



ОНТОЛОГИЯ И ГНОСЕОЛОГИЯ Ontology and gnoseology

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Hellenic Theology of Early Classical Period

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Abstract. The author analyzes the transformations of Hellenic theology's content and forms in the epoch of early antique classics (1st half of the 5th century B.C.). The general orientation of such transformations is the generalization of mythological gods' meanings into the abstract implications of the Absolute, which is not yet sacral in its full sense and not transcendent. Besides, this period is the end of the "decentralization of consciousness". Cognitive limitations to the development of abstract conceptual thinking and the rational component of consciousness are removed. This process's main points transform mythology into artistic and aesthetic creativity (folklore, mythopoetic epic, etc.), religious consciousness, and theology. Rationalism is always critical. Critical rationalism inevitably leads to historicism. Therefore, the formation of a historical attitude strengthens at the sight of the critical approach.

The world's mythological image is increasingly being questioned (first in parts, and then in general). Its content is being transferred to the past. Finally, the era of early classicism comes into play. It is a time when theology becomes a field of philosophical and theoretical reflection on myth and an area of its artistic and aesthetic experience. The most influential form of such an understanding of myth was the theater. The ancient theater served as a "spiritual and practical" form of ancient theology, a subject embodiment of theology in stage action.

Keywords: theology, culture, consciousness, theory, mythology, image, values, meaning, theater

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Contemporary researchers of the philosophy of religion, religious studies, and history of culture tend to blur the epistemological boundaries between religion and science, theology, and theoretical knowledge. That approach oversimplifies theology's description as a unique form of spiritual culture [1]. Such boundaries exist and are determined by the difference in forms of theorizing knowledge. It is a way of transition from the phenomenal to the fundamental level of existence, including in the system of religious consciousness. At the same time, there is a tendency in Patristics to contrast Christian theology with philosophical and theological interpretations of Hellenistic religion as a form of polytheistic myth, and in extreme cases, to see an etymological connection between them. This approach significantly deformed the principles of research into theology as a special form of theorizing knowledge. In our opinion, its historical roots date back to ancient Greek culture. It is translated into monotheistic religions' theological systems, primarily Christianity, only in the Hellenistic Roman period at the dawn of the common era [1].

The ground for overcoming the visually sensory mythological imagery was the decentralization of thinking (i.e., the subject's ability to correct the conditions of cognition) to consider the relativity of the "system of coordinates," from the standpoint of which the subject perceives the object). It ensured the overcoming of subjective boundaries of the "mental field," provided thinking with a trait of universality [2]. Historical stages and moments of this process are the transformations of mythology into forms of folklore creativity, mythopoetic epic, forms of religious consciousness, theology. The primary function of any theology is the interpretation of notional images of religious reverence. Theology emerges in the early traditions of critical-rationalistic interpretation of myth, when the motive and purpose of the activity, creative plan and its embodiment, figurative-poetic, and rational and conceptual ways of reflecting the world began to be realized as different states of consciousness. Early antique theologies arise in the form of theoretical reflection over the essence of the myth in the era of the ancient Greek archaic (8th—6th centuries B.C.) [3]. The first historical form of theology was allegorical myth theory. The further development of theological interpretations of mythological gods' images relates to an epoch of the ancient Greek classics (5th—4th centuries B.C., up to the beginning of the Hellenistic epoch).

The turn of the 6th—5th centuries B.C. is a pivotal point in the history of ancient Greek civilization. 5th century B.C. is the age of polis organization's heyday with its advantages, disadvantages, and contradictions. Antique slavery takes on a complete form. Commodity and monetary relations, trade relations, domestic and foreign markets develop. The contradiction between the authoritarian policy and the need to expand the political world's economic life scope is deepening. Patriarchal slavery paves the way for the classical one, aimed at commodity production and added value creation. The main political events of the 5th century

BC. were the Greco-Persian Wars and the Peloponnesian War. They largely determined the spiritual atmosphere of the classical era.

The breadth of ideas characterizes the classical epoch culture, greatness of style, high dramatism, assertion of rational and conceptual thinking, accompanied by categorical analytics, which allows reducing the plural to the singular, reproducing the extremes, expressing disharmony and others. Simultaneously, all the progressive, *disruptive* ideas of this epoch leave a palliative impression. They are quite often sketched yet incomplete, inconsistent, disjunct [4]. Here, rationality still gets along well with irrationality, the abstract and conceptual features with the visual and mythological ones. The general reason for such inconsistency of the classical epoch's consciousness is that the principle of slavery sets its borders, i.e., recognition as an absolute of living (in many respects instinctively organized) human body that consists of (and simultaneously constrains) the human spirit. As Aleksei Losev brilliantly demonstrated, in the slave-owning mode of personal production freedom (both slave and slave-owner), so freedom of thought here can manifest itself only in an abstract form — through the material-corporal being [5. P. 87—107]. The operational thinking system's formation has not yet been completed, it is still fragmented and mosaic [2].

In the classical age the content and forms of theology are changing. Several conditions cause this. First, transformations of meanings of mythological gods: images of mythological gods were gradually generalized in abstract implications of the Absolute but not yet sacral and not transcendent. Second, the “decentralization of consciousness” concludes, subjective limitations of the operational activity of thinking are being removed, and rational attitudes are being affirmed. That inevitably gives rise to a critical attitude towards mythology, followed by a historical attitude towards its subjects and images. Thirdly, theology becomes a sphere of theoretical reflection over myth and the artistic and aesthetic experience of myth. All these circumstances visibly manifested themselves already in the epoch of early classicism (1st half of the 5th century B.C.).

The early period of classicism was a time of complete domination of the policy over the person. Here everything private and personal retreats to the universal and obeys it. The style of the epoch is dominated by austerity — in cultural forms, severity, hardness prevails. The state ideology exalts heroism and patriotism, and the highest spiritual and moral ideal is glorious death. That was manifested during the Greco-Persian Wars of the first half of the 5th century B.C., which was a clash of the Eastern civilization, based on the suppression of an individual by a state, a single by the common, and the Western civilization, based on limitless human development. The Greeks clinched the victory at the price of unprecedented sacrifices. Nevertheless, it strengthened the political organization, the values of the Hellenic way of life, consolidated the Greek world, and stimulated the spiritual culture's growth. Ancient Greece entered the “Golden Age” of its history. Before the Peloponnesian War, the Greeks felt historical optimism, believing that all the bloody and tragic things are forever in the past. There are no obstacles that could not be overcome by a *polis* society.

At the same time, mythology is still strong in the described era. The victory over the Persians was interpreted as evidence of the power and justice of the Greek gods. After all, the gods, as organizers, managers, and guarantors of the cosmic world order, cannot be immoral [6]. They elevate man, turn him into a hero, and heroes into themselves, i.e., gods. But this comes at the price of a person's respect for the gods. Such respect is necessary for the organic unity of macrocosm and microcosm, nature, and man. In the epoch of early classicism (first half of the 5th century B.C.), the process of consciousness decentralization is approaching its finish line. The ability is formed to deliberately make corrections to the *subject's reference system* in the world's perception and thus coordinate the links between the thinking process's sensual and abstract components. For instance, this is reflected in a vase painting, which was the finest of the arts. Here, for the first time, a new "technique appears, the display of the body not in the way the viewer *knows* it, in all the integrity and interconnectedness of its body parts, but in the way it is seen in space... so that the image corresponds to *reality, to the optical perception* of an individual" [7. P. 35]. For this purpose, the subject must not correlate himself with his experiences' subjective world, but with objective, including socio-cultural conditions of cognition.

The processes of consciousness decentralization in early classicism raise generalization and symbolize mythological gods' meanings. Symbolization is disengagement. Images of mythological gods are increasingly rationalized and given abstract meanings. This tendency finds bright philosophical expression in the creativity of the Eleatics. The Eleatic school's beau-ideals are already strictly rationalistic: the essence (i.e., existence with its invariability, non-creation, unhollowness, and plasticity) is comprehended only by the mind. The Eleatics were the first to conclude about the existence in human mind of two incompatible pictures of the world, i.e., sensual-imaginary, and rational-discursive. Having contrasted the sensual image of the world with its rational model, the Eleatics thus put the ancient science (which had not accumulated enough experience of cognition) in the face of a gnoseological crisis. Unlike the Sophists, the Eleatics themselves saw the way out of this crisis to establish critical rationality.

For instance, Xenophanes finally breaks with anthropomorphic polytheism, looking at the myth as a certain, albeit distorted, reality. Myth has nothing to do with authentic reality. Mythological images bear the imprint of ethnic and national traits, which means that myth is the birth of man, his consciousness, and imagination [8. P. 199—200]. For Xenophanes, the true god is the world in its integrity and unity, the Universe as a whole. God is one, finite, reasonable, unchangeable. The Greek philosopher is one of the first pantheists. The Universe is a *God-Cosmos* or *Cosmic God*. God, like the world, is eternal and bodily (spherical). The Universe, like a god, does not come into being and is not destroyed but is always like itself. (Thus, there are numerous worlds inhabited by people in the Universe). The Eleatics outlined the revealing opportunity to transfer the function of theology to philosophy. However, they were still cautious in evaluating

the cognitive possibilities of philosophical-theoretical treatment of the world. For them, cognitive optimism is disputable.

And yet, the spirit of rationalism increasingly permeated the culture of ancient Greek classics. The philosophical ideals of the Eleatics, in principle, corresponded to the epoch's artistic and aesthetic ideals (strict outlines, clear symmetry, rhythm, rational slenderness, metaphysical perfection). They contributed to the development of "canons" of fine art, allowing the "mind to comprehend beauty" (Polykleitos). In ancient Greek art, lyricism, including choral lyrics and later theater, emerging from it, played a significant role. The duality of poetic perception characterizes ancient Greek lyrics. On the one hand, they idealize the mythological past, deeply believe in multifunctional mythological gods. On the other hand, they pay close attention to the reality they contemplate, heroic events and deeds of contemporaries, and connect archaic and modernity with logical unity. At the same time, some of them achieved the heights of philosophical and theoretical abstraction.

Pindar, e.g., still quite mythologically worships the gods, recognizes the gods' decisive role in people's fate, and treats them with awe. He "believes that the fate of man, his well-being, and failures depend on the gods. The gods are almighty; they all know they can do anything. You cannot argue with the gods. Attempts to compete with them are cursed to failure. You should honor the gods, seek their help and advice. They can perform miracles, help to fulfill vows, give people wisdom. However, a person is not allowed to penetrate their plans and intentions. With all their perfection, the gods are jealous; like people, they have a sense of shame" [9. P. 92]. But this does not prevent Pindar from rising to the level of philosophical generalizations, many of which take an aphoristic form: "god is everything," "the only proof of uncomplicated justice is Time." The poet is almost monotheistical in his take on Zeus' image as an active and sacred force, "ruling everything and seeing everything"¹. Simonides of Ceos is also quite philosophical. The glorifier of the struggle for independence from the Persians argues that "everything is a game and nothing should be taken too seriously," or "I am not looking for something impossible to be," "people have nothing lasting," etc.² In early classical poetry, lyric poetry is gradually relegated to the background, to the shadows. Theater enters the forefront.

The emergence of drama is a purely ancient Greek phenomenon. History knows no analogs — ancient Greek drama "is the greatest miracle in the history of culture." [5. C. 208]. It was an integral part of the old way of life, an essential component of the ancient Greek culture. The ancient theater is in line with the Hellenistic religion's spirit, which preferred not institutional (through priests) but direct communication forms among people and the gods. Attic theater is

¹ Pindar quite rationally divides the mythological and the real, contrasts myth and sensual givenness, treats the ancient gods as an active alienated force of being [8. P. 175—176].

² Simonides of Ceos' nephew Bacchylides (505—450 B.C.) aimed at the realistic reading of traditional mythological subjects [10. P. 227—284].

multifunctional. It is both a democratic tribune, a social institution, and an instrument for the individual's socialization, education, and upbringing. Thus, tragedy used the eloquent solemn archaic language and gravitated to the expression of worldviews [11]. By return, ancient Greek comedy employed lively, juicy, conversational speech and included political statements, appeals, manifestos, i.e., it fulfilled the function that the mass media now performs³. The theater expressed the mentality of the era.

The attic drama in its three varieties (tragedy, comedy, and the drama of satires) originated from the Dionysia with their ritual games of mimic and carnival character, i.e., with the wearing of masks and so on, which formed the mythological plot in the ritual drama⁴. That is why the early theater was covered with a halo of the sanctity of the temple⁵. The early antique drama had a magical ritual function. It was cleansing the viewer of filth, transferring it to the dying hero-god. Having formed as a type of religious sanctuary, the theater gradually humiliates and desacralizes it. Later, the ancient drama is rationalized and becomes an integral action, exciting syncretic unity of poetry, music, dance, acting, and philosophical generalizations, making a considerable impression.

The coming to light of the ancient theater also had a historical and cognitive background. A.N. Pavlenko's works convincingly show that the theater is a "way... an instrument, with which performance asserts its domination" [12. P. 88—89]. We may consider an integral complex of such theater productions as a proto theory. Theater becomes possible when representation as a form of secondary visualization turns out to be functionally independent of perception, sensory figurativeness, and the schemes of accompanying subject actions (in particular, the Dionysia ritual and cult procedures). Such a qualitative transition in the cognitive function of consciousness in ancient Greek culture took place at the edge of the archaic and classical epochs. From this moment on, it is possible to freely operate with generalized images of representation and model various "logical worlds" and pictures of reality. (It is not by chance that Solon, as noted by ancient authors, disapproved of theatrical art, seeing it as a deception). The subject acquires the ability to construct (with the help of imagination) diverging images of the same object, not from one, but contrasting "reference points." From this time on, the ancient theater (and subsequently any theater) freely constructs imaginary

³ Thus, if tragedy used the eloquent solemn archaic language and gravitated to the expression of worldviews [11], then ancient Greek comedy used lively, juicy, conversational vernacular and included political statements, appeals, manifestos. It fulfilled the function that mass media now perform. It is no accident that theater tickets were paid for by the state for the poorest people.

⁴ Tradition attributes the staging of Thespis' first tragedy, still little different from choral lyrics to 534 B.C. Between 480 and 380 B.C., about 2000 new dramas were staged in Athens alone.

⁵ A statue of Dionysus was brought to the theater so that he could enjoy the spectacle. Before the performance, a sacrifice was made to god. The transgressions committed by the spectators during the theatrical performance were punished not as ordinary crimes, but as sacrilege. Apparently, in its early versions, the ancient drama also had a magical ritual function: the spectator was cleansed of filth, transferring it to the dying hero-god.

situations, “possible worlds” of communication and human behavior, which is somehow endowed with new values and meanings for everyone. The subject can only assimilate them if he or she treats the imaginary situation as real. (In the words of Aeschylus, “knowledge is acquired by suffering”).

The organization and structure of ancient theatrical action gradually transformed, becoming more composite. In the early antique tragedies, actors expressed thoughts and ideas through stage action (chorus and a messenger). Later, the chorus' role gradually diminishes, and the value of an actor spirals (already in Thespis and Aeschylus). The number of actors also grows. (In dramas of the 3rd century B.C., the chorus generally disappears). Euripides is already set to replace the actions (frequent messenger entrances) with words. Thus, the ancient drama from the sacral action turned into a rhetorical school of rational speculation and dispute. The theme of ancient drama has also evolved from the depiction of the suffering of a dying and resurrected god to the depiction of passions, suffering, and death of a mythological hero, from empathy to the passions of a god through a dramatic resolution of the problems of retribution, sinfulness, justice to the affirmation of moral values⁶.

The dramatic composition of the early classics focused on themes and ideas of the cosmic world order, the image of the destinies of people over whom the Doom loomed. In fact, in the era's consciousness, the idea prevailed that the highest divine forces ruled the world, and on their background, the tragic suffering of man obtains the cosmic meaning. From a set of mythological plots, heroism's ideological theme stood out, i.e., the ability of a person to resist to inexorable forces of destiny, to crush obstacles on the way of life and, after all, it is worthy to accept the fate intended for you. Over time, the dramaturgy of the ancient theater develops, the level of generalization grows, and mythological gods' images are abstracted and symbolized. The highest dramatic achievement of the early classics is the Aeschylus' trilogy *Oresteia*, which artistically comprehends the last battle waged by mother's and father's gods, among matriarchal and patriarchal beginnings in the life of society. Images of mythological gods are generalized to the levels of monotheism⁷. Society should be governed by laws that represent a universal social attitude. The concept of Doom is also generalized to the *Weltanschauung* level. The old idea that gods do not even control destiny is given new meaning. Destiny is invisible, intangible, and probably unrecognizable. It is a mystery. Even though it is manifested everywhere and in everything, it is beyond human control.

Such topics were invariably combined: *knowledge* of mythological gods, and *value and meaning* attitude to the images of gods, expressed by sensual and emotional experiences. This combination is precisely the subject and content of theology. The theatrical script as a proto theory was, in fact, one of the forms of

⁶ By no accident, Aristotle defined tragedy as purification from pity and fear by objectivation.

⁷ According to Aeschylus, the one god who may be called Zeus was increasingly being interpreted pantheistically in the described era. He was personified with the greatness and supreme legality of Nature [13. P. 170—176].

Hellenic theology. Its peculiarities were that, firstly, it was a system of sensually shaped representations, not abstractions or rational concepts. Secondly, it directly connected with (expressed sensually emotional experiences) personal meanings and cultural values. The ancient theater served as a means of generalization and enrichment of knowledge, and the value-sense sphere, sensual, emotional experience by a subject of their attitude to the world.

Thus, the ancient theater was a distinct form of theology, the object of which was ancient Greek mythology, images of mythological gods in their relation to people, the content of which was objectified, and affirmed employing stage action. The ancient theater is an image and subject expression of theology in the form of stage action. In other words, with the advent of the theater, mythology becomes the object of purposeful transformation not only in theory but also in substance. Serving as a way of collective arranging of experience and comprehension of mythology, the ancient theater performed the function of interpretation and stage marking of meanings of mythological gods. In this role, it acted as a “spiritual and practical” form of ancient theology.

Rationalism is always critical, and critical rationalism inevitably leads to a historical vision of the world, a historicism bound to question the mythological image of reality, first in parts and then in coherence. Historical consciousness and history as a science were formed in ancient Greece. Thus, in Homer’s works, the term *history* “indicates a sharp cognitive orientation of visual perception, so that he who sees not only sees but also judges what he sees and even is a witness or an authority in the area that he perceives as visual” [14. P. 113]. In the 6th—5th centuries B.C., the word *history* was used in the meaning of “inquiry,” “the search for truth.” Indeed, the first historians preferred to call themselves *logographers* or *writers (syngraphi)*. History as a science is a product of the “Golden Age,” which was formed in the era of high classics from a rational-critical rethinking of mythology and attempts of theoretical synthesis of mythopoetic tradition (Cyclic poems, genealogical, ethnogenetic myths, etc.), annalistic tradition (including official documents, calendar and chronicle records, legislative acts, treaties), mythographic and logographic literature, geographical and ethnographic descriptions, etc.

Overcoming mythology was slow, controversial, slumpy. The first attempts we find with Hecataeus of Miletus (ca. 550—490 BC), who relied on the philosophical, geographical, historical, and ethnographic generalizations of Anaximander and the rich experience of Ionian merchants and travelers. Using myths as historical material, the scholar tries to separate what can be confirmed from what is fictional. He tries to bring a stream of objectivity to the explanation of historical events [15. P. 136]. Hecataeus is still far from rejecting the myth as a historical source entirely. He simply removes from the myth everything that seems to him incredible, fictional, fantastic, absolute speculation. The tradition of critical rationalistic attitude towards mythology established by Hecataeus is developed in the works of the next generation of logographers — Hellanicus of Lesbos, who tried to find the

objective basis of historical chronology (count by the archons at Athens, etc.), Dionysius of Miletus, Charon of Lampsacus, up to Herodotus, who borrowed a lot from his Ionian predecessors, first of all from Hecataeus [16. VI, 137] and, of course, from Thucydides, who is almost wholly anti-mythological.

The Father of History Herodotus (ca. 484—425 B.C.) worked in the genre of “epic historiography.” He was unhurried, uncomplicated in his style, and epically calm [17]. His *Histories* contain many traits that bring it closer to the mythopoetic tradition, including permanent, at every turn, distractions from the subject — the Greco-Persian Wars. Herodotus is multifaceted and boasts a wide variety of interests. He sees all aspects of the old way of life — traditions, mores, beliefs, myths of societies and peoples known to him. Simultaneously, in all such descriptions, there is a lot of confusion, absence of pattern, and lack of consistency. Herodotus “floats” in the sphere of the phenomenon and is still far from realizing the need to search for its essence, to reveal the natural links of historical reality. Therefore, he still has a lot of even elementary mistakes, and sometimes just nonsense and absurdity. The text is full of disorderly and sketchy retreats, chaotic excursions to the spheres far from history, to the fields of ethnography, geography, the psychology of peoples, zoology, botany.

At the same time, Herodotus’ personality attracts with its optimism, cheerfulness, friendliness, lack of arrogance, and openness to all cultures, including barbaric and even Persian ones. In relation to the barbarians, he is often unprejudiced, clearly sympathetic to them, recognizing their superiority over the Greeks in some cases (the ancient Egyptian culture). In general, Herodotus aligns with cultural dialogue. Furthermore, this is comprehensible. The Greeks are the winners over the great Persian Empire, so they are open to the ethno-cultural world of that time and are not afraid of dialogue. (In history, one should transmit “everything that is told” [16. VII, 152]). The Greeks boldly go towards the future. They are sure that the cosmic world order, including its past (history), might be comprehended by the human mind.

Herodotus strives for the objectivity of the image of historical reality, directly speaking that he distinguishes his task in the search for the causes of historical events. However, he is not always able to achieve objectivity. As the son of the early classic era, Herodotus has not yet freed himself from mythology. For him, the myth remains a native element. He portrays the world of the gods with calmness and does not apply theoretical reflection to it. Myths organically intertwine in his manner, in a brilliant, in fact, novelistic, with the entertaining and narrative style. It is most objective when it comes to the things he observed in person. Herodotus wrote about the Greco-Persian Wars, which went on during his lifetime, and many events of the recent past were well remembered by the people with whom he met and talked. Even in such direct descriptions, he often refers to mythological and mystical factors (Doom, the predestination of the gods), he apologizes to gods for his liberties, and so on. Mythology also permeates Herodotus’ apprehension of causality. For him, the world of the gods remains a decisive causal factor in the

historical process. He understands historical causality as fatalism and providentialism (“the just fate punishes all ungodly men” [16. V, 56], divine predestination, which can also be generated by the “jealousy of the gods” (“Every deity is envious and causes anxiety among people” [16. I, 32]. He also believes in things like dreams and fortune-telling, in the fact that the gods punish people for sins, crimes, and pride. The principle of critical rationalist attitude towards mythology can be consistently carried out only several decades later by Thucydides in his *History of the Peloponnesian War*. However, this is a different story of another war.

By the middle of the 5th century B.C., the most crucial cognitive boundary had been passed — the process of consciousness decentralization had been completed. Consciousness made operational corrections to the “reference system” of the subject in the visual and image perception of the world. On this basis, the demythologization of mind is accelerated, and a rational attitude towards the world is affirmed. This time is called the era of the ancient Enlightenment. Myth is gradually being looked down upon. The mythopoetic epic outgrows itself and is radically re-evaluated its cognitive, artistic, and ethical meaning. Myths are seen only as poetic works of antiquity, which have many contradictions and even nonsense from the point of view of common sense. The tradition of condemnation of Homer is growing stronger. The most vivid exponents of the new cognitive situation were the Sophists.

At the same time, in the middle of the 5th century B.C., the internal contradictions of the *polis* society gradually became more and more urgent, first of all, among the individual freedom and the collective interests. Polis society requires leveling, the subordination of a person to strict norms of collective control; the bright blossoming of a specific human is not the goal. Every citizen has to be aware of the limits of their requests and claims to the collective⁸. This fundamental collision gave rise to the polis’ antagonistic political organization — democratic and oligarchic — which fought among themselves cruel, stubborn, and bloody wars. This defining feature of the epoch got its relief expression in the Peloponnesian War of the second half of the 5th century B.C. Ancient culture entered the era of high classics, which brought new theological models of mythological gods.

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⁸ In the 5th century B.C., the institution of ostracism — the extrajudicial expulsion of the most influential citizens of the polis on political grounds — became widespread. Usually, these were bright representatives of noble aristocratic families, unmanageable, willful, and disobedient (the “dissidents” in contemporary terms). The decision to expel them was made by voting in the People’s Assembly. Often ostracism was not conditioned by specific offenses but acted as a “preventive” measure to confirm and stabilize the norms of political life (“cosmic” world order).

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Эллинская теология эпохи ранней классики

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В статье анализируются трансформации содержания и форм эллинской теологии в эпоху ранней античной классики (1-я половина V в. до н. э.). Общая направленность таких трансформаций — обобщение смыслообразов мифологических богов в абстрактный смыслообраз Абсолюта, пока еще не сакрального в полном смысле и не трансцендентного. Кроме того, в этот период завершается «децентрация сознания», снимаются

когнитивные ограничения развитию абстрактно-понятийного мышления, рациональной составляющей сознания. Основные моменты этого процесса — трансформация мифологии в формы художественно-эстетического творчества (фольклор, мифопоэтический эпос и др.), религиозного сознания, теологии. Рационализм всегда критичен, а критический рационализм неизбежно ведет к историзму. Поэтому критическое отношение к мифологии усиливается формированием исторического отношения к ней. Мифологический образ мира все чаще ставится под сомнение (сначала в частностях, а затем и в целом), его содержание переносится в прошлое. И, наконец, эпоха ранней классики — это время, когда теология становится не только областью философско-теоретической рефлексии над мифом, но и областью художественно-эстетического переживания мифа. Наиболее влиятельной формой такого переживания мифа являлся театр. Античный театр выступил «духовно-практической» формой античной теологии, предметным воплощением теологии в сценическом действии.

Ключевые слова: теология, культура, сознание, теория, мифология, образ, ценности, смысл, театр

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