial being, this book should be considered inauthentic. According to the scholar, therefore, book K is an independent imitation written by a Peripatetic, maybe a disciple of Aristotle's himself. This follower rewrote the argumentation of BΓE in a shorter text, imitating his master's style rather carefully, but – because of his poor speculative instinct and of his different metaphysical tendency – he misinterpreted some passages of Aristotle's work, writing something more about the transcendent and something less about the metaphysical foundation of the knowledge of nature. This way, despite his faithful and entirely Peripatetic use of Aristotelian conceptions, the author of K misunderstood the purpose of his model, and gave his work a Platonizing or even theologizing speculative attitude.⁴⁹ On the contrary, in what Natorp considers Aristotle's authentic intentions, the science dealing with being in general and as such, that is the *πρώτη φιλοσοφία*, is prior to sciences only dealing with a particular kind of being, and cannot be identified with any of them, not even with the most important and significant one, that is theology.

⁴⁹ See Natorp, "Über Aristoteles' *Metaphysik*", p. 180.

REFERENCES:

- Alexander Aphrodisiensis in *Aristotelis Metaphysica Commentaria*, edidit Michael Hayduck, Berolini, Reimer, 1891.
- Aristotle's *Metaphysics*, a Revised Text with Introduction and Commentary by William D. Ross, Oxford 1924, 2 vols.
- Aubenque, Pierre, "Sur l'inauthenticité du livre K de la *Métaphysique*", in Paul Moraux-Jürgen Wiesner (eds), *Zweifelhaftes im Corpus Aristotelicum. Studien zum einigen Dubia*, Berlin, W. de Gruyter, 1983, p. 318-344.
- Barnes, Jonathan (ed.), *The Complete Works of Aristotle*, The Revised Oxford Translation, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1984.
- Berti, Enrico, "La 'riduzione dei contrari' in Aristotele", in Id., *Studi aristotelici*, L'Aquila, L.U. Japadre, 1978, p. 209-231.
- Berti, Enrico, "La *Metafisica* di Aristotele: onto-teologia o filosofia prima?", in Adriano Bausola-Giovanni Reale (eds), *Aristotele. Perché la metafisica*, Milano, Vita e Pensiero, 1994, p. 117-143 (reprinted in E. Berti, *Nuovi studi aristotelici*, II. *Fisica, antropologia, metafisica*, Brescia, Morcelliana, 2005, p. 395-420).
- Berti, Enrico, *Aristotele nel Novecento*, Roma-Bari, Laterza, 1992.
- Berti, Enrico, Aristote, *Métaphysique Livre Epsilon (VI)*, Introduction, traduction et commentaire, Paris, Les Belles Lettres, (forthcoming).
- Bonitz, Hermann, *Aristotelis Metaphysica*, Bonn, Narcos, 1848-1849, 2 vols.
- Brandis, Christian A., in *Aristotelis et Theophrasti Metaphysica*, ad veterum codicum manuscriptorum fidem recensita, Berlin, Reimer, 1823, 2 vols.
- Brandis, Christian A., "Über die aristotelische Metaphysik", *Abhandlungen der königlichen Akademie der Wissenschaften*, hist.-phil. Klasse, Berlin, 1834, p. 63-87.
- Buhle, Johann G., "Commentatio de librorum Aristotelis qui vulgo in deperditis numerantur ad libros eiusdem superstites rationibus", *Commentationes Societatis Regiae Scientiarum Göttingensis recentiores, Commentationes historicae et philologicae*, 15, 1804, p. 57-133.
- Châtelet, François (ed.), *La filosofia del mondo scientifico e industriale (1860-1940)*, Milano, Rizzoli, 1975.
- Christ, Wilhelm, *Studia in Aristotelis Libros Metaphysicos*, Berlin, G. Bethge, 1853.
- Cousin, Victor, *De la Métaphysique d'Aristote*. Rapport sur le concours ouvert par l'Académie des science morales et politiques, suivi d'un essai de traduction du premier et du douzième livres de la *Métaphysique*, deuxième édition, Paris, Ladrangé, 1838.
- Décarie, Vianney, "L'authenticité du livre Kappa de la *Métaphysique*", in Paul Moraux-Jürgen Wiesner (eds), *Zweifelhaftes im Corpus Aristotelicum. Studien zum einigen Dubia*, Berlin, W. de Gruyter, 1983, p. 295-317.

Aristotle's Metaphysics Book K in Paul Natorp's Neokantian Perspective

- Donini, Pieluigi, "Unità e oggetto della metafisica secondo Alessandro di Afrodisia", in Giancarlo Movia (ed.), *Alessandro di Afrodisia e la Metafisica di Aristotele*, Milano, Vita e Pensiero, 2003, p. 15-52.
- Dussort, Henri, *L'École de Marbourg*, Paris, Presses Universitaires de France, 1963.
- Gigliotti, Gianna, "Avventure e disavventure del trascendentale". *Studio su Cohen e Natorp*, Napoli, Guida, 1989.
- Gigliotti, Gianna, "Objekt und Methode. Das Problem der Psychologie in Natorps Philosophie", in Peter Schmid (ed.), *Grenzen der kritischen Vernunft*, Basel, Schwabe, 1997, p. 95-114.
- Heidegger, Martin, *Metaphysische Anfangsgründe der Logik*, hrsg. von Klaus Held, Frankfurt am Main, Klostermann, 1978.
- Heidegger, Martin, *Aristoteles, Metaphysik Θ 1-3. Von Wesen und Wirklichkeit der Kraft*, hrsg. von Heinrich Hüni, Frankfurt am Main, Klostermann, 1981.
- Heidegger, Martin, *Die Grundbegriffe der Antiken Philosophie*, hrsg. von Franz-Karl Blust, Frankfurt am Main, Klostermann, 1993.
- Jaeger, Werner, *Aristoteles. Grundlegung einer Geschichte seiner Entwicklung*, Berlin, Weidmann, 1923.
- Jaeger, Werner, *Studien zur Entstehungsgeschichte des Metaphysik des Aristoteles*, Berlin, Weidmann, 1912.
- Kant, Immanuel, *Kritik der reinen Vernunft*, 1781, trans. Paul Guyer-Allen W. Wood, *Critique of pure reason*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1998.
- Mansion, Augustine, "Philosophie première, philosophie seconde et métaphysique chez Aristote", *Revue philosophique de Louvain*, 56, 1958, p. 165-221.
- Martineau, Emanuel, "De l'inauthenticité du livre E de la *Métaphysique* d'Aristote", *Conférence*, 5, 1997, p. 445-509.
- Menn, Stephen, "Zeller and the Debates about Aristotle's *Metaphysics*", in Gerald Hartung (ed.), *Eduard Zeller. Philosophie- und Wissenschaftsgeschichte im 19. Jahrhundert*, Berlin - New York, W. de Gruyter, 2010, p. 93-122.
- Merlan, Philip, "Metaphysik: Name und Gegenstand", *The Journal of Hellenic Studies*, 77, 1957, p. 87-92.
- Michelet, Karl L., *Examen critique de l'Ouvrage d'Aristote intitulé Métaphysique*, Paris, J.A. Mercklein, 1836.
- Micheli, Carlo, "Il problema dell'*a priori* nella filosofia di Paul Natorp", *Sapienza*, 32, 1979, p. 30-48.
- Natorp, Paul, "Thema und Disposition der aristotelischen *Metaphysik*", *Philosophische Monatshefte*, 24, 1888, p. 37-65; 540-574.
- Natorp, Paul, "Über Aristoteles' *Metaphysik* K 1-8, 1065 a 26", *Archiv für Geschichte der Philosophie*, 1, 1888, p. 178-193.

Lisa Bressan

- Natorp, Paul, *Platos Ideenlehre. Eine Einführung in den Idealismus*, Hamburg, Meiner, 1902, trans. Vasilis Politis - John Conolly, *Platos' Theory of Ideas. An Introduction to Idealism*, Sankt Augustin, Akademie Verlag, 2004.
- Natorp, Paul, *Tema e disposizione della Metafisica di Aristotele*. Con in appendice il saggio *Sull'inautenticità del libro K della Metafisica*, Giovanni Reale (ed.) - Vincenzo Cicero (trans.), Milano, Vita e Pensiero, 1995.
- Organte, Alessandra, "Dal "nihil negativum" di Baumgarten all'"oggetto in generale" di Kant", in Giuseppe Micheli-Giovanni Santinello (eds), *Kant a due secoli dalla Critica*, Brescia, La scuola, 1984, p. 275-282.
- Patricius, Franciscus, *Discussiones Peripateticae*, Basel, Neudruck, 1581, 4 vols.
- Ravaisson, Félix, *Essai sur la Métaphysique d'Aristote*, Paris, impr. Royale, 1837-1846, 2 vols.
- Reale, Giovanni, *Il concetto di filosofia prima e l'unità della Metafisica di Aristotele*, Milano, Vita e Pensiero, 1961.
- Renz, Ursula, *Die Rationalität der Kultur. Zur Kulturphilosophie und ihrer transzendentalen Begründung bei Cohen, Natorp und Cassirer*, Hamburg, Meiner, 2001.
- Rose, Valentine, *De Aristotelis librorum Ordine et Auctoritate*, Berlin, Reimer, 1854.
- Rutten, Christian, "La stylométrie et la question de *Métaphysique K*", *Revue Philosophique de Louvain*, 90, 1992, p. 486-496.
- Samueli Petiti *Miscellaneorum libri novem*, Paris, Ch. Morel, 1630.
- Schwegler, Albert, *Die Metaphysik des Aristoteles*. Grundtext, übersetzung und Commentar, nebst erläuternden Abhandlungen, Tübingen, Fues, 1847-1848, 4 vols.
- Spengel, Leonhard, "Über die Reihenfolge der naturwissenschaftlichen Schriften des Aristoteles", *Abhandlungen der Bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften*, 3, 1849.
- Überweg, Friedrich, *Das Altertum*, in Id., *Grundriss der Geschichte der Philosophie*, Berlin, Mittler und Sohn, 1854.
- von Arnim, Hans, "Aristoteles' K und B", *Wiener Studien*, 44, 1929, p. 32-38.
- Vuillemin, Jules, *L'héritage kantien et la révolution copernicienne*, Paris, Presses Universitaires de France, 1954.

LISA BRESSAN
Università degli Studi di Padova
lisabressan@libero.it