A NOTE ON PLATO *POLITICUS* 285d9–286b1[1]

ΞΕΝΟΣ Ἦ που τὸν τῆς ὑφαντικῆς γε λόγον αὐτῆς ταύτης ἕνεκα θηρεύειν οὐδεὶς ἂν ἐθελήσειεν νοῦν ἔχων· ἀλλ' οἶμαι τοὺς πλείστους λέληθεν ὅτι τοῖς μὲν τῶν ὄντων ῥᾳδίως καταμαθεῖν αἰσθηταί τινες ὁμοιότητες πεφύκασιν, ἃς οὐδὲν χαλεπὸν δηλοῦν, ὅταν αὐτῶν τις βουληθῇ τῷ λόγον αἰτοῦντι περί του μὴ μετὰ πραγμάτων ἀλλὰ χωρὶς λόγου ῥᾳδίως ἐνδείξασθαι· τοῖς δ' αὖ,* μεγίστοις οὖσι καὶ τιμιωτάτοις,* οὐκ ἔστιν εἴδωλον οὐδὲν πρὸς τοὺς ἀνθρώπους εἰργασμένον ἐναργῶς, οὗ δειχθέντος τὴν τοῦ πυνθανομένου ψυχὴν ὁ βουλόμενος ἀποπληρῶσαι, πρὸς τῶν αἰσθήσεών τινα προσαρμόττων, ἱκανῶς πληρώσει. διὸ δεῖ μελετᾶν λόγον ἑκάστου δυνατὸν εἶναι δοῦναι καὶ δέξασθαι· τὰ γὰρ ἀσώματα, κάλλιστα ὄντα καὶ μέγιστα, λόγῳ μόνον ἄλλῳ δὲ οὐδενὶ σαφῶς δείκνυται, τούτων δὲ ἕνεκα πάντ' ἐστὶ τὰ νῦν λεγόμενα. ῥᾴων δ' ἐν τοῖς ἐλάττοσιν ἡ μελέτη παντὸς πέρι μᾶλλον ἢ περὶ τὰ μείζω. (*Pol.* 285d9–286 b1)

(*These commas have been added by me. They are not in the Oxford text. I give my reasons on page 113)*

As for the verbal analysis of weaving, at any rate, I don't suppose anybody would be willing to pursue it for its own sake if he had any sense; but, I think, most people are unaware that *for some of the things that are*, for ease of understanding, there exist *cases of similarity* which are *sort of perceptible* and which it is not at all difficult to make clear, whenever someone asks for a verbal analysis of them concerning some subject and one wishes to point them out easily *without the presence of objects but independently of a verbal analysis*. *For other things, again*, which are greatest and most valued, there is no *visible representation* worked up to meet human requirements in a clear way, by displaying which someone who wishes to satisfy an enquirer's mind can do so adequately by matching it with one of the senses. This is why one must exercise the ability to give and receive a verbal analysis of each subject, because incorporeal things, which are most beautiful and the greatest, are demonstrated clearly only by verbal analysis and not by any other means. All of what is now being said is said for their sake, and in any field it is easier exercising with lesser subjects rather than with greater ones.

(Plato, *Statesman*, 285d9–286b1)

This paper makes suggestions for a significantly improved reading of what is agreed to be an important and difficult passage. Campbell[2] describes 'the whole sentence' (perhaps to ἐνδείξασθαι, perhaps to πληρώσει) as 'laboured and pleonastic'. Rowe[3] agrees with this assessment. The suggestions I make, if accepted, dissolve some of the obscurities identified by Rowe[4] and go some way, as a collateral benefit, to diminish

[1] I wish to thank E. E. Pender for sparing time to discuss my thoughts on this passage with me when they were very ill-formed and for encouraging me to try to sort them out. I also thank N. Fox, S. Stern-Gillet, C. Tipper, and P. Vassilopoulou for a number of useful suggestions and other help; and *CQ*'s anonymous referee, whose comments on the first version of this note compelled me to make some important points more clearly than I had done. The responsibility for what appears here remains my own, of course.

[2] Lewis Campbell, *The Sophistes and Politicus of Plato* (Oxford, 1867) [*Politicus*, 110].

[3] C. J. Rowe (translation and edition with commentary), *Plato Statesman* (Warminster, 1995), 212, on 285e3.

[4] Rowe (n. 3), 210–12, and the collection edited by him, *Reading the Statesman: Proceedings of the III Symposium Platonicum* (Sankt Augustin, 1995), 22–4, provides a thorough discussion of the passage and is very sensitive to the range of difficulties raised in the different interpretive possibilities. However, Rowe does appear to accept, both in the discussions just cited and in the summary of his own view which I quote below, the interpretation of ὁμοιότητες which it is the purpose of my note to call into question: thus, for example, *Reading the Statesman*, 23, 'there are some things..which don't have such likenesses/images' and (n. 3), 210 (on 285d8–9) 'On the interpretation I propose, the nub of the explanation is that weaving *is* [emphasis added] itself a

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the grounds for an accusation of pleonasm. They concern especially the italicized phrases (i) 'cases of similarity' (ὁμοιότητες), (ii) 'sort of perceptible' (αἰσθηταί τινες), (iii) 'without the presence of objects' (μὴ μετὰ πραγμάτων), (iv) '. . . for some of the things that are. . . . For other things, again . . .' (. . . τοῖς μεν τῶν ὄντων . . . τοῖς δ' αὖ . . .) and 'visible representation' (εἴδωλον). I do not attempt to assess the philosophical soundness of what I find in the passage nor to explore implications for more general issues in Platonic studies.[5] Three inter- pretations of the passage are current in recent scholarly discussion of the dialogue. The first, exemplified in the translation of Skemp,[6] takes ὁμοιότητες to denote perceptible representatives of Forms (Ideas). The second, produced by Owen,[7] in criticism of Skemp and as part of his wider interest in banishing talk of Forms in relation to Platonic dialogues characterized as 'later' ones, argues persuasively that there is no basis in the Greek text for any reference to a theory of 'paradigm-forms' associated with Plato's 'middle' period. Instead, he takes the word to denote, quite literally, 'pictures and models' used as visual aids in the classroom. Whereas on the first interpretation the purpose of the passage is to point out that things divide between the perceptible and the bodiless, the second identifies the division as being between the depictable and the undepictable. The third interpretation is Rowe's:[8] while he acknowledges a debt to Owen's account, he 'differs from it particularly in identifying the basic distinction in the passage as being not so much between the depictable and the undepictable as between those things that have perceptible likenesses in a straightforward and literal sense and those with likenesses which, although they may be perceptible, will nevertheless need to be explained in words (as statesmanship finds its likeness, according to ES [Eleatic Stranger], in the art of weaving).'

PROBLEMATIC PHRASES; POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

(i) Similarities (ὁμοιότητες)

Despite their differences these interpretations share a premise: they all take ὁμοιότητες to denote the *bearers* of the property of 'being like' rather than the property itself, while differing of course as to what satisfies that description. Whatever shifts in the meaning of the word ὁμοιότης may have occurred during the long life of the Greek language,[9] it is highly improbable that the word should in fact

"perceptible likeness (αἰσθητή τις ὁμοιότης, e1) of statesmanship".' Contrast with this the following formulations: (A) Weaving possesses the property of being like statesmanship and statesmanship possesses the property of being like weaving, and (B) The relation of likeness obtains between weaving and statesmanship. Notice that both (A) and (B) avoid any importation of asymmetricality. I shall offer a further brief comment about relational properties/relations below, page 111 and note 11.

[5] I do, however, in the concluding remarks hint briefly at ways in which what I have to say might feed into wider discussion.

[6] J. B. Skemp, *Plato's Statesman* (Routledge, 1952), 175–6.

[7] G. E. L. Owen, 'Plato on the undepictable' in E. Lee, A. Mourelatos, and R. Rorty (edd.) *Exegesis and Argument* (Assen, 1973), 349–61.

[8] C. J. Rowe 'The *Politicus*: structure and form' in C. Gill and M. M. McCabe (edd.), *Form and Argument in Late Plato* (Oxford, 1996), 163, n. 28.

[9] I have received an informal communication from James Barlow suggesting that St John Chrysostom may have used ὁμοιότης to mean likeness = image. I have been careful to restrict my claim to Plato and the relevant period. In this connection it is interesting to note that Marsilio Ficino translates by 'imagines' (*Platonis Opera* [Basel, 1546], XVI.212); I speculate that he

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have this denotation either in this passage or in Plato generally. The standard function of the -*ότης* ending is to *name* the property *assigned* to something by the corresponding adjective: thus *ὀρθότης*, *μαλακότης*, and *θερμότης* (all conveniently to be found together at Cratylus 432b) denote respectively the correctness, softness and heat of correct things, soft things and hot things (see also Theaetetus 182b1–2 for Plato's sensitivity to this distinction). There seems to be no reason in this passage for reading *ὁμοιότης* differently. We should expect the word to be used to denote the *property* of 'being like' which *ὅμοια* ('like things') possess. Consultation of Ast's *Lexicon Platonicum* and Brandwood's *Word Index* does not disclose obvious counter-examples or even doubtful cases. Moreover, in the relative clause which attaches to *ὁμοιότητες* in our passage, we find the verb *ἐνδεικνύναι* (admittedly in a different voice and tense), so that we have a very close parallel to the phrasing used in the basic analysis of comparison and *paradeigma*[10] offered by Plato a few pages earlier at Politicus 278b1–2. There the comparison is between arrays of letters, and we use the familiar to grasp the unfamiliar when we can 'point to the same property-of-being-like and character being there in both complexes' (*ἐνδεικνύναι τὴν αὐτὴν ὁμοιότητα καὶ φύσιν ἐν ἀμφοτέραις οὖσαν ταῖς συμπλοκαῖς*). The passage, then, is not directly about models, depictions, copies, or images of any sort but about occurrences or instances of 'being like': more exactly, about cases where two (at least) items possess the *same* *ὁμοιότητα*. The most convenient translation will be 'similarities'. The word 'similarity' will usually denote either a *relational property* or a *relation*.[11] It is much less likely to denote the *bearer* of a relational property. I have argued above from the way the word *ὁμοιότης* is actually formed that Plato himself will probably have thought of similarity as a relational *property*.[12] Translation by 'likeness' has the disadvantage that it makes it too easy to ignore the distinction between bearer and property which I suggest is crucial for grasping the exact sense of *ὁμοιότης*.

(ii) Sort of perceptible (αἰσθηταί τινες)

What, however, is our passage saying *about* similarities? It ought to be something obscure or at least not evident ('most people are unaware'). The similarities are *αἰσθηταί τινες*. We can make *τινες* do more work here than other interpretations require of it. One idiomatic use of *τις* is to 'soften' the literal meaning of the word it attaches to. (A good example is the conclusion at one point in *Republic* 1 [334a10]

naturally adopts the meaning of Greek words current in the Byzantine period. Even more interestingly Ficino understands *μὴ μετὰ πραγμάτων* much as I do, by *non cum ipsis rebus*; there is nothing in the Greek to correspond to *ipsis*.

[10] For extended discussions of *paradeigma*, see S. Kato, 'The role of *paradeigma* in the Statesman', in Rowe (n. 4), 162–72, and M. S. Lane, *Method and Politics in Plato's Statesman* (Cambridge, 1998), 13–97. On alternative ways of translating *paradeigma* (model, example) see Lane, 46, n. 67 and the references given there.

[11] Which one of these one opts for depends on one's philosophical view of 'relation' talk. Leibniz, like Plato, understood such talk in terms of relational properties: it was more ontologically economical to do so and conceiving of space as an ideal construction enabled one to escape the notion of a void. On the other hand, a Newtonian view of space as substance leads easily to the postulation of relations as distinct, mind-independent entities. See Leibniz, Correspondence with Samuel Clarke, Fifth Paper, §47. Printed in *Leibniz: Philosophical Writings*, ed. G. H. R. Parkinson (London, 1973), 230–3; and also, for a very comprehensive recent discussion, B. Dainton, *Time and Space* (Chesham, 2001), 1–3, 138–45.

[12] See also D. Bostock, *Plato's Phaedo* (Oxford, 1986), 43–5, 107, and index s.v. 'relations'.

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that the just man is κλέπτης τις.)[13] I suggest that τινες here is 'softening' αἰσθηταί; the similarities are 'sort-of-perceptible'. The claim that there exists a species of similarity of this intermediate type gives more point to the phrase 'most people are unaware' than an unremarkable observation that some things are perceptible/depictable while others are not.

(iii) Without the presence of objects (μὴ μετὰ πραγμάτων)

Translating μὴ μετὰ πραγμάτων as I have done by 'without the presence of objects'[14] clarifies αἰσθηταί τινες: we are going to engage in a comparison which differs in an important way from the comparison being made in the παράδειγμα τοῦ παραδείγματος (277d9–10). The comparison is the one promised at 279b1–3, between weaving and statesmanship. It differs from the comparison of one (familiar) array of letters with another (unfamiliar) one in two important ways (i) we cannot, so to speak, put the items to be compared on a table in front of us and (ii) the items do not have the same ontological status or value. To that extent identifying the shared ὁμοιότητα καὶ φύσιν (which is, in this case, a πραγματεία—see 279a7–8) is more than a matter of straightforward perception, but it *is* a sort of perception. The πραγματεία shared by both weaving and statesmanship is 'intertwining'. We would say, of course, that the word is used literally in the former case and metaphorically in the latter. Plato can draw an analogous distinction, I suggest, by using the 'softening' τινες.

(iv) For some of the things that are . . . for others, again . . . (τοῖς μὲν . . . τοῖς δ' αὖ . . .) and *visible representation (εἴδωλον)*

In outline, the main points that I try to establish in this section are: (a) the logical (as distinct from grammatical) subjects of the contrasting μέν/δέ clauses are 'some things' and 'other things'; (b) the two sorts of thing are contrasted in respect of the way we come to know them, specifically whether it is by verbal analysis only or whether perception is involved at all; (c) there are other contrasting items too, but they are subsidiary (for example, body—which is not mentioned but can be inferred—and the bodiless); (d) statesmanship is not being *contrasted* with weaving: on the contrary, though only one is named, they are located together on one side of the contrast and the emphasis is on a feature which they *share*, namely an element of perceptibility.

First consideration of the parallel μέν/δέ clauses does not, one must admit, immediately reveal exactly what is being contrasted with what. Skemp takes it as a contrast between things that have perceptible images and things that do not. Rowe takes it as being between things that have perceptible images and things that, even if they do have such images, need to be explained in words too. Actually, in both cases the

[13] Some other examples are (i) with nouns: σκιαγραφία τις (*Phaedo*, 69b7); καθαρμός τις (*Phaedo*, 69c3); (ii) with adjectives: φαύλη τις (*Symp.* 175e2–3); ἐπιλήσμων τις (*Prot*. 334c8–9); ἐγώ τις . . . δυσμαθής (*Rep.* 358a8–9).

[14] The standard meanings of the Greek words severely underdetermine the meaning of this phrase. The meaning which I suggest removes some redundancy. I do not deny that it could mean 'without trouble' though it does not occur elsewhere in Plato with this meaning. We do find ἄνευ πραγμάτων (*Euthd.* 288e6) and διὰ πολλῶν πραγμάτων (*Prot.* 341d5). μετὰ τῶν πραγμάτων (*Crat.* 417a6) occurs when we are talking about the movement of the soul 'in accord with things (in the world)', cf. *Crat.* 412a1–3.

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translations they offer seem to suggest a different contrast again, namely the contrast of the greatest things with (putative) lesser things.[15] Thus (1) Skemp: 'Likenesses which the senses can grasp. . . . But to the highest and most important class of existents . . .'; (2) Rowe: '. . . to some of the things that are . . . ; conversely, for those things that are greatest and most valuable . . .'.

My own preference[16] is to punctuate with commas after αὖ (cf. *Pol.* 267b3, 274d1) and τιμιωτάτοις, taking μεγίστοις . . . και τιμιωτάτοις as adjectives in the predicative rather than the attributive position.[17] τὰ γὰρ ἀσώματα, κάλλιστα ὄντα καὶ μέγιστα later in the passage displays the same phrase-structure. Reading the Greek in this way brings out the focal points of the contrasting μέν/δέ clauses much more clearly: 'among some of the things that are *similarities exist which are in a qualified way perceptible* . . . ; for others, again, there is no clear visible representation . . .' (*a fortiori* therefore, *there are no clear visible/perceptible features among which such similarities can exist*). Other phrases tell us for whom the distinction between these two sorts is significant, the enquirer and his instructor; this establishes that it matters for the process of learning and cognition. The two sorts, then, are essentially distinguished by the modes of cognition which apply to them. This is obscured somewhat by the fact that things of the second sort (and only things of the second sort) are given explicit additional characterization by the Stranger: they are greatest (or very great), most valued and most (or very) beautiful; they are also bodiless, which is why they can be known only through verbal analysis.[18]

Turning our attention back to weaving and statesmanship, how are we to allocate them to our two sorts? It is easy enough to assign weaving to the first one (μέν clause): weaving is clearly a perceptible activity and we are told that it does not *per se* merit verbal analysis. I believe that we can confidently assign statesmanship to this sort as well. The Stranger has been very careful and precise in identifying weaving not as an image (εἴδωλον) but as a model/example (παράδειγμα). An image is (a) a representation of an original; (b) ontologically inferior to its original; (c) to some degree or other an effect of its original; and the movement from original to image is, one may say, a descent. On the other hand a model/example is something which we can use to gain cognitive access to something more distant because of some feature or features which both share. (It is of course possible for these two different connotations to apply to the same referent: *x* could be an image of *y* from one point of view and a παράδειγμα for it from another. This point does not affect the argument here.) The movement from model to 'target' is an ascent rather than a descent. If we apply these points to the relationship between weaving and statesmanship, we see that the ascent from the one to the other is possible because they share a more or less perceptible feature, the activity of interweaving, and we assign them *both* to the sort of things among which sort-of-perceptible similarities exist.

There is a tendency on some other readings to assign statesmanship to the second

[15] Taking this to be the focal point of the contrast is certainly embedded in the tradition. See Latin versions by Ficino (see n. 9 above) and G. Stallbaum, *Platonis Opera Omnia* (Gotha and London, 1841), ix.1, 241–2.

[16] Only a preference is possible, given the absence of 'hard and fast rules' for the deployment of μέν/δέ. See J. D. Denniston, *The Greek Particles* (Oxford, 2nd edn reprint 1959), 369–74.

[17] See W. W. Goodwin, *A Greek Grammar* (London, 2nd edn reprint 1955), para. 919

[18] One should note here that, while verbal analysis can be applied to perceptibles as well as to the things that are bodiless (it has been applied to weaving as an exercise), perception has no application to the realm of the bodiless.

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sort (δέ-clause). If it were well founded it would constitute a decisive objection to the understanding of the passage which I am attempting to articulate. I find two distinct motivations for it. One is the belief that the δέ-clause is making a universal statement about *the* 'greatest things' and that statesmanship belongs among these.[19] This is certainly the case with Owen's article (p. 358): he reasons as follows: 'It is less plain,' he writes, 'as P [the passage] develops, that it is wool-weaving that can be depicted and statesmanship cannot; but that can hardly be in doubt. It is *the* [emphasis added] μέγιστα that cannot be depicted, and we have already met statesmanship as a μέγιστον ὄν . . .' (278e7–8 is cited for the latter phrase). Given the possibility of taking μεγίστοις as predicative, it is uncertain[20] that any universal claim is made by the Stranger about *the* 'greatest things'; the argument therefore fails because one of its premisses is not established, and we cannot conclude anything about the status of statesmanship on the strength of it.

The other seems to be an unargued assumption that statesmanship must belong to the bodiless things, about which the δέ-clause *does* make a universal statement, namely that they can only be cognized clearly by verbal analysis because they cannot be satisfactorily aligned with any of the senses. Since (i) statesmanship *does* display a perceptible feature, the activity of producing a πλέγμα (cf. 283a6), which it shares with weaving, and (ii) perceptibility implies body,[21] statesmanship cannot be referred to the δέ-clause and the bodiless. Additional considerations support this point: (a) the search for statesmanship is subordinate to—and hence different from—dialectic (285d5–7, 286a7–8), which we may reasonably identify with the verbal analysis of things that are bodiless (and most valued, and so on); (b) later in the dialogue (305d1–5) we learn that the statesman/king knows the right time to initiate policy: this is tantamount to an admission that , though exalted above the administrators, his expertise is still focused on the world of movement and change, that is the world of body.[22]

One final consideration: if we do not refer statesmanship to the δέ-clause, do we not somehow detract from the rhetorical 'shape' of the passage? This 'shape' can easily be taken as some sort of crescendo or ascent from the perceptible to the bodiless. There is another possibility: my own view is that the paragraph opens on a low note (the lack of value *per se* of a verbal analysis of weaving), and has a central part which *balances* an interesting and important observation (which has gone unnoticed) on the ontologically inferior realm of perception (that is, that variation within it allows for a more subtle application of the method of παράδειγμα than the straightforward application exemplified by the comparison of different letter-groups) with something *less* surprising about the superior realm of the bodiless and truly greatest things—namely that cognition of them is by λόγος only. It then closes with the quiet observation that it is easier to practise on lesser things rather than greater things.

[19] The most we can infer from the dialogue with confidence is that statesmanship is one of the great*er* things (277d1) or a very great thing (278e8). Cf. Lane (n. 10), 62.

[20] The uncertainty is increased by the fact that the Greek superlative makes no distinction between 'greatest' and 'very great' and habitually a complement is not accompanied by the definite article.

[21] On this, see, e.g., *Phaedo*, 78d10–79a4 and the Timaeus account of vision, 45b2–d3.

[22] Rowe (n. 3), commentary, 212, on 285e4, and 210–11, on 285d8–9 has a more complicated position: he believes that statesmanship (a) belongs to the things that are the greatest and bodiless; (b) possesses a perceptible image; (c) is apprehended through perception and words working together; and (d) in respect of all these features relates to the δέ-clause. My account accepts only (c) but explains it differently.

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THE CONTEXT

Does the interpretation that I am offering fit the flow of the argument? The framework within which our passage is located can be demarcated at one end by the promise to use weaving as a *παράδειγμα* to illuminate statesmanship (279b1–3) and, at the other, by the long deferred delivery of the promise at 287a7–b2.[23] The promise was itself foreshadowed at 277d1–2, when the general need for *παραδείγματα* was stated; the actual production of a particular *παράδειγμα* (at 279b1–3) was deferred until after an excursus on the defining characteristics of *παράδειγμα*. Similarly, application of the weaving/statesmanship comparison is delayed by a series of methodological digressions: the first is the excursus or exercise on weaving itself, which commences at 279b8 and finishes at 283a8; the second is the section on excess, deficiency, and measurement (283c3 to, say, 284e8); the third identifies some essentials of the dialectical method (roughly 285a4–c2) and reminds us that *all* our discussions have the overriding purpose of making us better dialecticians: comprehending statesmanship is a secondary aim. Our passage is part of this digression on dialectic method, the core of which is to proceed at once to the *διαφοραί* if one has started by noting a common element (*κοινωνία*), and, vice versa, if one begins with the *ἀνομοιότητες* one must persevere until the cognate items are gathered together into one *ὁμοιότης* (285a8–b6). The passage draws our attention to the existence of a species of similarity which obtains between items whose perceptual status is *unequal*: some of them could be called quasi-perceptual. Kato[24] characterizes the difference as being between something 'quasi-visible' (weaving) and something 'quasi-invisible' (statesmanship). Lane[25] talks of 'levels' A, B, and C, and she puts weaving at level B and 'statecraft' at level C. Lane's apparatus would be better, I believe, if she split level B, putting weaving at B1 and statecraft at B2—leaving level C for what is bodiless, and completely imperceptible. Perhaps our passage can be seen as an indication of Plato's continued interest in the conception of a cognitive ladder on which the relative positions occupied by the perceptual and conceptual aspects of things vary inversely.[26] At the top end of the ladder the most valuable objects of cognition have no perceptual aspect at all; they are purely conceptual. This note is not the place to pursue this speculation, however. What we can say is that the particular comparison between weaving and statesmanship depends upon their possessing in common some aspect which is *ambiguously* (and intermediately) 'perceptible', and the point of the passage in general is to explain how it is that, thanks to the existence of such intermediate perceptibles, it is possible to use the method of *παραδείγματα* to advance from cognition of the 'lesser' to the 'greater'.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

I have not attempted to engage in full detail with other readings of the passage, since my own depends mostly on an attempt to extract something more out of the Greek text as it stands. However, I will offer the following brief comments. Owen's argu-

[23] The application *begins* here, with the stripping away of what is *not* statesmanship. The essence of statesmanship is finally identified by the appearance, with increasing frequency, of *metaphorical* uses of *ὑφαίνειν* or its compounds, together with other 'weaving' words (e.g. *συμπλοκή*), from 305e onwards.

[24] Kato (n. 10), 168

[25] Lane (n. 10), 61–2.

[26] Seen most clearly, of course, in the 'divided line' of *Republic* 6.509d6–511e4

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ments against Skemp seem to me to be persuasive;[27] his positive thesis that ὁμοιότητες refers to 'pictures and models' just seems insufficiently supported by the reference back to 277a–c, with its metaphor of the roughed-out sculpture used to indicate the so far unfinished character of the investigation and the accompanying observation that some people's understanding never progresses beyond such a perceptual level. I think this is the case even if, contrary to my own contentions above, ὁμοιότητες could have the denotation Owen wished it to have.[28] On the other hand, when Rowe identifies certain items as 'perceptible, yet needing explanation in words', they seem not unlike the 'cases of similarity which are sort of perceptible' which I find explicit in the passage.

There are general issues on which my reading of the passage might throw additional light. For example, it would support Lane's view, when she is discussing Scott's[29] thesis that 'true knowledge is gained not by clarifying beliefs but by radically rejecting them altogether': Scott is considering the *Phaedo*, *Meno*, and *Republic*, but Lane finds that in the *Statesman,* at any rate, 'example [viz. *paradeigma*] is presented as the path from true beliefs to knowledge, a path which clarifies and extends those beliefs rather than rejecting them'.[30] My reading of 285d9ff. illuminates a detail on that path. On a narrower question, the passage could contribute something to an assessment of Plato's view of metaphor. This has been examined in detail in a valuable study of images in Plato by Pender;[31] unfortunately she has followed Lane's supposed improvement of Owen when she discusses our passage (52–6) and consequently not extracted from it what it could supply.

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[27] W. K. C. Guthrie, however, did not think that they were. See *A History of Greek Philosophy* 5 (Cambridge, 1978), 178ff.

[28] I believe that Owen's article, though written with great verve and style and universally acclaimed, actually owes more to imagination than to the Greek text. Lane (n. 10), 71 and n. 108, calls it a 'signal achievement'—but she also intriguingly describes the translation he offers as 'purpose-built' and decides to use Campbell's instead.

[29] D. Scott, *Recollection and Experience: Plato's Theory of Learning and its Successors* (Cambridge, 1995).

[30] Lane (n. 10), 64–5

[31] E. E. Pender, *Images of Persons Unseen: Plato's Metaphors for the Gods and the Soul* (Sankt Augustin, 2000).

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