Introduction

The two parts of this book require separate introductions. Although Part I (on method) comes first in order of presentation below, Part II (on metaphysics) was composed earlier and thus will be introduced first. Part II is a continuation of the inquiry into the metaphysics of Plato's late period that resulted in the publication of *Plato's Late Ontology: A Riddle Resolved (PLO)* in 1983.

PLO was concerned primarily with the once strange-sounding theses attributed to Plato in Aristotle's *Physics* and *Metaphysics*. Among them are the theses: (i) that numbers come from participation of the Great and the Small in Unity, (ii) that sensible things are constituted by Forms and the Great and Small, (iii) that Forms are composed of the Great and the Small and Unity, and (iv) that Forms are numbers.

Prior to *PLO*, there were two radically opposed positions on the significance of Aristotle's reports. One (represented by K. Gaiser and H. J. Krämer of Tübingen, among others) held that Aristotle was reporting a set of doctrines passed on orally by Plato but never committed to writing – the so-called unwritten teachings. The other position was championed by Harold Cherniss in *The Riddle of the Early Academy*, to the effect that Aristotle simply did not understand Plato's views and was reporting them erroneously. Opposed as they were in other respects, both camps maintained that the views attributed to Plato by Aristotle could not be found in Plato's dialogues.

PLO offered a third alternative. It argued that all of the theses attributed to Plato by Aristotle can be found in the *Philebus*. The reason they are not immediately apparent is that they are expressed in terms other than those used by Aristotle in reporting them.

The argument for this intermediate position was based on the texts of several commentators on Aristotle writing in Greek during the fourth through sixth centuries A.D. (the "Greek Commentators"). While repeating the expressions ('the Great and the Small' and 'the Indefinite Dyad') used by Aristotle in reference to Plato's views, these writers employed several other terms in the same referential capacity (notably 'the Unlimited', 'the Unlimited Nature', and 'the More and Less'). These terms all play prominent roles in the *Philebus*, appearing in passages clearly answering to Aristotle's claims on Plato's behalf. So at least it was argued in *PLO*.

As far as terminological overlaps with the Greek commentators are concerned, this previous work was focused primarily on the *Philebus*. Whereas other dialogues figure in the argument of *PLO*, the *Statesman* is scarcely mentioned. The *Statesman* came into the picture with the serendipitous discovery, over a decade later, that the term (in translation) 'Excess and Deficiency' is yet another synonym for the expressions used both by Aristotle and his commentators in reference to the Great and the Small.

A striking feature of the *Statesman* is the dual appearance of the expression 'Excess and Deficiency' at either end of a sequence occupying the exact middle of the dialogue (283C–285C). This is the section in which the Eleatic Stranger undertakes an examination of the two kinds of measurement, one of contraries with respect to each other, the second of contraries with respect to fixed measure. Recent writers on the dialogue have found this section difficult to deal with. Some have passed it by as a mere distraction, while others have taken substantial liberties in translation to lend it a semblance of intelligibility. Such difficulties have led to an underestimation of the importance of this section in the structure of the dialogue overall.

The key to bringing this central passage of the *Statesman* into focus is the realization that it has close connections with passages in the *Philebus* containing other expressions designating the Great and the Small. When these connections are traced out, it can be seen that the *Philebus* provides a background against which the *Statesman*'s recalcitrant section on measurement becomes almost transparent. As indicated by the corresponding theses (i) through (iv) attributed to Plato by Aristotle, this background from the *Philebus* is largely metaphysical in character. The overall purpose of Part II of this study is to lay out the metaphysical underpinning of the Stranger's examination of measurement, along with that of other key sections of the *Statesman*.

Toward this end, Chapter 7 presents a translation and preliminary discussion of the section on the two kinds of measurement, followed by a

brief survey of alternative designations for the Great and the Small found in Aristotle and his commentators. The Appendix, titled "Equivalents for the Great and Small in Aristotle and His Commentators," provides a more extensive listing of sources from which the survey is drawn. Chapter 8 continues the discussion with a selective look at other dialogues containing terminology of the Great and Small, including the *Parmenides* and possibly the *Republic*, along with the *Philebus* and now the *Statesman*.

Chapter 9 returns to the section on measurement (283C–285C) with the intention of elucidating the two kinds of measurement in light of connections with the *Philebus*. A pivotal point in the dialogue comes with the Stranger's remark, at the very middle of this section, that all the arts depend for their existence on the second kind of measurement. Explicitly mentioned in this regard are the arts of statesmanship and weaving, but the context makes it clear that dialectic is included as well. The stake of dialectic in the second kind of measurement is examined in Chapter 10. This chapter is primarily concerned with the depiction of dialectic in the *Philebus* as the most accurate of the arts in its use of numbers and measures.

Among the theses attributed to Plato by Aristotle is the thesis that Forms are numbers. As argued in *PLO* (and again here), what this means is that Forms are numbers in the sense of measure. The superior accuracy of dialectic lies in its ability to make divisions according to Forms in the role of measures. Chapter 11 considers various other explanations offered by recent commentators of what division according to Forms amounts to. It tests these explanations against the Stranger's remark in an earlier passage (262B) that one is more likely to encounter Forms or Ideas by making cuts through the middle, and finds them unable to account for the meaning of that remark. Important questions raised in the course of this discussion include: "What gets severed when cuts are made through the middle?" and "What results from such cuts?"

Chapter 12 concludes Part II of the study with textually based answers to these and related questions. In the course of examining the Stranger's distinction between parts and kinds (at 263B), it argues that kinds in the *Statesman* (but not always elsewhere) are classes of entities all sharing in the same Form. After making a connection between cutting things through the middle and the second kind of measurement, it then argues that kinds are what dialecticians are supposed to cut through the middle and that correct cuts produce other kinds in turn. The reason cuts through the middle are likely to encounter Forms is that the relevant middle is established by Forms initially. This is the answer the Stranger

himself points out in his summary statement of the second kind of measurement at 284E.

Immediately following the section on measurement, the Stranger discloses the main purpose of the dialogue (285D). Contrary to what might be expected, the main purpose is not to define the statesman but to make the participants in the dialogue better dialecticians. This brings us to the topic of dialectical method.

As noted previously, the metaphysical part of the present work was developed before the part on method. The initial draft of the book followed this sequence, placing method after metaphysics. The order was reversed in the final draft for the following reasons. First is a matter of familiarity. To the best of my knowledge, there is no previous study of the metaphysics of Plato's *Statesman*. Most recent commentaries on the dialogue nonetheless have had something to say about its method. A consequence is that students familiar with scholarly literature on the dialogue will tend to be more familiar with its methodological than with its metaphysical aspects. The sequence of method before metaphysics is dictated by the principle that a specialized book like this should begin with material familiar to its intended audience.

Another reason has to do with the purpose of the dialogue. Becoming a better dialectician requires both increased competence in the techniques of correct division and increased understanding of what those techniques accomplish. The first gain is methodological (how to do it) and the second, theoretical (the significance of doing it). Beginning with the metaphysical would treat the theory in a practical vacuum. The budding dialectician must see the method in action to appreciate the questions it raises about the underlying metaphysics.

Recent commentaries on the *Statesman* vary in the degree of attention they pay to the Stranger's disclosure of purpose at 285D. One author allotting due consideration to this passage is Mitchell Miller, in his durable book *The Philosopher in Plato's* Statesman. Frequent references are made to this work in the following discussion. Another scholar who has recognized the importance of this disclosure is Christopher Rowe, in his fine introduction to *Reading the* Statesman, which recently appeared under his editorship. Most commentators who approach the dialogue from a political perspective, however, give this passage short shrift or overlook it entirely. A case in point is Melissa Lane's often brilliant *Method and Metaphysics in Plato's* Statesman. Although this work contains many methodological insights, some of which figure in the discussion that follows, it neglects to mention the Stranger's observation that the purpose of the dialogue is to produce better dialecticians.

The Stranger's disclosure of purpose serves as a point of departure for Part I of this study. Chapter 1 sets the stage with a summary description of the dialogue's topical structure. As part of this summary, it is observed that most of the dialogue's early divisions are flawed in an instructive manner, as is the paradigm of the kingly herdsman on which they are based. These flaws illustrate one respect in which the dialogue is set up to provide dialectical instruction. Other respects are discussed in subsequent chapters. The first chapter ends with a discussion of the text containing the disclosure of purpose itself.

The *Statesman* is third in a sequence of dialogues employing the method of dialectical division. In both the *Phaedrus* and the *Sophist*, division is paired with a companion procedure of collection. To evaluate the absence of collection in the *Statesman*, it is helpful to look carefully at how it functions in these two previous dialogues. This is the purpose of Chapter 2. Also discussed in this chapter is the language of collection that appears in the *Philebus*, despite the absence of the corresponding methodological procedure.

In similar fashion, Chapter 3 addresses the use of division in those two earlier dialogues. A notable feature of division in the *Phaedrus* is its use of nondichotomous distinctions, a feature which is absent in the *Sophist* but reappears in the *Statesman*. The *Sophist* contains eight fully developed lines of division in all, each of which is examined in the course of this chapter.

Chapter 4 is concerned primarily with the paradigm for the use of paradigms introduced at 277D. As Lane notes (and as G. E. L. Owen noted previously), the Stranger's treatment of the use of paradigms at this point ties in with his later discussion of the importance of verbal paradigms in dialectical inquiry. After a textual examination of the passages involved, the chapter ends with an explanation of the sense in which collection in the *Phaedrus* and the *Sophist* is replaced by the use of paradigms in the *Statesman*.

Among the subtleties often missed in the Stranger's development of his paradigm for the use of paradigms is that it actually consists of a plurality of paradigms rolled into one. The key paradigm is the *use* of familiar symbols as paradigms in teaching letters to children, which serves in turn as a paradigm for the *use* of paradigms in the advancement of knowledge. In like fashion, although weaving is introduced as a paradigm for statesmanship itself, the main dialectical lesson in this regard comes with the *use* of the paradigm of weaving as a paradigm for the *use* of paradigms in dialectical inquiry generally. After carefully distinguishing the several paradigms involved, Chapter 5 undertakes a detailed examination of the paradigm

of weaving in particular. As Miller has pointed out, the development of the definition of weaving closely parallels the ongoing development of the definition of statesmanship. These parallels are spelled out in detail by way of preparation for an analysis of the final definition of the kingly art.

Three features of the final definition are particularly noteworthy. One, is the Stranger's careful itemization and detailed description of the various arts that must be separated from statesmanship for the definition to be complete. Another, is his departure from the strictly dichotomous division that prevails in the *Sophist* and the first part of the *Statesman*. Third, is the fact that nondichotomous division occurs only in the leftward direction, contrary to the explicit instruction of *Sophist* 264E to restrict division to the right.

Chapter 6 examines these three features and shows that they are intimately related. They are all part of what appears to be a new technique of definition (anticipated in the *Sophist*'s definition of not-Being) by way of a full specification of what the thing to be defined is not. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the sequel to the formal definition in the final pages of the dialogue (305E–311C), which describes parallels between the practical activites of the weaver and those of the statesman. Part I comes to a close with the suggestion that the formal definition relates to this final description as warp to woof and that both are needed to bring the portrait of the statesman to completion.

A few disclaimers are in order regarding both the subject matter and the format of this study. Readers accustomed to approaching the *Statesman* as a political treatise will find relatively little in this book that responds to their interests. There is no fine-grained analysis of the Myth of Cronus, for example, nor is there much discussion of the political significance of the concluding definition of statesmanship. A consequence is that there is a considerable range of politically oriented commentary that this study does not take into account.

As far as format is concerned, readers familiar with the text of the *Statesman* may find my frequent quotation of Greek terms somewhat disconcerting. The reason for these quotations is straightforward. As everyone involved in translation knows, one's rendering of a given text can be strongly influenced by how one reads it. Although I have consulted other translations of the dialogue on a regular basis, the translations of the passages discussed here are my own responsibility. Frequent quotation of the Greek texts is intended mainly as an aid to readers who wish to check the accuracy of my translations. Stephanus numbering follows that presented in the electronic *Thesaurus Linguae Graecae*.

The book has been written with readers in mind who already have experience with the methodology of Plato's late dialogues. At the same time, it seems not unreasonable to hope that it may be of some help as well to readers who have not yet savored the delights of Plato's methodological investigations. Another reason for including ample quotations of the Greek is to acquaint less experienced readers with the music of Plato's language. The more scholars are attracted to a careful study of these late dialogues, the better we should come eventually to understand them.

PART I

METHOD

1

Becoming Better Dialecticians

1.1 Topical Structure of the Dialogue

The *Statesman* begins with Socrates thanking Theodorus for introducing him to Theaetetus and the Stranger (ξένος)[1] from Elea. After a bantering interchange on the relative values of sophistry, statesmanship, and philosophy, and after acquiescing to the Stranger's request that Young Socrates (YS) serve as respondent in the ensuing discussion, Socrates announces his intention to converse with his younger namesake on another occasion and takes his seat among the audience. We hear nothing more from him until the final speech of the dialogue in which he compliments the Stranger for completing an excellent portrayal of the kingly art.

The Stranger begins by assuming that the statesman, like the sophist before him, is someone possessing knowledge (ἐπιστημόνων: 258B4). After securing YS's agreement that the king, the slave master, and the household manager all share the same knowledge and exercise the same skill as the statesman (259C1–4), the Stranger identifies this knowledge

[1] Translations of the *Sophist* (by Nicholas White) and the *Statesman* (by Christopher Rowe) in John Cooper (ed.) (1997) agree in rendering ξένος 'visitor'. I prefer the more common translation 'stranger', which is compatible with the person in question remaining in the city for an extended period of time – perhaps as a metic or resident alien (the term μέτοικος appears to be used synonymously with ξένος at *Laws* 881B6; see also *Laws* 866B7 and *Meno* 80B6). This leaves open the possibility of viewing the Stranger as a symbolic stand-in for Plato as author, who may well have thought of himself as a "stranger in his own country" at the time these two dialogues were written. [In this regard, see Konrad Gaiser (1980).] Pursuant to this interpretation, the Eleatic connection could be explained in terms of Plato's indebtedness to Parmenides' conception of Being in his initial theory of Forms.

as theoretical (γνωστικῆς: 259C10) rather than practical (πρακτικῆς: 259D1). Theoretical knowledge is then divided into that responsible for making judgments and that responsible for giving directions, which latter is further divided into self-directive (αὐτεπιτακτικην) and a nameless kind concerned with promulgating the directions of others. Those guided by their own directions, in turn, might be concerned with bringing either inanimate or animate products into being (γενέσεσιν at 261B13). Inasmuch as bringing animate things into being involves providing sustenance, that kind can be subdivided into those who rear animals individually and those who rear them in herds (ἀγελαιοτροφικὴν: 261E8).

As characterized thus far, the statesman is someone with self-directive theoretical knowledge concerned with the collective rearing of living things. But there are many other skills that fit this description, including those of the shepherd and of the cowherd. When the Stranger asks YS to divide by half (ἡμίσεσιν: 262A2) the field cordoned off by this description, YS comes up with the distinction between rearing of beasts and rearing of human beings. Although this distinction seems reasonable enough at first glance, the Stranger points out that humans constitute only a small part of the class of living things and proceeds to give YS a tutorial on making cuts "through the middle" (διὰ μέσων: 262B6). The contents of this lesson are discussed in Chapter 11.

To get the definition back on track, the Stranger observes that their previous reference to rearing carries with it a distinction between wild and tame animals and that the latter could be further divided in two ways to reach the class of human beings who are the primary beneficiaries of the statesman's nurturing activity. The shorter of the two distinguishes human beings as featherless bipeds occupying dry land. Like YS's initial attempt, however, this shorter way involves cutting things into smaller and larger portions (bipeds constitute a relatively small subclass of creatures living on dry land). By way of avoiding this error, the longer route divides dryland animals into those with and those without feet and singles out human beings as hornless noninterbreeding animals with two feet only. This accomplished, YS assumes (267A) that the definition of statesmanship has been completed.

But as the Stranger points out, there are occupations besides statesmanship concerned with the collective rearing of human beings – merchants, farmers, millers, and so forth. Ostensibly to narrow the definition yet further, he recounts an elaborate myth about an age governed by Cronus in which the course of nature ran backward, and the needs of all