The Reception of Ideas:

Probabile as a Criterion for Right Action, from Ciceronian Scepticism to Jesuit Dogmatism

1. Introduction

The Jesuit, Honoré Fabri (1607-1688), writing in the preface to his 1659 book entitled *Pithanophilus: sive dialogus vel opusculum de opinione probabili* (*"Pithanophilus: or A dialogue or little work on Probable Opinion"*), portrayed Europe as being in uproar over a single issue:

> Almost the whole of the Christian world at this time is in dispute about probable opinion. The benches in schools, the pulpits in churches, the presses in publishing houses, the crossroads and the market in cities, the cloisters and cells in monasteries, resound with one [topic] only, [namely] probability. Onto the scene have come forth learned men of every kind — scholastics, moralists, philologists, canonists, indeed even experts on Roman law; and men of every establishment — regulars, academics, priests, bishops, churchmen, laymen; and likewise writers of every nation — Italians, Frenchmen, Spaniards, Germans.[1]

Fabri may have been exaggerating the circumstances to justify his own intervention, although the subject does seem to have been of some importance at the time. Of more topical interest to the historian of concepts are his allusions not only to a Latin term (*probabile*) but also to its Greek forerunner, πιθανόν (*pithanon*). The complex but traceable development of the probable may contribute valuable insights towards the construction of a theory of the migration of knowledge.

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1. Fabri (1659) *Lectori* ("To the reader"), first paragraph: *De opinione probabili totus fere Christianus orbis hoc tempore disputat; subsellia in scholis, pulpita in templis, prela in officinis Typographicis, compita, et forum in Urbibus, claustra, et cellae in monasteriis una duntaxat probabilitate personant; doctores omnis generis, scholastici, morales, philologi, Canonistae, immo et iuris Caesarei periti; homines omnis instituti, regulares, Academici, Parochi, Episcopi, Ecclesiastici, laici; scriptores item omnis nationis, Itali, Galli, Hispani, Germani in hanc scenam prodiere.*

The Greek Origins of Probabile and Veri Simile

The Latin and Greek terms do not mean the same thing (*pithanon* means "persuasive", while *probabile* means "approvable") and yet they clearly have something in common. Do the terms refer to two aspects of one concept, or to two different concepts within a larger context? How were the terms transmitted or received, and why? My research originally began with Fabri and worked backwards in time, but for ease of presentation I shall begin at the chronological beginning and work forwards. Some steps may therefore appear arbitrary, such as the early focus on oral poetry, truth, reality and the appearance of truth, but they proceeded naturally from the investigation.

It may be worth noting already that the general context for these concepts is an awareness of the limited nature of human knowledge, variously applied. It is unclear to what extent this awareness *per se* is transmitted or whether it is a natural outcome of the human condition, but it does seem to be the case that the interpretations of this awareness may be transmitted, or received and applied in new and apparently advantageous ways.

2. The Greek Origins of *Probabile* and *Veri Simile*

Our sources are sketchy, to say the least, but we may identify several early stages in the development of the awareness that human knowledge is limited. I shall consider the main stages so far as is possible in chronological order, although there is a great deal of overlap.

2.1. The Oral Tradition (C20-8)

Human curiosity demands answers to questions lying beyond immediate human experience: anthropomorphic and zoomorphic explanations seem to have satisfied curiosity for many centuries, if not millenia. To take one example, early Greeks (and Romans) explained the summer and winter cycle through the myth of the crop goddess Demeter (Ceres) who in winter was distressed by the absence at that time of the year of her daughter Persephonê (Proserpina) who was forced to attend her husband Hades (Pluto) in the Underworld. The cult of Demeter continued to be popular centuries after such anthropomorphic explanations began to be challenged, and it should be borne in mind that those thinkers of the ancient world we shall be concentrating on as the instigators of change were always in

The Oral Tradition (C20-8)

a minority: established, popular and politically approved structures are persistent and slow to change.

Prior to the advent of general literacy, the main vehicle for the amassing and transmitting of received wisdom was poetry, and particularly epic poetry with its several techniques to facilitate the memorization of vast quantities of information both by the poets themselves and by many members of their audiences. In the Mycenaean world (C20-12), poets sang heroic accounts celebrating the manliness of their kingly patrons and stories about the gods with whom the patrons liked to be associated, incidentally exploiting both heroes and gods to explain phenomena such as plants, animals, places, and weather. These works continued to develop orally for centuries after the end of the Mycenaean period in a much different context, and the traditional process of amalgamation and adaptation culminated in a series of large-scale epics including the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*. With the introduction of writing, these oral poems were finally written down and became relatively static (C8-7).

Early in the oral tradition, poets began to portray themselves as conduits for the words of a divine power. They achieved this by introducing into their poetry requests to a Muse[2] to sing the poem, which the poet himself proceeded to sing. The appeals to a Muse would precede accounts of things about which the poets had no immediate familiarity, ranging from events of long ago in far distant lands to the intimate thoughts and feelings of gods and heroes. From being the default device for explaining how a poet could deal with topics about which he could have no personal knowledge, the Muses eventually came to be viewed more as a source of inspiration than of information, but this transition clearly occurred well after the end of the oral tradition. Appealing to the Muse or Muses as the source of information may have contributed at an early stage in the oral tradition to poetry itself becoming associated with divine revelation; hence the production of oracles in the form of poetry, e.g., in Delphi, where the source of information was none other than Apollo himself. By this point it would have been easy to conclude that the gods, or at least some gods, being the source of epic and oracular information, knew everything, and that only through these gods could men hope to

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2.   Addressed as such, for example, in the first line of the *Odyssey* while the more general term of "goddess" is used in the first line of the *Iliad* to fit the metre.

understand or know anything beyond their own senses.

Poets and priests may have appealed to the authority of divine powers, but their utterances could also be compared with reality. Priests, on the one hand, would have wished to avoid the consequent eventuality of supplicants complaining about false predictions, and it would not have taken them too long to realize the benefits of ambiguous oracles. Many classical stories illustrate the point that it is the wrong-headed client, not the ambiguous nature of the oracle, that is at fault when things do not turn out as expected.

Poets, on the other hand, could expect to contend with the criticism that their stories of monsters, gods and miraculous events fail to conform with reality. Indeed, Hesiod (C8-7), the first real individual poet known to us (Homer is a fiction), has been regarded as himself casting doubt on the reliability of the Muses when he has them sing (*Theogony* 27-28):

> We know to speak many false things similar to true things,

> But we know, whenever we want, to sing true things.[3]

This at first hearing sounds like an explanation for the failure of poetry to reflect reality, and if so, it would be a poor explanation for a poet to make since it appears to be an admission of his own untrustworthiness: we are not to know when the Muses (and hence the poet) are singing something true or false. It is unlikely that Hesiod would wish to undermine his own credibility with such a rash statement. Thus the "false things" have been interpreted both negatively and positively in the scholarly literature.[4] In my opinion, the Muses should be interpreted as declaring that they present many fictions because this is their usual way to present truths beyond the understanding of men, although they themselves are of course able to tell truths if they so wish. In other words, fictions similar to truths are the best that humans can expect to understand with regard at least to the great

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3.   ἴδμεν ψεύδεα πολλὰ λέγειν ἐτύμοισιν ὁμοῖα,

        ἴδμεν δ' εὖτ' ἐθέλωμεν ἀληθέα γηρύσασθαι.

4.   For a discussion and bibliography, see Belfiore (1985) 47-48. She is correct in identifying Plato, *Resp.* II. 382d2-3 as a direct allusion to these lines in Hesiod, but her discussion is vitiated by the traditional assumption that Plato is the speaker in a Platonic dialogue.

truths concerning the nature of the gods and reality in general. If this interpretation is correct, Hesiod would seem to be consciously endorsing mythology, despite its patently anthropomorphic bias, as the divine vehicle of great truths which are otherwise beyond the understanding of humans.[5]

Oracular poetry must be seen to be true about future events, and is therefore ambiguous; epic poetry does not need to appear to be true to the uninitiated since it is concerned with universal truth, necessarily portrayed to humans in fictional - mythical - terms whose veracity regarding particular details is irrelevant. There is no need for ambiguity in the presentation of universal truth, or for myth in predictions. Common to both types of divine communication, however, is the poetic form through which the omniscient gods attempt to impart their knowledge of universal truths and future events to generally incomprehending humans.

To summarize: humans have long sought to overcome their limited understanding of the world. For millenia they satisfied their curiosity with mythological and anthropomorphic explanations, and preserved and developed this body of information by means of poetry with its several mnemonic devices. To make themselves credible, poets attributed the information to a divine source, and poetry itself came to be regarded as the language of the gods, through which the gods attempted to communicate with humans. Traditional anthropomorphic explanations came to be rationalized as the only way gods could communicate universal truths to weak-minded mortals, while the sophisticated device of ambiguity in predictions, actually a means to preserve the integrity of prophets, also emphasized the fallibility of mortals and the infallibility of the gods.

2.2. The Rise of Argument (C8-6)

Hesiod's apparent defence of mythology would suggest that he felt a need to defend it. He lived in Boeotia, on the Greek mainland north of Attica, but his father came from Cyme, a city in Ionia, the area running north to south down the western coast of what the Romans later called Asia Minor, and is today known as Turkey. We know of an Ionian reaction against mythology and poetry in

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5.   The idea is picked up by Plato's Socrates in *Republic*, where myths are described as lies/fictions containing some truth. See my book...

the sixth century, and I suggest that it was already under way in the eighth-seventh centuries and was familiar to Hesiod. His knowledge of eastern myths and his apparent familiarity with a reaction against mythology may be due to an education at the hands of emigrants from Cyme,[6] such as his family, or to an early childhood in Cyme itself. Although Hesiod is autobiographical in his poetry, he does not elucidate this point.

Outspoken critics of divinely inspired poetic mythology are known to us from the sixth century, such as Hecataeus of Miletus, one of the first prose writers. It has been observed that the opening line of his rationalizing mythography is a "remarkable declaration of epistemic independence."[7] Prose writers, both by the act of writing prose rather than poetry and by explicit reference to themselves as the source of their information, made it plain that they were not inspired by a divine power but were relying on their own reason. The cautious presentation of opinions rather than knowledge shows the continuing awareness that human knowledge is limited, but the very presentation of arguments implies an attempt to expand human knowledge through reasoning. I shall briefly indicate the context for this break with tradition and then concentrate on a particular group of people most relevant to our discussion, the *phusikoi* ("men pertaining to nature", "naturalists").

C8-6 Ionia was in a remarkable position. The Greek city states scattered down its coastline were exposed to a wide variety of cultures. Travellers from each city state could compare their own customs and laws with those of the other Greek city states in the area, and with those of the Greek mainland to the west, of the Aegean islands in between, and with more far-flung Greek city states, from the western edges of the Mediterranean to the northern shores of the Black Sea; but on their doorstep were also the "barbarian" (non-Greek speaking) empires of the east, including the Persians

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6.   Emigration at this time was usually from the Greek mainland outwards to the periphery; however, we know of a wave of emigration from Cyme in the opposite direction in around 750 B.C.E., and Hesiod's father may have been involved in that: see Barron & Easterling (1989) 93.

7.   Herbert Granger (2007) 420, who translates thus: "Hecataeus of Miletus says this: These things I write, as it seems to me to be true; for the stories of the Greeks are many and absurd, as it appears to me" (*FGrH 1 F 1a*). Granger notes the emphasis on the author's own opinion to the exclusion of any divine inspiration.

who would come to dominate the region, while to the south was Egypt with its own ancient and venerable traditions. The sheer variety of ways of life should surely have provoked some of those with time on their hands to begin thinking critically.

Both Mesopotamia to the east and Egypt to the south were areas where water regularly flooded the earth, and it is no surprise that locals had provided mythological explanations for the phenomenon.[8] The creation myth in which water was the dominant form of matter would have lost its original context by the time it was picked up around 600 B.C.E. by Thales, an Ionian Greek based in the city state of Miletus, just south of Cyme, the city from which Hesiod's father had set out for Boeotia. Mythology may already have been the object of criticism for over a century by the time Thales began to consider the creation myth. He may not even have been the first to ask himself why water was the dominant form of matter. It seems that he did accept without question that water was indeed the primary element, and in seeking to explain an unquestioned element in the myth, he behaved like later rationalizers of mythology. At any rate, he seems to have provided what he must have considered to be a rational explanation, removing as he appears to have done all mythological references.[9] By providing a rational argument in support of his view that water was in some way the primary form of matter, Thales effectively prompted fellow Milesians and Greeks of nearby cities in Ionia to provide rational counterarguments in favour of alternative primal substances. That the first to react were also Milesians suggests that Thales did not write his ideas down but discussed them. The Milesians Anaximander and Anaximenes provided rational arguments for the "indefinite" and air, respectively, while Heraclitus (C6-5) in nearby Ephesus proposed fire/*logos*. The two later Milesians may have adopted the new medium of prose writing, while Heraclitus certainly did,[10] and they may have done so, as the later logographers (e.g., Hecataeus of Miletus) did, partly in order to emphasize

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8. In the Babylonian *Enuma Elish*, fresh and salt water mingle at the beginning of creation. These two types of water are represented by Apsu and Tiamat respectively.

9. What exactly he claimed is unclear, as we have only testimonia from not entirely impartial philosophers such as Aristotle, *Metaphysics* 983 b21-29. It is not even clear whether he wrote his ideas down, let alone whether he wrote in poetic or prose form.

10. On early prose writers and their significance, see esp. Herbert Granger (2007) 412-414.

their rejection of poetic divine revelation. If correct, it may be assumed that they saw human reason as capable of arriving at an understanding of great truths, such as the cause of everything, without the aid of the gods.

Thus began the quest of the *physikoi* (the "naturalists") to discover the cause of the world. The nature of the spread of these physical theories would seem to indicate that reacting to rational argument with rational argument played a large role in the rise of Greek philosophy. The supporting arguments raised additional questions and targets for responses. For example, the demythologizing of physical matters naturally led to a critique of the gods. Xenophanes (C6-5) of the Ionian city of Colophon, besides offering an alternative suggestion for the prime material (water and earth, or wet and dry), appears to have argued that there was one non-anthropomorphic god, and that omens and portents were in fact only physical phenomena providing mortals with no divine knowledge. It is interesting to observe that despite his criticism of anthropomorphism and mythology he expressed himself in hexameters, in the style of Homer and Hesiod. Probably following the capture of Colophon by the Medes in 546/5 B.C.E.,[11] he spent the majority of his long life in Magna Graecia, the Greek-colonized area of southern Italy and eastern Sicily, and his wanderings from city to city combined with his use of poetry suggest that in his reduced circumstances he had become a professional poet, catering to the traditionally poetic tastes of his western Greek audience while feeding them revolutionary material.

One verse is particularly pertinent to our study, but it has come down to us as a one-line quote taken out of context, making its intent uncertain. Responsible for this is the philosopher, historian and biographer, Plutarch (C1-2), writing over six hundred years later, who mentions his own teacher Ammonius being in the habit of quoting this line of Xenophanes. Since it would be unwise to assume that the context in which Ammonius was in the habit of using it corresponded to the original setting, I shall present only the line of Xenophanes (Plutarch 746B7):

"Let these things have been considered resembling true things"[12]

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11.   Granger (2007) 417.

12.   Plutarch 746.B.7: ταῦτα δεδοξάσθω μὲν ἐοικότα τοῖς ἐτύμοισι.

This is remarkably reminiscent of Hesiod's "similar to true things" (ἐτύμοισιν ὁμοῖα). Perhaps due to metrical considerations, Xenophanes substitutes for Hesiod's *homoia* ("things similar") the term *eikota* ("things resembling"), a participle cognate with the noun *eikon* ("icon", "image").[13] The perfect imperative suggests that the line refers to a preceding account just concluded in one of Xenophanes' poems, in which case the line should be regarded as positively expressed, in the same way that the Muses' lying was intended positively by Hesiod. However, while the Muses told falsehoods similar to truths because (so I argue) humans could not comprehend the whole truth known to gods, Xenophanes seems to have denied divine revelation altogether (he had, as already mentioned, explained away omens and portents as purely physical phenomena). He may therefore have consciously transformed Hesiod's use of the phrase by alluding here instead (so I argue) to the fact that his account was based on human reason, and might not be completely accurate but could be considered a rough approximation to the truth.

Xenophanes the wandering poet exemplifies one of the ways the Ionian physical theories spread throughout the Greek-speaking world, although not every naturalist would have spent his time giving exhibitions of his work. I suggest that Xenophanes in particular seems to have influenced key figures and new trends in Magna Graecia — to be discussed shortly — in large part because he was an intriguing novelty, especially in that part of the world. Written works may have begun to make their presence felt in this period, especially in Ionia, but not as might be envisaged today. Heraclitus, for example, is reported to have deposited his work in the renowned Temple of Artemis in his home city of Ephesus. He may have assumed that such a respected and well-visited building would ensure a large readership for his work in perpetuity.

Xenophanes is reported by Diogenes Laertius (IX.20) to have written an elegy on the foundation of Elea (by Ionians about 540 B.C.E.), apparently when he was already an old man; that he wrote such an elegy suggests that he may have lived there for a time. He was, then, in the right time and place to influence one of the major figures in the development of western thought, Parmenides of

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13.   This word substitution may be no more than a metrical necessity, but it is now the first instance known to us of *eikos* explicitly in the context of truth.

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Elea, and indeed he is reported by ancient sources[14] to have been the teacher, or at least one of the teachers,[15] of Parmenides (C6-5).

Parmenides seems to have shared unquestioningly with the Ionians, including Xenophanes, the assumption that that which causes is material, but he worked out the implications of another assumption common to all their theories, that that which causes differs from the things caused: the things caused come to be, while that which causes, being uncaused, cannot come to be, but must always be. He developed this awareness into an axiom that no later Greek thinker could ignore: "the thing which is" (*to eon*, the later Greek *to on*) is; "the thing which is not" (*to mê eon*) is not. From this basic premise it followed, according to Parmenides, that what is always is, is unchanging, and therefore is one and the same when looked at from any direction, and is hence a sphere. Coming to be is impossible in this scheme, and this is obviously at odds with our experience.

Prose had not yet taken hold in the west. Parmenides may have used his own reason, but he ascribed it poetically to a divine power, a goddess who shows him two paths - the path of *peithô*, persuasion, and the path of *doxa*, variously translated in the secondary literature as appearance, seeming, or opinion. *Doxa* is "that which seems", so all these interpretations have some basis. The path of persuasion follows truth/reality (*alêtheia*), and from the basic premise that what is is, and what is not is not, the argument leads to the conclusion, as we have seen, that what is is one changeless sphere. The path of seeming leads to the phenomena of this world. Of interest to us here is the connection Parmenides makes between persuasion and truth/reality.[16] While the phenomena of this world might suggest to us that change and multiplicity are part of reality, the poem suggests that rational argument is what ultimately persuades us to accept the unchanging sphere as true or real.

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14.   Plato, *Sophist* 242d (the Eleatic guest is speaking); Aristotle, *Metaphysics* 986b20-25; Plutarch *Moralia* 333.

15.   Diogenes Laertius IX.21 adds Aminias the Pythagorean, citing Sotion as his source. Strabo VI.1.1.16-17 refers to Parmenides and his follower Zeno as Pythagoreans.

16.   Πειθοῦς ἐστι κέλευθος (Ἀληθείηι γὰρ ὀπηδεῖ), "There is the path of persuasion (for it attends truth/ reality)": Diels-Kranz, (1951) I, B 2 line 10. It is often telescoped into "The Way of Truth" in secondary literature.

The Rise of Argument (C8-6)

Reality is to be understood through active reason and the persuasive power of rational thought, rather than through our passive and misleading senses.

All later naturalists felt obliged to explain in one way or another what appeared to be the fact of an unseen static cause (or causes) of the sensible ever-changing world of phenomena. One strategy was to accept the Parmenidean sphere, but to attribute to it internal change. Empedocles of Agrigentum in Sicily (C5) wrote a poem in which this sphere comprised the four elements cyclically blending together and then separating out over thousands of years. This would be reflected in the Hellenistic period (C4-1) in Stoic cosmology, which also borrowed from Heraclitus the notion of one *Logos* pervading and forming everything. The *Logos* was an aspect of the traditional omniscient god, here far more influential on the cosmos than ever before. Another strategy was to accept the unchanging nature of the sphere, but to assume an infinite number of spheres. Leucippus (C5) and Democritus (C5-4) developed this idea that later came to be known as atomism, and it was adopted in the Hellenistic period by Epicurus and his followers. Atomism effectively removed divine omniscience so far as it helped humans, although lip-service was still paid to a belief in gods. In these and other strategies, whatever the status of divine communication to humans, it was understood that reality was beyond the immediate knowledge of humans and required argument to give an account of it.

To summarize: the Ionian reaction to mythology saw the beginnings of critical thinking. The presentation of one's own opinions encouraged others to react with more arguments on more subjects, and this was all accompanied by a gradual shift towards writing in prose. Prose seems to have taken some time to reach the west, for which reason Xenophanes (who may have left Ionia before prose took hold), Parmenides and Empedocles all wrote in hexameter. Their poetry, however, already exhibited critical argumentation, and any goddess appearing in a poem would seem to represent the divine power of human reason rather than a superior entity talking down to a mere human. What was presented in poetic form could still be declared to be like the truth, now not because a divine power had to dumb down a universal truth but because reason itself was working up to a universal truth through argument. Taking the comments of Xenophanes and Parmenides together, it may be said that an argument presenting what is like the truth is persuasive.

2.3. The Origin of Rhetoric (C5)

Many if not most Greek city-states in the seventh and sixth centuries experienced a period of tyranny, when one oligarchic aristocrat would overcome his peers with the aid of non-aristocratic factions. The process in each case eventually led either to some form of democracy, as in the case of Athens (the last tyrant was expelled from there in 510 B.C.E.), or back to some form of oligarchy. Tyranny reappeared in Sicily in the fifth and fourth centuries in the form of military dictatorships. One Sicilian city-state, Syracuse, enjoyed a brief respite from tyranny with the fall of Thrasybulus in 465 B.C.E., with results both unexpected and far-reaching. Many aggrieved parties petitioning for the return of property that had been appropriated during the tyranny were for the first time assisted in their efforts by a system showing them how to put their case persuasively in the lawcourts. This system, the art of speaking well, or the art of speeches,[17] is attributed in our ancient sources to two people, Tisias and Corax, or just one person, namely Tisias the crow (*corax*).

At the time that this occurred, Empedocles of Agrigentum, a neighbouring Sicilian city-state, was probably in his thirties, Xenophanes was long gone, and Parmenides may have died only recently. Their poetic argumentation and terminology clearly influenced Tisias, although for a different outcome in his different context. It could be inferred from the poets that everyday sensed phenomena concealed a deeper persistent reality approachable only through reasoned argument, and that such argument would be persuasive to the extent that it approximated to this reality or truth (thus Parmenides' path of persuasion with regard to what is, arrived at not through the senses but through reason). Tisias seems to have taken this understanding and turned it on its head. He saw that in a court of law, the aim was to persuade rather than to discover the truth;[18] in order to persuade others one had to provide arguments bearing the appearance of truth, without regard for the truth itself. Arguments resembling (the truth) are *eikota*, the term used by Xenophanes. They are fundamental to persuasion.

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17.   This was *de facto* rhetoric, but the name seems to have come later.

18.   That Tisias/Corax regarded the aim of rhetoric to be persuasion (*peithô*) is well documented: for sources see Glucker (1995) 123 n.45.

A slightly later division reported in Plato's *Phaedrus* recommends the following structure for a rhetorical forensic speech: an introduction, an account, witnesses, evidence, *eikota*, and closing arguments.[19] Plato's Socrates in the same dialogue provides an example of an *eikos* or argument from plausibility purportedly written by Tisias himself:[20] a weak but brave man attacks a strong but cowardly man and takes, say, his cloak; he is brought to court; neither party must tell the truth; the cowardly man must deny that he was attacked by only one brave man while the other must claim that they were alone, and use the following line of argument: "How could one as small as I am have made an attempt on one as big as he is?"

The appearance already in the poetry of Xenophanes of *eikota* in connection with the truth suffices to show that Tisias was not the first to distinguish between truth and the appearance of truth. It was only with the events after the fall of Thrasybulus, however, that the appearance of truth came to be exploited methodically at the expense of truth itself, that is, even when the truth of the matter were known, a case not too often encountered in physical speculation. Persuasion in courts of law depended then as now on the appearance of truth, rather than on truth itself. While persuasion (*peithô*) and the likely (*eikos/eikota*) had been side-effects of the naturalists' search for truth, they were transformed by Tisias into the end and the means, respectively, for winning court cases. Tisias had discovered (consciously or not) the human tendency, in default of knowledge, to attempt to understand the world according to stereotypes. The *eikos* shifted from being qualitatively like the universal truth sought by the naturalists to being a likely example of what usually was the case in events similar to the one at issue in a court of law. The limited nature of human knowledge was no longer the driving force of the agent in a search for truth, but an essential quality in the audience to be exploited by the unscrupulous orator.

2.4. The Spread of Rhetoric (C5-4)

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19.   *Phaedrus* 2667-e6: the division is ascribed to a late fifth century sophist, Theodorus of Byzantium. For further details, see Glucker (1995) 124.

20.   *Phaedrus* 273b3-c2.

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Just as Xenophanes may have been chiefly responsible for the spread of demythologizing argumentation from Ionia to Magna Graecia, so Gorgias (C5-4) may be regarded as chiefly responsible for the spread of the art of speaking well, or of speeches (again, it had not yet been named rhetoric) from Sicily to the Greek mainland and particularly to Attica. He was a citizen of Leontini, not far from Syracuse. Diogenes Laertius (VIII.58), citing a Hellenistic doxographic source, suggests that he was a pupil of Empedocles, himself a very good orator. Doxographers were prone to identify master-pupil links even where there was none in their attempts to explicate and impose order on the development of schools of thought; Empedocles was in the right time and place to be able to teach Gorgias, but beyond that it is difficult to verify the connection. Whatever the case may be, Gorgias was certainly influenced, whether directly or indirectly, by Tisias and his new art of speaking well, or art of speeches.

Gorgias is today considered one of the two members of the first generation of sophists, the other being Protagoras of Abdera (C5) or, according to Eupolis (DL IX.50), of Teos. The Persians had conquered the Ionian city of Teos in about 540 B.C.E., and some of its citizens had fled to Abdera in Thrace, which itself fell briefly to the Persians some decades later. Abdera was the birthplace not only of Protagoras but of Democritus as well, who was later believed to have taught the future sophist (DL IX.50, 53). Whatever the case may be, Protagoras was clearly influenced by the Ionian rejection of divine revelation: he notoriously wrote in his work *On Gods* that he could not know whether the gods existed or not (DL.IX, 52), for which offence he was thrown out of Attica and his books burned. The influence of the Ionian adoption of prose argumentation may have led to Protagoras being the first to engage in many aspects of prose analysis and debate. At some point before being banished from Athens, he had come to that city on behalf of the citizens of Abdera, but had stayed in order to teach aspects of argumentation and give readings of his works, and seems to have become immensely wealthy. He was a friend of Pericles, which firmly places him in Athens before the beginning of the Peloponnesian war. Gorgias arrived in Athens in 427 B.C.E., already after the death of Pericles. The Leontinians had sent him as one of their representatives to plead for Athenian aid in the face of Syracusan aggression, and he too stayed after making a good impression in order to teach.

The Spread of Rhetoric (C5-4)

Protagorean debating techniques and Gorgian speechmaking helped undermine whatever was left of public confidence in man's ability to know any universal truth. Protagoras taught that for any argument there could be a perfectly persuasive counterargument (the forerunner of the dialectical technique used by Academic sceptics in the Hellenistic period). Gorgias provided examples to show how his art of speaking well could make even the weaker case appear stronger; among absurd positions that he made persuasive is one making a mockery of the Parmenidean argument that what is is, and what is not is not. This is his treatise *On Nature, or What is not*, whose major thesis was that nothing is communicable, if indeed anything exists at all.

Protagorean debating techniques and Gorgian speechmaking cross-fertilized and produced a variety of proponents of rhetoric in the so-called second generation of sophists and their pupils. Rhetoric was regarded by the younger generation of Athenian citizens as an essential means to acquire power and influence in the state. It was no longer limited to the lawcourts, but extended to public assemblies and ceremonies, and even further to any transaction in which one party might need to persuade another. It was generally accepted that the appearance of truth trumped truth itself in any attempt to persuade. The notion of persuasion by appearance was developed to include anything that might influence the audience: respectable vocabulary, impressive style, personal verbal abuse against the opponent, elegant dress, good posture and significant gestures. All but the actual truth of the case could be effective. Playing to the prejudices of the crowd ensured the continued importance of *eikota*.

As for persuasion, it was no longer concerned only with the apparent truth of a state of affairs, but with determining for others a course of action. To use a couple of anachronistic terms, the focus of debate had moved away from physics, through forensics, all the way to ethics. Many teachers found a lucrative profession in teaching people how to succeed in political life through persuasion, and the demand for their teaching was very great. Schools for rhetoric sprang up in wealthy cities throughout the Greek-speaking world, and they persisted for the duration of Classical civilization. Those opposed to the sophists in the first two generations, such as Socrates and Plato, naturally emphasized the need for good behaviour through the proper understanding of reasoning, language, and concepts such as the good, and appear to have paid as little attention to physical theories as did most of the sophists.

The Greek Origins of Probabile and Veri Simile

Plato's Socrates in the dialogues opposes rhetoric to dialectic. An orator aims to persuade his audience with no regard to truth, while a dialectician aims to have himself or members of his audience understand the truth at the risk of his appearing a fool, which in rhetoric would be equated with failure to persuade. Rhetoric deals with a succession of immediate impressions; dialectic deals with a dialogue in its entirety, requiring a good memory to be able to compare and contrast what has been said in different parts of the conversation and to apply inductive reasoning. Thus much critical discussion of rhetoric, including the terms persuasion/persuasive (*peithô/pithanon*) and likely (*eikos*), is to be found in Plato's dialogues. It must be stressed, however, that the dialogues themselves are full of rhetorical techniques and devices. Plato was writing for an audience already exposed to rhetoric, eristic and sophistry. He presents the shortcomings of these practices by using them in dialogues involving a dialectician, causing the reader (in the optimal case) to think dialectically and arrive at universal truths.

The Macedonian pupil of Plato, Aristotle, spent much of his later life in an Athens controlled by Macedonia, and was permitted to use some public buildings in the Lyceum gymnasium for his own philosophical activities. Most of his writings now in our possession were generally unknown during the Hellenistic period, but it is difficult to ascertain whether this was also the case with his *Rhetoric*. In that well worked-out treatise, he considers rhetoric to be not so much the art of persuasion as the art of discovering the existing persuasive element (*pithanon*) in each particular case (1355b10). The *pithana* are the elements of a speech which produce the final persuasion (*peithô*), and the most important of these elements are the plausible arguments (*eikota*). Aristotle provides explicit confirmation for the rhetorical usage of *eikos* as what happens for the most part (1357a34).

2.5. Hellenistic Philosophy (C4-1)

Athens had enjoyed a lucrative hegemony in the fifth century and used its wealth, among other things, to oil the wheels of direct democracy (for male citizens), construct magnificent buildings such as the Parthenon, and produce public works of art of a very high standard. Excess money among the privileged classes combined with the new possibilities of speechmaking and argumentation also attracted ambitious foreigners (Greeks of other cities) prepared to teach a wide range of skills for pay.

Their Athenian students expected to reap social advantages from a sophistic education and had no intention of becoming sophists themselves: the Athenian who came to be known as Antiphon the sophist was a notable exception. There were citizens concerned by the new learning, and these included some parents and a number of thinkers such as Socrates and Plato. Rhetoric became generally accepted by the masses but debates between philosophers and rhetors over the relative value of their professions rumbled on throughout the Hellenistic period.

Athens like most other Greek city states in the late fourth century fell under the control of the Macedonians. Its prestigious past, however, caused it to become the centre for higher education, attracting teachers and students alike from all over the civilized world. Sophists and rhetors were as common in Athens as elsewhere. The city's claim to fame, however, was as the birthplace of four major schools of philosophical thought whose adherents were named after the places in or around Athens where those philosophies had been originally taught.

The Academics were named after the Academy, an area of land north of Athens in which one of the public gymnasium complexes of Athens was located. They studied nearby, on property originally owned by Plato, which, on the death of Plato's heir and nephew, Speusippus, had passed into their hands in perpetuity. One of their members was chosen by the others to be the official owner of the property, and was known as the scholarch or head of the group, this election process being repeated after the death of each scholarch. The house passed out of their possession at some point during the Hellenistic period, but the Academics continued to own common property and study and teach in the area until the siege of Athens by the Roman dictator Sulla in 87/6 B.C.E. At about this time, the last scholarch, Philo of Larissa, moved to Rome, and died there, thus ending the Academic line, although Cicero regarded himself as the last intellectual representative of the Academy. As we shall see, the Academics had developed a sceptical position and were distinguished from dogmatic students of Plato who were known as Platonics.

Aristotle's collection of works and artifacts was preserved by his successors in the public buildings they had taken over in the Lyceum gymnasium complex east of Athens. One of these buildings had an internal collonade, a walk-about or *peripatos* in Greek, and from this his successors came to be known as Peripatetics. They too elected a scholarch responsible for the care of their

property, and this line also came to an end at the time of Sulla's siege of Athens in 87/6. Aristotle's lecture notes seem to have been transferred at this time from the Lyceum to Rome, where they were edited into the form familiar to us today. Aristotle's successors had apparently neglected these notes, preferring more standard philosophical terminology to that devised by Aristotle (e.g., "potential", "actual"), although they continued Aristotle's scientific studies.

Epicurus (341-270) was an Athenian citizen born in a recently founded Athenian colony on the island of Samos. He taught for some years on the Ionian mainland near Samos, but came to Athens in about 308 and acquired a house just off the route students would take from Athens to the Academy. This was probably intentional as he was thus well placed to divert youths to his large garden where he could teach them his brand of hedonism and even have them form part of his private society, away from the depravities of city affairs. His philosophy is therefore referred to as that of the Garden. The school property was maintained for centuries through a succession of scholarchs.

Just a few years later, around 300, Zeno of Citium (a city in Cyprus) went one up on Epicurus by diverting students even before they left the city, by teaching outside the Painted Stoa at the northern exit of the agora. From this building his students' students came to be known as Stoics, although most of them had soon found other public places in which to teach. This school of thought became the most popular in the Hellenistic period, with Stoics teaching in many important cities around the Mediterranean. Zeno's philosophy brought together the three main spheres of human activity up to that point: logic, physics, ethics. In logic he brought together what seemed to be the two arts connected with speaking, namely dialectic and rhetoric. In physics, he effectively presented a reply to Parmenides combining the views of Empedocles and Heraclitus, with the cosmos being a sphere comprising the four elements, but underpinned by fire and logos pervading the whole. In ethics, happiness was predicated upon behaving well in a cosmos so constituted. All three parts of philosophy were seen as codependent: logic provided the tools to discuss physics and ethics; physics explained the nature of the cosmos and of words, and thus provided the structure in which ethics could be discussed to some purpose; ethics was the reason for dealing with logic and physics, on the understanding that all people wish to live well as an end in itself. Later Stoics retained the threefold

structure of philosophy, but attempts to integrate them to attain greater consistency produced great transformations in significance and formal content.

Logic, introduced by Zeno as the field regarding language and comprising the two arts then known to be dealing with language, namely dialectic and rhetoric, gradually came to be regarded as the field pertaining to the *logos* in a wider sense that included not only language, but also internal and external reason and the relations between them. The Stoic sage came to be seen as having a reason conforming with that of the all-pervasive, all-fashioning god. The wise man was naturally more limited than god, but by behaving in accordance with divine reason was fully an active part of god. The Stoic system as it gradually developed increasingly allowed humans to bridge the gap between divine omnipotence and human behavioural limitations by means of living in conformity with divine reason (ethics), and to bridge the gap between divine omniscience and human limitations in understanding the environment by providing a thoroughly consistent network of concepts covering everything (physics), as the Stoic system itself exemplified.

To live well required understanding the cosmos, and this led to the development of a fairly sophisticated epistemology.[21] Humans were not born with concepts, but the basic ones were imposed on the child's soul by nature, an aspect of the external *logos*, itself an aspect of the all-pervasive god, prior to the child attaining, at the age of fourteen, an inner *logos* or ability to think rationally. Images representing objects would leave the objects and impress themselves upon the soul. Enough images of a certain object superimposed on each other would create a concept, namely an image of the basic features of the set of objects without the extra details not common to all of them. Verbal impressions would behave in a similar way, ranging from "Table" through "This is a table" and "I am not under threat from this table" to such general statements reflecting reality as "God is manifest in everything" (all these are examples I have just made up). When the inner *logos* was finally attained at the age of fourteen, distinctions could be made by the individual between subsets of each concept to create more particular concepts, such as different breeds of horse, and to understand the connections between

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21.   That is, this epistemology was the guide both to understanding reality/truth and to living well: cf. n.# below.

concepts. The point of concepts was to facilitate the identification of objects in the world and to understand the workings behind the sensed phenomena of this world. Thus the more accurate the concepts one had, the more one could grasp one's surroundings accurately and in depth. The faulty combination of concepts, such as those of the eagle and lion into that of the gryphon, resulted in fear, confusion and a failure to grasp reality. Concept creation and application was therefore a serious business, and the Stoic sage behaved well in taking time before assenting to an impression as belonging to this or that concept, as it would both affect the concept to which he assigned it, and would also affect his understanding of the present state of affairs. A fool tended to assent to any first impression (literally an impression on his soul), believing, for example, that he was stepping on a snake rather than a rope, or more generally that he was in danger when the only true danger was corruption of the soul.

An opinion was a *doxa*, interpreted by the Stoics as an impression assented to as reflecting a state of affairs whether it did or not. Most people have opinions and consequently cannot grasp reality in general or in its particulars. It should be noted that their assent to impressions is usually automatic and not conscious. However, an accurate impression reflecting its true origin (e.g., the impression of a table accurately reflecting a table from which the impression emanated) and assented to as such was for the Stoics a *dogma*. The ideal Stoic sage had *dogmata* rather than *doxai*, and had a grasp of reality, necessary for living well. In order to have only *dogmata*, the Stoic sage would delay assenting to impressions until he was sure that he had a true grasp of the state of affairs, or rather that his impression was grasping the true state of affairs (grasping is Zeno's metaphor). The *kataleptikê phantasia* (the impression pertaining to grasping) became central to one of the most serious and long-lasting debates between the Stoics and the Academics.

In the first generations after Plato's death, the Academics seem to have regarded Plato as a philosopher with positive doctrines and interpreted his dialogues accordingly, much as dogmatic Platonists do today. An Academic contemporary with Zeno, however, seems to have come to the conclusion that Plato's dialogues often led not to positive conclusions but to refutations and *aporia* (a lack of answers) and that Plato was accordingly a sceptic (someone continually asking questions and never accepting positive conclusions as necessarily true). This Academic was Arcesilaus, who became

scholarch in the middle of the third century. Thereafter until the end of the line with Philo of Larissa, the Academics developed a form of scepticism greatly influenced by their debates with the Stoics, just as Stoic dogmatism was greatly influenced by Academic scepticism, each adopting terminology from the other while maintaining a defiantly contrary position. Just one of the many points of contention between the two schools of thought was the *katalêptikê phantasia*.

In one of the arguments in this debate, the Academic position accepted the Stoic premise that reality existed and could be grasped by a *phantasia*, the *katalêptikê phantasia*. What, however, distinguished this impression from any other sort of impression? Why should this and not another impression be assented to? The Stoics under great pressure claimed that this impression had a sign or indication (*sêmeion*) to the effect that it accurately reflected the state of affairs which was its source, but they never satisfactorily explained its nature. The Stoic sage's wisdom in delaying assent actually won Academic approval, but was determined not to go far enough, since the Stoic sage did in fact assent to one or other impression eventually. The Academic sage would not merely delay assent, but suspend judgement entirely. It was to produce the suspension of judgement that Academics cultivated the Protagorean practice of arguing in both directions (for and against), and of pitting dogmatic arguments (e.g., of the Stoics and Epicureans) against each other, claiming that since both sides appeared true, no decision could be made. The Stoic responses to this *epochê* (suspension of judgement) included making fun of an Academic sage having to be guided by assistants to prevent him walking into walls. To such objections in the middle of the second century, the Academic scholarch Carneades developed a sceptical epistemology, not as *dogma* since that in itself would belie Academic pretensions to scepticism, but presumably as a debating technique to counter Stoic epistemology: following the usual Academic practice, if both Stoic and Academic epistemologies appeared true, neither could be assented to as certainly true. According to this sceptical epistemology, the Academic sage would accept an impression provisionally as perhaps grasping reality and act according to it, but would not assent to it as necessarily grasping reality. Of two competing impressions, the one looking more like reality or the truth would be more *eikos*, and consequently would be persuasive, but anything persuasive here as in rhetoric could be short-lived, being replaceable by the next persuasive particular to come along. The term *pithanê phantasia* (persuasive impression)

is thus an Academic term stressing the limitations of human knowledge even in the field of rational argument. The Stoic sage according to the Academic position mistakenly identifies a *pithanê phantasia* as a *kataléptikê phantasia*, and gives not only provisional assent to it as being like the truth, but strong assent to it as if it grasps reality.

3. *Probabile* and *Veri Simile*

After this very brief presentation of the Greek background, it is time to turn to examine the development of the Latin terms themselves.

3.1. Cicero and the Transition to Latin (106-43 B.C.E.)

The "new man" Marcus Tullius Cicero (106-43 B.C.E.) seems to have felt a burning ambition to excel at whatever he turned his hand to, largely in an ultimately futile effort to become accepted by the entrenched aristocracy to which he aspired. He made a name for himself as an orator in the law courts and wrote extensively on rhetorical theory. He became the model for oratory not only in the ancient world but also in the Renaissance. His political ambitions reached their peak in 62 when he served as one of that year's two consuls and, to hear him tell it (often and in great detail) saved the Republic from a coup attempt by disgruntled elements in the aristocracy. He was sidelined by Caesar's rise to preeminence in Rome in the 40s. After the assassination of Caesar in 44, Cicero once more came to the fore, but his outspoken Republican sentiments put him on the wrong side of Caesar's relative and second in command, Marcus Antonius, who appeared to be intent on becoming dictator. Politically bereft, and deprived of his beloved daughter, Tullia, who died in 45, he attempted to console himself in what he knew was the limited time remaining to him by feverishly transposing Greek philosophy into Latin in a Roman setting. He was murdered in 43 in the proscriptions imposed by the second triumvirate, of which Marcus Antonius was a member, and was singled out for special treatment when his head and hands were sent to be displayed in the forum in Rome.

It was Cicero's practice in his rhetorical and philosophical writings to provide the technical Greek terms the first time he translated them, but he would occasionally vacillate in his translation of

them. A clear case of this is *sôphrosynê* which he variously translated as *frugalitas, moderatio, temperantia* and *modestia*.[22] I shall not go into all the intricate detail concerning the reconstruction of Cicero's translation of the Greek *pithanon* and *eikos*, since this has been done by John Glucker, who identifies a passage in Augustine based on a text of Cicero now lost to us.[23] As for Cicero's usage, I present the matter as concisely as possible. Cicero in his rhetorical works usually distinguishes the two terms when they are distinguished in his Greek source, with *pithanon* being translated as *probabile*, and *eikos* as *veri simile;* when only one term appears, he does not always maintain the distinction.[24] As we have seen, what appears to be the truth is persuasive, so that what may be designated by one of the terms may equally well be designated by the other.[25]

The translation of *eikos* as *veri simile* ("similar to the truth") is unsurprising, given the rich Greek tradition connecting *eikos* with what is like the truth, and indeed this translation appears in Latin texts earlier than Cicero.[26] The minimalist literal translation of *eikos* as *simile* ("similar") would have lost the pertinent connotations. However, the translation of *pithanon* (persuasive) as *probabile* is less obvious, and is unattested before Cicero.[27] Cicero seems to have been responsible for this translation, and it may be explained by examining his treatment of Stoic and Academic epistemology.

In his youth, Cicero had gone to Athens and studied philosophy with, among others, the last Academic scholarch, Philo of Larissa, and his pupil, Antiochus of Ascalon. From Philo, Cicero had learned Academic scepticism, and from Antiochus, a hybrid of Stoic, Peripatetic and Platonic tenets which Antiochus claimed reflected the original dogmatic philosophy of Plato. In his last few years, if not throughout his adult life, Cicero professed Academic scepticism, and indeed regarded himself as

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22. See Glucker (1995) 118, n.19.

23. Glucker (1995).

24. Glucker (1995) 129.

25. Cf. the observation of C1 C.E. rhetorician Quintilian, *Inst. Or.* 4.2.31, that it does not matter whether the narrative part of the rhetorical speech is described as *veri similis*, *probabilis*, or *credibilis*.

26. Glucker (1995) 119, n.24.

27. There is one prior appearance of *probabile*, but in the sense of "praiseworthy", and Cicero also occasionally uses the word in this non-technical sense: see Glucker (1995) 119, n.25.

the last representative of that school of thought. His philosophical works reflect this scepticism. They are mostly in the form of dialogues on central philosophical themes, such as the nature of the gods or how to live well, and in each dialogue at least two Hellenistic schools of thought are pitted against each other. They are represented by Romans Cicero wished to honour, but with Cicero *propria persona* casting the final judgement, usually expressing his provisional preference for one dogmatic position over the other. In this he follows the Carneadean recommendation to accept an impression provisionally, but not to assent to one or other impression as being certainly true.

Cicero translates the Stoic assent to the *katalêptikê phantasia* as *adsensio (assensio)* or *adprobatio*. The Carneadean provisional acceptance of a *pithanê phantasia* he translates as *probatio*, without the intensifying prefix *ad-*. A persuasive phantasia is therefore something that can be accepted provisionally, or something approvable, and it is consequently translated as *probabile*. The Latin translation emphasizes the potential acceptance of what is persuasive, rather than the "persuasive" nature itself. The word *persuasibile* (and some cognates) is later coined by the first century C.E. practitioner and teacher of rhetoric, Quintilian, to translate *pithanon* (and some cognates), but this translation evidently did not catch on.[28]

3.2. Augustine (354-430)

Greek rhetorical and philosophical terminology was given a Latin context by Cicero, allowing it later to be used in a Latin Christian context by the Ciceronian rhetor and Platonizing Catholic, Augustine. Bishop Augustine of Hippo (354-430) lived to see Rome fall to the Visigoths in 410, and his own city in North Africa besieged by the Vandals in 430. For a Catholic bishop who had spent the second half of his life fighting heresies, it must have been particularly galling to end his life besieged by the Vandals, since they were not only barbarians, but Arians as well. The Arians believed that Jesus was a created son of God, while the Catholic Church held Jesus to be uncreated and eternal, like his

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28.   Quintilian 2.15.13 translates Aristotle's definition of rhetoric (1355b10; see p.16 above) using *persuasibilia* (for *pithana*, although Aristotle has the singular *pithanon*). I have not found the word used by other authors.

Augustine (354-430)

Father. We may recall the Greek naturalists' assumption that things caused are created, but that the prime cause must necessarily be uncreated and eternal. It had very quickly become apparent in Greek philosophy that things caused were generally complex and therefore potentially corruptible, while the simple cause, being simple, was necessarily incorruptible. Hence Arians were effectively claiming that Jesus, being created, was potentially corruptible. Catholics, on the other hand, were effectively making Jesus an aspect of the one God, just as the Greek pantheon had been envisaged as aspects of the one god in Stoic philosophy.[29] It would have been a simple matter for Stoically influenced thinkers to accept that an aspect of the immanent God could occupy the body of a man without affecting its eternal nature. By the time of Augustine, the Platonic (nowadays called Neoplatonic) conception of Ideas had helped to transform the Christian God into a transcendent being (a simple and non-physical entity immune to corruption), while earlier Greek influences allowed for Jesus to be regarded as an aspect of God despite being made flesh. The impossible mesh of conflicting philosophies provided great scope for theologians, but this is beyond the scope of this paper.

In his youth, Augustine learned rhetoric, became a rhetor and was an avid Ciceronian. The terms *probabile* and *veri simile* are not, however, to be found in his essay *On Rhetoric* as the practice of persuading at the expense of truth seems not to be part of Augustine's view of rhetoric. Without mentioning our terms, he does note (§§2-4) that rhetoric had been criticized in Plato's *Gorgias* and by Hermagoras (a C1 B.C.E. rhetorician) because its end is to persuade (i.e., even at the expense of truth), but he argues that rhetoric would have a better reputation if the proper field of its persuasion were restricted to what is for the common good in the general area of politics. In his companion essay *On Dialectic* he laments (§7) that dialectic tends to scorn the pleasure of the hearer in its desire for learning, while in rhetoric, the many tend to think that what is said ornately is said truly. He concludes that each art would benefit from the other: it would be more pleasant to listen to dialectic if it had

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29.   John 1:1 similarly reflects Stoic cosmology, in which the *Logos* is an aspect of God. It is only with such a Stoic notion that John's *Logos* ("Word" in the English translation) may be said to be both God and with God, depending upon whether the aspect is seen as distinct from the whole or as the whole in one of its aspects.

some rhetorical ornateness in it, while the orator, attempting to persuade [an audience of] the truth, would be well advised to include some dialectic, like bones and muscles, to strengthen the body of the argument.[30]

Augustine's view of truth may be discerned from his essay *On Lying*, where lying is defined as attempting to persuade an audience of something which the speaker believes to be false. All lying, except in the case of jokes (the victim is soon disabused of the falsehood), is interpreted by Augustine as giving false witness, expressly prohibited by God. Thus even lying to save the life of someone else would, by breaking God's commandment, jeapordize one's own immortal soul. We may conclude that Augustine regards the rhetorical device of exploiting verisimilitude (*eikos*) as immoral. Augustine's rhetoric persuades, therefore, through truth itself, which is none other than God's word. The work *On Lying* exemplifies Augustine's reliance on Biblical quotations, but he also finds it necessary to use rational argument against others who also use such quotations to claim the opposite point of view, that lying on some occasions is the right thing to do. As Augustine noted in his *On Dialectic*, some dialectic strengthens the orator's attempts to persuade an audience of the truth.

The terms *veri simile* and *probabile* are considered explicitly in a three-volume work *Against the Academics*, a Ciceronian blend of narrative and dialogue. Augustine seems to have acquired most of his understanding of the Academic position on probable opinion from Cicero's philosophical works, including a couple of important texts now lost to us. His great admiration for Cicero as an orator does not lead him to accept Cicero's sceptical position. The dialogue raises a number of problems, mainly pertaining to the sceptics' ultimate failure to know anything. The sceptics claim that it is wise never to assent to any impression as grasping reality because of the chance that the impression does not grasp reality; it follows that they never know what is true. They are therefore also unqualified to assent to any impression even provisionally as like the truth, since they do not know what the truth is. Their behaviour is therefore based on random impressions just like that of other unwise people. Furthermore, it is pointed out that humans feed on truth/reality, which is what drives

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30.   In later Stoic philosophy rhetoric had been subsumed to dialectic, and Augustine's comments seem to
         reflect this.

humans to understand it. We may see here the influence of contemporary Platonic notions of a transcendant God as the ontological cause of everything, but as we have already noted, Augustine also accepted a more physical God who could reveal Himself through incarnation as Jesus, and who could communicate with humans through sacred literature. The latter belief situates him closer to the early poets than to Hellenistic philosophers. He differs from the poets in his acceptance of God's revelation (the Bible) as true, and not as like the truth, although it requires dialectic as practised by Augustine to understand it. This opens the possibility of error during the time that the dialectician has not fully understood the truth, with the prospect of eternal damnation for bearing false witness. However, in his essay *On Lying,* having set out what lying involves, Augustine adds (§4, fin.): "For none of those definitions is to be feared, when the mind (*animus*) is well aware (*bene sibi conscius*) that it is stating what it knows, or thinks, or believes, to be true, and that it does not wish to persuade of anything other than what it is stating."[31] The phrase I have translated as "well aware" may be converted from an adverb and adjective into an adjective and noun as "good conscience". The dialectician, then, is effectively believing to be true every probable opinion he currently holds, while working his way to the actual truth. It may be deduced from this that there are levels of probability, and that the dialectician will prefer the most probable to the less probable. Thus Augustine has closed off the use of *probabile* and *veri simile* in conventional rhetoric and refuted Academic scepticism where these terms were prominent, but seems to have inadvertently provided an opportunity for their continued use in a Christian context.

3.3. The Origins of Probabilism

The sheer output of conflicting opinions in the debate over probabilism seems to have obscured the origins of this ethical practice. The Dominican theologian Bartolomé de Medina (1527-1581) is generally mentioned in connection with the origins of probabilism, but there is no consensus

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31.   Augustinus, *De Mendacio* 4 (*fin.*): *nulla enim definitionum illarum timenda est, cum bene sibi conscius est animus, hoc se enuntiare quod verum esse aut novit, aut opinatur, aut credit, nequen velle aliquid, nisi quod enuntiat, persuadere.*

regarding his exact role. He is considered by some to be the father of probabilism, but others posit precursors. Some steer a middle course between these two positions by claiming that (at least) he instigated the most radical position in probabilism, that one may be allowed to follow any probable opinion, even the least probable opinion in preference to the most probable opinion. In the scope of this paper, it will suffice to understand Medina's use of the term *probabile*, and how his formulation could lead to a sudden proliferation of conflicting positions on the subject of probabilism.

Bartolomé de Medina was commissioned by the University of Salamanca to write a commentary on part of the *Summa Theologiae* of Thomas Aquinas to be used by students in the university, and the notorious quote regarding probable opinion is drawn from his comment on article 6 of question 19 of the first part of the second part of this work. Before considering his comment, it would be very helpful to see what he is commenting on.

Thomas Aquinas (1225–1274) at this point in his *Summa Theologiae* is considering the question whether the will, when acting against God's law by following erring reason, is bad.[32] In his response he declares that error due to willfulness or neglect does not excuse reason or conscience, but involuntary error does, and he provides a couple of concrete examples:[33]

> Consider: if erring reason should say that a man be held to go to the wife of
> another, the will agreeing to this erring reason is bad, because this error arises from
> an ignoring (*ignorantia*) of God's law which he is held to know. But if reason errs
> in this, that he believes some woman to be his own wife, and wishes to know her if
> she asks for her right, then his will is excused so that it is not bad, because the error

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32. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae* 2.1. q.19: *sexto, utrum voluntas contra legem Dei sequens rationem errantem, sit mala.*

33. *Ibid.* 2.1. q.19. a.6*: Puta, si ratio errans dicat quod homo teneatur ad uxorem alterius accedere, voluntas concordans huic rationi erranti est mala, eo quod error iste provenit ex ignorantia legis Dei, quam scire tenetur. Si autem ratio erret in hoc, quod credat aliquam mulierem submissam, esse suam uxorem, et, ea petente debitum, velit eam cognoscere; excusatur voluntas eius, ut non sit mala, quia error iste ex ignorantia circumstantiae provenit, quae excusat, et involuntarium causat.*

arises from ignorance (*ignorantia*) of the circumstance which excuses and causes

an involuntary act.

Thomas contrasts *ignorantia* of God's law with *ignorantia* of external circumstances, and indicates that there can be no excuse for the former. The goodness of the will is decided not by the act itself but by the will's awareness (*conscientia*) that the perceived act conforms with God's laws. This is similar to Augustine's view of telling the truth, whereby the speaker says what he believes to be true in order to conform with God's prohibition against bearing false witness, although what he says may actually be false. Thomas and Augustine are, then, very clear in their support for a strict application of God's law in the mind of the agent, whether the agent is correct in his assessment of reality or not. The agent's opinion regarding the state of affairs may be objectively wrong, but since it seems to him to be true, he is right to act upon it.

We may now turn to the quote taken from Medina's comment on this article: "if an opinion is probable, it is permissible to follow it, even if the opposite is more probable."[34] Medina would have been familiar with Thomas' own use of *probabile* in an epistemological/ethical context, as in the argument showing the need for probable certitude in daily activities where demonstrative certitude is impossible (2.2. q.70 a.2).[35] Thomas contrasts probable certitude with demonstrative certitude, where "demonstrative" means "based on proof/evidence". As Thomas explains, the probable touches on the truth in the majority of cases. This harks back to the rhetorical *eikos/veri simile/probabile* ("likely",

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34.   Bartolomé De Medina, *Expositio in primam secundae S. Thomae* (1578), q. 19, art. 6: *si opinio est probabilis, licitum est eam sequi, etsi opposita sit probabilior*. I have not had access to this book, but I did find the Latin quote in Henry W. Sullivan, *Tirso de Molina and the Drama of the Counter Reformation* (1976), 40, where a sample list of later probabilist texts is also provided.

35.   Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae* 2.2. q.70 a.2: *In actibus humanis, super quibus constituuntur iudicia, non potest haberi certitudo demonstrativa, eo quod sint circa contingentia et variabilia, et ideo sufficit probabilis certitudo quae in pluribus veritatem attingat, etsi in paucioribus deficiat.* ("In human acts, about which judgements are made, demonstrative certitude cannot be had, because they [=the acts] are about contingents and variables, and probable certitude suffices since it touches on the truth in many things, although it fails to do so in a few").

"what is usually the case", "apparently true") rather than to the sceptical Academic *pithanon* ("persuasive"), designated in Latin by *probabile* in the sense of "provisionally acceptable". According to Thomas' use of *probabile* as "likely", "what is usually the case", or "apparently true", Medina's comment may be understood as follows: if an opinion is likely, it may be followed even if the opposite is more likely. This should, however, be understood in the context of Thomas' example of behaviour manifesting good will. The point of the example is that the man with good will follows God's law even when his assessment of his surroundings is erroneous. His erroneous opinion in the example is likely and appears true to him. Were he actually to grasp the true state of affairs, he would realize that he was not performing his marital duties but actually committing adultery, and he would immediately stop to avoid further offence to God's laws. Medina's point seems to be that Thomas is allowing any opinion to be followed so long as it appears true to the opiner, even if it is the opposite of the truth (in the example, the man thinks the woman is his wife, while the more probable opinion, reflecting reality, would be that this is not his wife). Medina's formulation, however, allows later interpreters to assume that the agent makes a choice between two opinions and for reasons best known to himself prefers the less probable. Because the two opinions are said to be opposed, some interpret Medina's position as radical in the extreme, with the agent preferring the least probable opinion over its opposite, the most probable opinion.

3.4. *Probabile* in Probabilism

Augustine and Thomas had both made the point that right action depended on the agent consciously acting in accordance with God's law even when in error as to the circumstances, but now the centre of attention shifted to an analysis of the nature of the probability of an opinion, on the assumption that acting upon a probable opinion ensured a clear conscience and preserved one's immortal soul.

The concept of probable opinion in probabilism continues to work within the general awareness that humans must somehow act well in this world despite their limited understanding. The sceptical Academic persuasive (Cicero's provisionally approvable) opinion was consciously adopted by the Academic sage provisionally as being like the truth because a kataleptic opinion reflecting the

actual state of affairs could never positively be identified as such. Cicero's choice of *probabile* emphasized the provisional nature of the acceptance of a persuasive, truth-like, opinion. The Christian probable opinion also emphasized its truth-like qualities, but not the provisional nature of its adoption by the agent. One opinion might appear more true than another, but for probabilists it sufficed to choose any one of them, so long as it had some appearance of truth. The Academic sceptic was certain of one thing, that it would be folly to assume an impression to be certainly true; the Christian was also certain of one thing, the folly of breaking any of God's commandments, for which reason probable opinions needed to be supplied that might indicate that none of God's commandments had been broken by an agent while, for example, committing adultery.

3.5. Fabri (1607-1688)

The reader may have noticed the hint at the end of the last section that probabilism was open to abuse. The Jansenists were particularly vocal. The most famous Jansenist critique of probabilism (among other corrupt Catholic practices) is to be found in Pascal's satire, the *Lettres provinciales* (1656-7), which earned its fame from its savage humour. In the fifth letter, for example, a Jesuit purportedly explains the Jesuit position on probable opinion in conversation with the (ficitional) innocent writer from the country:[36]

> "Ponce and Sanchez are of contrary opinion: but, because they are both wise, each renders his opinion probable."

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36. From Letter Five: Ponce et Sanchez sont de contraires avis; mais, parce qu'ils étaient tous deux savants, chacun rend son opinion probable. Mais, mon Père, lui dis-je, on doit être bien embarrassé à choisir alors! Point du tout, dit-il, il n'y a qu'à suivre l'avis qui agrée le plus. Et quoi! si l'autre est plus probable? Il n'importe, me dit-il. Et si l'autre est plus sûr? Il n'importe, me dit encore le Père... Voici les paroles de Layman, que le livre de nos vingt-quatre a suivies: Un docteur étant consulté peut donner un conseil, non seulement probable selon son opinion, mais contraire à son opinion, s'il est estimé probable par d'autres, lorsque cet avis contraire au sien se rencontre plus favorable et plus agréable à celui qui le consulte...

"But my father," said I, "it must be very embarrassing to choose, then."

"Not at all," said he, "one need only follow the most agreeable."

"What? Even if the other is more probable?"

"It matters not," he told me.

"And if the other is safer?"

"It matters not," the Father told me again.

...

"Here are the words of Layman: 'A doctor, being consulted, may give advice not only probable according to his own opinion, but contrary to his own opinion if it is considered probable by others, when this opinion contrary to his own finds itself more favourable or more agreeable to the person consulting him....'"

The Jansensists advocated the hard-line approach of Augustine and Thomas, a position given the name of tutiorism, or doing what is morally safer - safer from the point of view of the soul which ran the risk of being condemned to eternal damnation. Eternal damnation is more likely to be avoided by following the opinion most conforming to God's law in every case. Essentially following Luther's lead,[37] the Jansenists urged humans to stop thinking for themselves and place their will in the hands of God. In an age of increasing scientific learning, this seemed to some to be a regressive step.

Pascal's satirical attack, however, had some effect (not forgetting other critiques as well), and a more moderate approach was devised by Jesuits and others to counter the probabilists with their potentially lax morals. The refined approach came to be known as probabiliorism (the "more probable" approach), which advocated following the opinion for which there were most criteria for its

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37.   Martin Luther (1483-1546) in his *Disputatio contra Scholasticam Theologiam* of 1517, dismisses the ability of humans to act well of their own volition. In thesis 4 he likens man's evil nature to that of a bad tree: "It is therefore a truth that man, having been made a bad tree, cannot but will and do [what is] bad." (*Veritas itaque est quod homo arbor mala factus non potest nisi malum velle et facere*).

being probable. Criteria were sorted into intrinsic (the conformity of the opinion to the actual state of affairs) and extrinsic (the support of wise and prudent men for the opinion).

The uproar in Europe described by Fabri in the quote presented at the beginning of this paper arose in the wake of Pascal's attack on probabilism, and Pascal is one of the main anonymous targets of Fabri's counterattack. Fabri's book (1659), fashioned in the style of a dialogue between two Jesuits, the knowledgeable Antimus, on the one hand, and Pithanophilus, a friend recently returned to Italy from beyond the Alps, on the other, aims to present and elucidate the Catholic position on the nature and merits of probable opinion, while also rebutting the main objections to it. Towards the end of the dialogue, Antimus cites a number of authorities in support of the two principles of the doctrine he himself has argued for in the dialogue: firstly, the principle that that practical judgement which constitutes conscience must be certain, so that one may act rightly;[38] secondly, the principle concerning the moral certainty of probability. The first principle, regarding the moral certainty of conscience in practical judgement, is unexceptional and widely supported, from Thomas onwards, and

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38.　　Fabri (1659) 116-117: *Descripsi nudius tertius in chirographo aliquorum nomina; en tibi. Iudicium illud practicum, quod conscientiam constituit, certum esse debere, ut quis recte operetur, certum inquam, formaliter, morali saltem certitudine, omnes fere censent, tum antiqui, tum recentiores; summistae omnes, verbo* opinio*, vel* dubium *D. Thom. quodlib. 8.a.13, Gerson tract. 36, Ioann. Maior in 4. q.t., Henricus quodlib. 4, Navarrus cap.* si quis autem *n. 63.d7 de poenit, Suarez de censur. disp. 40, sect. 5 n.14 & sect. 6 n.6, item de act. hum. disp. 12.f.4, Benedict. Iustinian. in prarphras. cap. 13 ad Rom. Lessius lib. 1. cap. 1. dub. 1. Merend. de consc., Layman lib. 1, tract. 1, cap. 5 §1, Delugo de fid. disp. 5 sect. 1. n. 16 & seq., Caren. p. 2. tit. 5. §4, Ariaga tom 3 disp. // 23 sect. 2 subsect.2, Salas 1.2.tract.8 sect. 4, Mercor. 1. p. a. 10 & 11, Caeit. 2.2. q.47. a.3, Azor 1. p. lib. 3, cap. 25. q. 2, Medina 1.2., q. 19. a.5 & 6, Alensis in sum. p. 1. q. 16, Sanchez in sum. lib. 6. c. 3 & l. 1. c. 6, Sayr. in clavi reg. lib. 1. c. 13. nu. 13, Filiutius tom. 2. tract. 21. c. 4. Lao de conscient. disp. t. dub. 6, Ferrerius lib. de probabilit. cap. 7, pag. 57. Mastrius in 2. sent. disp. 5 q. 2. a.1, n.40 & a. 4, n.82, Ouied. tract. 5. contr. 1. p. 2. n. 18, Bardi, disp. 4. c. 10 §1. & licet Vasquez disp. 62 cap. 5 n. 22 & Sanch. in sum. lib. 1. c. 9 n. 10 secus sentire videantur; ne tamen sibi contradicant, vix crediderim, ab iis negari, iudicium illud ultimum practicum conscientiae certum esse.*

the great number of wise supporters in itself suggests that the opinion cannot be denied. This point is made explicitly by Fabri (Antimus) himself, and interestingly it incidentally exemplifies the principle of probabiliorism. In contrast to the overt support for the first position, however, few explicitly address the second principle concerning the moral certainty of probability. Fabri (Antimus) notes that Nicolaus Baldelli (c. 1610?, Jesuit metaphysician) attempts to construe the principle as being held by Thomas Aquinas (1225–1274) and Thomas de Vio Caeitanus (1468–1534). The supporters he adduces are still sufficiently impressive.[39]

Fabri sets out his own position prior to the dialogue, thus confirming that the dialogue's main speaker, Antimus, is none other than himself:

> I assume only two principles. The first is that conscience must be certain; evidently, that practical judgement is certain which has established conscience itself; certain, I say, with — at any rate — moral certainty. The second [principle] is that it is certain, at least morally, that only probable [opinion] is the moral opinion which can be honestly and justly reduced to action.[40] Because all that I am going to say is deduced from these two principles, I should in vain cite authors for the conclusions which I shall deduce from them...[41]

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39.   Fabri (1659) 117: *Quod attinet ad secundum huius doctrinae principium, de certitudine, scilicet morali probabilitatis, omnes fere illud supponunt, pauci expresse hanc quaestionem tractant, dum plures occurrant, accipe aliquos; Baldell. lib. 4 disp. 10. n.5, Medin. 1.2.q.19. a.6, Bresserum de conscient. lib. 3. c.5, Merulam disp. 3. c.4, Mercorum 2. par. art. t. ad 1, Lugo de fid. disp. 10, sect. 1, Salas 1. 2. tract. 8. sect. 4. n. 41, Lao de conscient. disp. 3. dub. 2, Mastrium in 2. disp. 5. q.2 a. 6. nu. 116 & 126. Ouied. & Bardium supra citatos, adde. Spinolam passim in tract. de hoc argumento. Baldell. autem citatus vult, hanc esse S.Thom. & Caeitani mentem: alios, si quos nactus fuero, tibi postea suggeram. Caeterum unum tantum, vel alterum invenio, qui hoc expresse neget.*

40.   The second principle is quoted and criticized by Gradius (1678) 13.

41.   Fabri (1659) *Lectori*, last paragraph of second column: *Duo duntaxat principia suppono: primum est, conscientiam certam esse debere; scilicet iudicium illud practicum certum, quod ipsam conscientiam constituit; certum inquam, morali saltem, certitudine; alterum est, illam duntaxat opinionem moralem*

Fabri (1607-1688)

Fabri appends to these two principles a new definition of probable opinion:

> I add just one definition of probable opinion: I say that it is what rests on a rational base short of (or "this side of") certainty. Rational is what sufficiently moves [one] to rational or prudent assent, if of course the command of the will agrees.[42]

Fabri's emphasis on reason, and his use of words such as "prudent" and "assent", expose his return to the Classical sources, and to Cicero in particular. No longer is probable opinion a likely but erroneous notion as in Medina's interpretation of Thomas, or the most convenient opinion to salve a sinner's conscience as with certain probabilists, but a conscious attempt to approximate to the truth so far as is possible within the limits of man's understanding. His inclination is not to an Academic provisional acceptance (*probatio*) of a temporarily persuasive truth-like opinion, but to a longer-lasting Stoic prudent assent (*adsensio = adprobatio*).

Much of Fabri's book is taken up with elucidations of the two principles using his new definition of probable opinion: practical judgement in many cases cannot be practically certain with regard to the outcome of acting on that judgement; the outcome cannot be known; practical judgements are, in other words, usually based on probable opinions rather than epistemic certainty; probable is that which may be true, but not necessarily true, but is based on reason; the very choice of the probable, or more probable, option, because it is rational, is itself a moral act which bestows upon the agent moral certainty; the agent acting with moral certainty need not fear punishment from God, even if the probable opinion upon which the moral act is based eventually turns out to be false (for example, when the Church decides otherwise). Taken together, these points form a coherent position whereby some wise Catholics may be regarded as authorities to be consulted, not merely by virtue of their authority, but because they have considered all sides of an issue and have assented to an opinion

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> *ad praxim honeste ac licite reduci posse, quam probabilem esse certum est, saltem moraliter, et quia illa omnia quae dicturus sum, ex his duobus principiis deducuntur, autores pro conclusionibus, quas ex iis deducam, frustram citarem...*

42. Fabri (1659) *Lectori*, third column: *addo unicam definitionem opinionis probabilis; eam enim dico esse, quae citra certitudinem, rationabili fundamento nititur; rationabile autem est, quod ad rationabilem seu prudentem assensum sufficienter movet, accedente scilicet voluntatis imperio.*

which is probable. A layman would do well to accept the probable opinions arrived at by those wiser than himself, and by accepting the judgements of wise men, he too would act with moral certainty and a clear conscience, and he would thus avoid eternal damnation. Neither the Academic nor the Stoic would have consented to the outsourcing of one's morality, but in a world dominated by the fear of eternal damnation for contravening God's law, the almost omniscient Catholic Church had a virtual monopoly on moral advice.

3.6. Conclusions

What may be learned from this paper that is pertinent to a theory of the migration of knowledge?

1. A background concept may exist without a term to denote it, such as the awareness that one's knowledge or understanding is more limited than that of a far superior entity.

2. A background concept may influence human behaviour and interaction throughout millenia, albeit in a number of ways: e.g., poets, prophets, and priests, for different motives, may make their words credible to audiences by attributing them to a divine source.

3. The background concept may itself be innate rather than transmitted or received, but the concepts built upon it may be passed on and developed: e.g., the notion that most humans are incapable of comprehending direct divine communication leads variously to myth and poetry, oracles and prophecies, Biblical stories requiring allegorical interpretation, and the Pope.

4. Ordinary phenomena explained in the light of a background concept produce secondary concepts conforming with the background concept and leading to refinement of the background concept: e.g., poetry with its mnemonic devices began as a natural vehicle for stored knowledge in an oral society, but its truth was attributed to a divine power, since only a divine power could know so much. Hence mystical and poetic language came to be associated with the mode of communication of omniscient divine powers with the relatively ignorant humans, thus conforming with the background concept.

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Conclusions

Furthermore, the background awareness of a superior omniscient power was refined to incorporate the notion that the superior omniscient power could communicate with humans. See again the exploitation of this concept in the hands of poets, prophets and organized religion.

5. One term, allowing for slight changes from language to language, may denote one general concept throughout millenia: e.g. ῥητορική, rhetoric, rhétorique, Rhetorik. However, while remaining apparently static, the concept changes in its composition, motivation and other features. Rhetoric began as an art of speaking, designed to organize the presentation of claims in a court of law; but it developed to include every field of public speaking. Truth was the first victim of rhetoric whose professed aim was persuasion, but in the hands of philosophers, especially the Stoics, and thinkers like Augustine, it was subsumed to dialectic and served to spread the truth.

6. Two or more terms may refer to one concept from different aspects. In some cases, it may take several stages before the two terms are recognized or treated as such. The Greek πιθανόν (*pithanon*, "persuasive") and εἰκός (*eikos*, "like [the truth]) are a case in point. At first they were treated as separate parts in rhetoric, but seem to have become interchangeable denoters of the one complex concept, since what is persuasive in rhetoric or philosophy is so because it is like the truth. In Latin, *eikos* (similar <to the truth>) was accurately translated by rhetoricians as *veri simile*, but *pithanon* was not similarly translated as *persuasibile*, except later by the grammarian Quintilian. Instead, Cicero chose to denote another aspect of the concept in its use in Academic sceptical epistemology: the persuasive truth-like, because it is such, is provisionally acceptable, hence Cicero's *probabile*. Thus *probabile* might appear to be used indiscriminately to translate *eikos* and *pithanon*, but in fact it is not translating either of the terms, but denoting a third aspect of the complex of which they are all a part.

7. Transmission is of a term or terms associated in a particular way with one or more aspects of a concept. Reception, however, may not preserve the associations. A concept may be received, but given a new term to denote a different aspect of it, as in the case of

Probabile and Veri Simile

Cicero's *probabile*. A term may be received, but misapplied: e.g., *probabile* may be seen to be associated with a less than certain opinion, but its denotation of provisional acceptance may be missed. A new aspect is found for the term to denote in the general area of a doubtfully true opinion.

8. The migration of concepts may be physical and geographical, or metaphorically from one generation to the next, even in the same place.

9. The mode of migration seems to have an effect on the reception of concepts: an individual speaking his ideas to friends has a numerically limited influence on society, while they, writing their ideas down, may have a wider reach, although with a small circulation at the beginning. A wandering poet reaches an even larger audience in an area previously untouched by unsettling thoughts, affecting some of them to write poetic works of philosophy. And so on.

10. A theory of the migration of knowledge may not set down hard and fast rules, but it could usefully indicate the sort of things that should be looked for in any particular case study to help uncover the concepts involved, the development of these concepts, the reasons for the development, the terms involved and their changing denotations as one or other aspect of the concepts come to the fore.

11. Such research ideally requires a collaborative team of experts pertaining to each aspect of the study, including the languages, societies, and other disciplines involved.

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