## Contents

Preface \hspace{1cm} \textit{page} xiii

Preliminary note \hspace{1cm} xvi

List of abbreviations \hspace{1cm} xvii

Introduction \hspace{1cm} 1

1. Subject and structure of the dialogue \hspace{1cm} 1
   1.1 The correctness of names \hspace{1cm} 1
   1.2 A map \hspace{1cm} 6
   1.3 Making sense of etymology \hspace{1cm} 11

2. The characters \hspace{1cm} 14
   2.1 Cratylus \hspace{1cm} 14
   2.2 Hermogenes \hspace{1cm} 18

3. The date \hspace{1cm} 19
   3.1 The dramatic date \hspace{1cm} 20
   3.2 The relative date \hspace{1cm} 20

4. The evidence for the text \hspace{1cm} 21

1 Cratylus’ naturalism (383a–384c) \hspace{1cm} 23

   1.1 The thesis \hspace{1cm} 23
      1.1.1 First approach to the thesis (383ab) \hspace{1cm} 23
      1.1.2 More details: Hermogenes’ name (383b–384c) \hspace{1cm} 26
      1.1.3 The origin of natural names \hspace{1cm} 32

   1.2 Before Cratylus \hspace{1cm} 33

2 Hermogenes’ conventionalism (384c–386e) \hspace{1cm} 37

   2.1 Convention and individual decision (384c–385b) \hspace{1cm} 37
      2.1.1 First statement (384ce) \hspace{1cm} 37
      2.1.2 Public and private names (385ab) \hspace{1cm} 42

   2.2 Truth and falsehood in sentences and names (385bd) \hspace{1cm} 49
      2.2.1 True and false sentences (385b) \hspace{1cm} 49
      2.2.2 The parts of a sentence. True and false names (385cd) \hspace{1cm} 54
      2.2.3 Truth values and sentence structure \hspace{1cm} 59
      2.2.4 The passage’s function in context \hspace{1cm} 62
Contents

2.2.5 Authenticity and position of the passage 68
2.2.6 Proclus’ testimony 70
2.3 Convention and individual decision: further details (385de) 72
2.4 Hermogenes and Protagoras (385e–386e) 76
2.4.1 Man the measure of all things? (385e–386a) 77
2.4.2 The refutation of Protagoras – and of Euthydemus (386ad) 81
2.4.3 Conclusion: objects have a stable being (386de) 86
2.5 Before Hermogenes 88
2.5.1 Empedoclean and Thucydidean ‘conventionalism’ 89
2.5.2 De natura hominis and Democritus 91

3 Naturalism defended (386e–390e) 95
3.1 First argument: the naturalness of actions (386e–387d) 95
3.1.1 The naturalness of actions. Cutting and burning (386e–387b) 95
3.1.2 Speaking (387bc) 100
3.1.3 Naming (387cd) 103
3.2 Second argument: the function of names (387d–388c) 107
3.2.1 Names as instruments (387d–388c) 107
3.2.2 Aristotle on names as instruments 114
3.3 Third argument: enter the namegiver (388c–389a) 115
3.3.1 The use and the making of instruments (388cd) 115
3.3.2 The lawgiver as name-maker (388d–389a) 117
3.3.3 Who is the lawgiver? 121
3.4 Fourth argument: instruments, names and forms (389a–390e) 125
3.4.1 Instruments and forms (389a) 125
3.4.2 Generic and specific forms of tools (389bd) 129
3.4.3 Forms of name (389d–390a) 132
3.4.4 The lawgiver and the dialectician (390bd) 138
3.5 Conclusion (390de) 144

4 Naturalism unfolded (390e–394e) 146
4.1 Searching for a theory (390e–392b) 146
4.2 The theory discovered. Naturalism and synonymy (392b–394e) 152
4.2.1 ‘Scamandrius’ and ‘Astyanax’ (392bd) 152
4.2.2 ‘Astyanax’ and ‘Hector’ (392d–393b). The argument previewed 155
4.2.3 A lion begets a lion – and a king a king (393bd) 159
4.2.4 The relative irrelevance of letters and syllables (393de) 163
4.2.5 Synonymical Generation runs wild. The ‘power’ of names (394ab) 167
4.2.6 ‘Hector’ and ‘Astyanax’ again (394be) 172
4.3 Conclusion (394e–396c) 178

5 Naturalism illustrated: the etymologies of ‘secondary’ names (394e–421c) 181
5.1 The arrangement of the etymologies 182
5.1.1 Analysis of 394e–421c 182
5.1.2 The systematic character of the etymologies 189
## Contents

5.1.3 Platonic views in the etymologies (396bc, 399bc, 400ab, 403a–404b, 410b) 191

5.2 The etymologies and the argument of the Cratylus 197

5.2.1 Ordinary proper names put aside (397ab) 197

5.2.2 The etymologies as doxography, or the suicide of naturalism (400d–401a) 199

5.2.3 The etymology as doxography (continued): the theory of flux (401d, 402a, 411bc) 201

5.3 More on the theory of flux 210

5.3.1 Locomotion 210

5.3.2 The Penetrating Principle (412–413d) 215

5.3.3 Further evidence about the atomists in the Cratylus (412b, 414a, 420d) 223

5.3.4 Atomism in the Theaetetus 225

5.3.5 The Penetrating Principle again (413e–414a, 417bc, 418a–419b) 227

5.3.6 Flux and relativity? 233

5.4 Meaning in the etymologies 233

5.5 Plato’s attitude to the etymologies 237

5.5.1 seriousness in the etymologies (414c–415a, 439bc) 237

5.5.2 The inspiration of Euthyphro (396c–397a) 241

5.5.3 Humour and detachment in the etymologies (398de, 399a, 406bc) 246

5.5.4 The etymologies’ epistemological status 250

6 Naturalism illustrated: the primary names (421c–427e) 257

6.1 From secondary to primary names (421c–422c) 257

6.1.1 The postulation of primary names (421c–422c) 257

6.1.2 Intermezzo: the meaning of ῥῆµα (399ab, 421b, e) 262

6.2 The correctness of primary names (422c–424a) 267

6.2.1 Introduction (422ce) 267

6.2.2 Indication by gestural mimesis (422e–423b) 269

6.2.3 Indication by vocal mimesis (423bc) 271

6.2.4 Vocal imitation of the essence (423c–424a) 274

6.3 The imposition of primary names (424a–425b) 280

6.3.1 The etymologies of primary names: false start (424ab) 280

6.3.2 Division of letters (424bc) 281

6.3.3 Division of beings (424d) 285

6.3.4 Matching letters and beings (424d–425a) 290

6.3.5 Intermezzo: names, verbs and speech (425a) 293

6.3.6 First assessment of Socrates’ programme 296

6.3.7 How names are and how they should be (425ab) 298

6.4 The investigation of actual primary names (425b–427d) 302

6.4.1 Disclaimers and preliminaries (425b–426b) 302

6.4.2 Letters and primary names: the examples (426c–427c) 306

6.4.3 Conclusion of Socrates’ survey (427cd) 311

6.4.4 An assessment of the mimetic survey 312

6.4.5 The discussion with Hermogenes concluded (427de) 315
## Contents

7  Naturalism discussed (427e–433b) 317
   7.1  Introduction (427e–429c) 317
     7.1.1  Preliminary exchanges (427e–428e) 317
     7.1.2  Better and worse names? (428e–429b) 319
     7.1.3  Hermogenes’ name, again (429bc) 324
   7.2  Naturalism and falsehood (429c–431c) 326
     7.2.1  Naturalism and the impossibility of false speaking (429cd) 326
     7.2.2  Cratylus against false speaking (429d) 332
     7.2.3  Cratylus against false speaking, continued 335
     7.2.4  Socrates’ defence of false speaking (430a–431c) 338
     7.2.5  Conclusion 350
   7.3  Naturalism and imperfect resemblance (431c–433b) 351
     7.3.1  First round (431ce) 351
     7.3.2  Second round: Cratylus’ argument from spelling (431e–432a) 356
     7.3.3  Second round: Socrates’ reply and the ‘Two Cratyluses’ (432ad) 359
     7.3.4  Conclusions on fine and bad names (432d–433b) 369

8  Naturalism refuted and conventionalism defended (433b–439b) 383
   8.1  Resemblance and convention in names (433b–435d) 383
     8.1.1  Preliminaries (433b–434b) 383
     8.1.2  The sklerotes argument: conflicting letters in the same name (434bd) 390
     8.1.3  The sklerotes argument: understanding, indication, correctness (434e–435b) 395
     8.1.4  Convention ‘contributes’ to correctness (435bc) 405
     8.1.5  Conclusions on resemblance and convention in names (435cd) 413
     8.1.6  Convention elsewhere in the Platonic corpus 424
     8.1.7  The ancient commentators 425
   8.2  Names and knowledge (435d–439b) 427
     8.2.1  Cratylus’ view that names ‘teach’ (435d–436a) 427
     8.2.2  Names might express false beliefs (436a–437d) 431
     8.2.3  Names and the namegiver’s knowledge (437d–438d) 441
     8.2.4  Knowledge ‘without names’ (438d–439b) 444

9  Flux and forms (439b–440e) 449
   9.1  The arguments (439b–440d) 449
     9.1.1  The lawgivers in a whirl (439bc) 449
     9.1.2  Flux and forms: the arguments previewed 451
     9.1.3  Enter the forms, exsunt particulars (439cd) 456
     9.1.4  The first argument (439d) 462
     9.1.5  The first argument and the Theaetetus 468
     9.1.6  The second argument (439e) 473
     9.1.7  The third argument (439e–440a) 478
     9.1.8  The fourth argument (440ab) 482
## Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9.1.9</td>
<td>Flux rejected? (440bc)</td>
<td>483</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.1.10</td>
<td>Conclusion (440cd)</td>
<td>485</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.2</td>
<td>Epilogue (440de)</td>
<td>487</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix 1:</td>
<td>The text of 437d10–438b8</td>
<td>489</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix 2:</td>
<td>Some interpolations and non-mechanical errors in W and δ</td>
<td>496</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## References

- I  General index  
  509
- II Index of ancient texts  
  517
- III Index of Greek expressions  
  533
- IV Index of words discussed in the Cratylus  
  536