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## HERACLITUS' FR. 52

Heraclitus' fr. 52 is found in Hippolytus' writings as follows : "Ὅτι δέ ἐστι παῖς τὸ πᾶν καὶ δι' αἰῶνος αἰώνιος βασιλεὺς τῶν ὅλων οὕτως λέγει : αἰῶν παῖς ἐστὶ παίζων πεσσεύων· παιδὸς ἢ βασιληίῃ (*Refutatio* 9, 9, 3-4 = p. 241 Wendland).

The image appearing in this fragment seems to be impressive and suggestive. However, it is very enigmatic in its structure and significance; it appears to be a riddle whose meaning likes to be persistently hidden. Gigon<sup>2</sup> considers fr. 52 as one of the problems *vor denen wir kapitulieren müssen*. Certainly, the problem is not only that we cannot know what Heraclitus means by the term αἰών; although this is the fundamental problem, it is the whole image, through which αἰών appears, that makes it difficult for us to postulate what the philosopher meant by that. However, αἰών seems to be the subject of the whole apophthegm, because it is the word which comes first in the word order. It is just as if one has made the question: τί ἐστὶν αἰών? and the following has been given as the answer: αἰών παῖς παίζων πεσσεύων· παιδὸς ἢ βασιληίῃ<sup>3</sup>. We are not hereby given a definition which can limit our thought, but what we have before us is a picture purely poetical in which our thought can freely move, being elastic. Also, there is presented a remarkably important, lively and precise image: the παῖς, through his own activity, that is to say, while he is playing expresses himself, as well as the essential way through which he exists. Παῖς παίζων

1. The ἐστί, which editors and researchers accept as Heraclitean, seems to me as a later addition. Heraclitus generally avoids the copula and especially when he speaks sententiously (frr. 8, 10, 15, 31a, 33, 36, 41, 48, 60, 61, 62, 67, 90, 96, 102, 112, 118, 119, 124).

2. O. Gigon, *Untersuchungen zu Heraklit*, Leipzig 1935, 72 and 122. Cf. B. Snell, *Die Sprache Heraklits*, «Hermes» 61 (1926) 373, 1; H. Fränkel, *Dichtung und Philosophie des frühen Griechentums*, München 1962<sup>2</sup>, 447, 55; F. M. Cleve, *The giants of Pre-Sophistic Greek philosophy* 1, The Hague 1965, 85; M. Marcovich, *Heraclitus*, Merida (Venezuela) 1967, 493.

3. It is not accidental that Lucian, *Vit. Auct.* 14, in his writing, separates the Heraclitean text in a question (τί ἐστὶν αἰών;) and an answer (παῖς παίζων...).



are two words that emphasize the whole sentence in a special way and, simultaneously, serve only one impression : the first word represents the appearing person and the second represents the only essential way through which the person exists and lives.

Reinhardt<sup>4</sup> mistakes the unity that the words, παῖς παίζων, have within the sentence by putting a comma after the word παῖς, thinking that this is the word to be emphasized. Kranz<sup>5</sup>, also, wants the emphasis to be on the word παίζων. Reinhardt thinks that this punctuation: παῖς ἐστὶ παίζων (which Diels follows in the editions of the Pre-Socratics and, likewise, Wendland, in the edition of Hippolytus) isolates the πεσσεύων. The words παίζων πεσσεύων, he says, constitute a new member, so that the three parts of the sentence correspond to each other : Παῖς, παίζων πεσσεύων· παιδὸς ἢ βασιληΐη. This alliteration is not unusual to Heraclitus. The philosopher likes the sound-tricks in his writings, just as a poet does<sup>6</sup>. But, we must not think that the word παίζων receives a special importance in this way, that is being between the two παῖς (παῖς, παιδός), as it is implied by Kranz's and also, in some way, by Reinhardt's point of view.

The word παίζων is followed by the participle πεσσεύων<sup>7</sup>, which determines the concrete content of the image, that is the kind of the game. The participle is not an auxiliary word used in order to specify the meaning of παίζων more clearly. However the word παίζων is connected with the word παῖς, as Kranz himself successfully observes, and defines the only essential way through which it lives. It is my personal belief that the word πεσσεύων sounds somewhat as bearing a higher pitch of tone, and it is brought out with some special emphasis, altogether. This inquiry will show that πεσσεύων has to be considered as a necessary «key» required for the solution of this riddle, in regard to the conception of the meaning which is hidden behind the image of the playing child.

The aphorism that finally takes the place of a conclusion in the sentence

4. K. Reinhardt, *Heraklits Lehre vom Feuer*, in *Vermächtnis der Antike*, Göttingen 1960, 46, 7.

5. Diels-Kranz, *Die Fragmente der Vorsokratiker* 1<sup>6</sup>, 493, 24. Kranz cites, also, a fragment from Alcman for this purpose : fr. 36 D. Ἔρωσ οἶα [παῖς Bentley] παῖσδει ἄκρ' ἐπ' ἄνθη καβαίνων . . .

6. B 5 : μαινόμενοι - μαίνεσθαι. B 15 : αἰδοίοισιν - ἀναιδέστατα - Ἄιδης. B 25 : μόροι - μοίρας B 28 : δοκέοντα - δοκιμώτατος. B 50 : λόγου - ὁμολογεῖν B 114 : ξὺν νόφ - ξυνφ.

7. As regards the unconnected grammatical scheme παίζων πεσσεύων cf. fr. 28 : γινώσκει φυλάσσει.

(παιδὸς ἢ βασιληίῃ), is not a reference to the word πεσσεύων, that is to the concrete image of the game, but to the word παῖς : a child sits in the throne, i.e. the same child who παίζει - πεσσεύει.

It is very characteristic to note the change of thought from the abstract αἰὼν to the concrete image παῖς παίζων πεσσεύων and back again to the general idea παιδὸς ἢ βασιληίῃ. But now it is enriched by the image and also connected with it so essentially that the word παῖς, which expresses the image at the beginning, is apt to express, in succession, the general idea itself : παιδὸς-αἰῶνος ἢ βασιληίῃ. This process seems to be a type of reasoning whose, however, «major proposition» is missing :

αἰῶνος ἢ βασιληίῃ  
αἰὼν παῖς (ἐστι)  
παιδὸς ἢ βασιληίῃ.

Certainly, by this presentation of the word-order in the fragment, the writing loses some of its vividness and plasticity. This scheme, however, outlines the process of the thought from the general to the particular and back again to the general, which keeps in the particular, forming with it a solid unity : αἰῶνος-παιδὸς ἢ βασιληίῃ or αἰῶνος παιδὸς παίζοντος πεσσεύοντος ἢ βασιληίῃ.

In this fragment we distinguish the following parts : a) αἰὼν, preceding literally as a title, b) παῖς παίζων, πεσσεύων and c) παιδὸς ἢ βασιληίῃ.

By tradition, the word αἰὼν is generally related to the idea of time and life<sup>8</sup>. Heraclitus is the first philosopher who makes use of the term αἰὼν and gives a philosophical meaning to it. The word αἰὼν is found in certain doxographical texts, as for example by Anaximander (VS A 10 = D.G. 579)

8. In Homer, the word αἰὼν means everyone's lifetime or human life : Δ 478, E 685, I 415, T 27, X 58, Ω 725 ; ε 152, 160. Cf. *h. Merc.* 119. And yet it is characteristic for the close relation between the two ideas αἰὼν and ζωή, that the words ψυχὴ and αἰὼν go together serving the same conception: Π 453, ι 523. Cf. R. B. Onians, *The origins of European thought*, Cambridge 1954, 200 ff. Hesiod, *Theog.* 609, uses the word with the meaning of the past time : a long portion of time (aevum in Latin). Cf. M. L. West, *Hesiod Theogony*, Oxford 1966, 334-335. And also Aeschylus, *Ag.* 554, *Supp.* 582, 574, *Ch.* 26, *Eu.* 563 ; the poet uses the word with other meanings, too : time (*Supp.* 47 : μόρσιμος αἰὼν — the same expression in *Pi. Ol.* 2,10), generation (*Th.* 744 αἰῶνα δ' ἐς τρίτον). Herodotus stands near the Homeric meaning of the word : everyone's lifetime, his own life (1, 32, 5. 3, 40, 2. 9, 17, 4 ; 27, 3) ; in a passage of his (7, 46, 4) the word αἰὼν has a different meaning, but we shall consider it below. — Regarding the tradition and the history of the idea αἰὼν from Homer and ff., see C. Lackeit, *Aion. Zeit und Ewigkeit in Sprache und Religion der Griechen* 1, Königsberg 1916 ; by the same author an article Αἰὼν in *R.E. Suppl.* 3 (1918), 64-68. E. Degani, *Αἰὼν da Omero ad Aristotele*, Padova 1961.



and also by Anaximenes (*VS A 6* = D.G. 579), but it is not possible to assume that the word αἰών is a citation in these texts. After Heraclitus, Empedocles uses the word and even so in different meaning : lifetime (fr.110, 3), life (fr. 17, 11), generation (fr. 129, 5-6) and it is very difficult to discern the meaning of eternity in the expression ἄσπετος αἰών (fr. 16). This word is also found in two of his questionable fragments (fr. 154, 158), the second of which contains a pure Homeric expression : αἰῶνος ἀμερθεῖς (X 58).

As for the history of the word αἰών, taken as a philosophical term, Heraclitus constitutes the first stage and Plato the next one. So we have to go to Plato in order to find the term αἰών, bearing again a clear philosophical meaning. In other words, here, we meet this term in the meaning of eternity (*Tim.* 37 d). Beierwaltes<sup>9</sup> successfully observed that Plato had discriminated the words αἰών and χρόνος<sup>10</sup>, but he thought that the word αἰών, as a philosophical term with the meaning of eternity, was found only in Plato for the first time ; and although he talks about Empedocles' expression ἄσπετος αἰών, he does not say a word about Heraclitus' fr. 52. Certainly, in Heraclitus, the term αἰών is not equivalent to the conception of eternity, but nevertheless it has the color of this sense, as we shall see below, if we combine it with fr. 30<sup>11</sup>.

In tradition, of course, the word αἰών had a very meaningful character, but there was a common characteristic in all its meaning, i.e. the dynamic element, which is connected with the idea of motion and life. Therefore, it is not strange that Heraclitus chooses this word and gives a philosophical meaning to it in the measure of his dynamic meditation. It is exactly here that we meet the first and basic problem for the inquiry concerning the meaning of the fr. 52 : how is the meaning αἰών transformed in the philosopher's thought, and what is the revaluation of its significance ?

The ancient explanation is almost useless : Lucianus, *Vit. Auct.* 14, of course, is not interested in dealing with the meaning of the Heraclitean thought. He simply refers to the idea of inconstancy and changeability of everything in the world and he gives a pessimistic character to it : Ἡράκλειτος : Ταῦτα ὀδύρομαι καὶ ὅτι ἔμπεδον οὐδέν, ἀλλὰ κως ἐς κυκεῶνα πάντα συνειλέονται καὶ ἔστι τωτὸ τέρψις ἀτερψίη, γνῶσις ἀγνωσίη, μέγα μικρόν, ἄνω κάτω περιχωρέοντα καὶ ἀμειβόμενα ἐν τῇ τοῦ αἰῶνος παιδιῇ.

9. W. Beierwaltes, *Plotin. Über Ewigkeit und Zeit (Enneade III 7)*, Frankfurt 1967, 145.

10. Cf. Phil, *Quis rer. div.* 34, 165 (Loeb) ; *Quod deus sit immut.* 6, 32 (Loeb).

11. As for the philosophical meaning of the term αἰών see : A. J. Festugière, *Le sens philosophique du mot αἰών*, PP 2 (1949) 172-89.



Ἀγοραστής : Τί γὰρ ὁ αἰὼν ἐστίν ; Ἡράκλειτος : Παῖς παίζων, πεσσεύων, <συμφερομένοις> διαφερόμενος<sup>12</sup>. This is not but an entirely free and derivative outline of the philosopher's personality. It is remarkable, however, that the Heraclitean theme for the word αἰὼν is described with an excessively strong emphasis in Lucian's writing.

Clements, *Paed.* 1, 22, 1 (1, 103, 4 Stählin) discerns Zeus, face behind the image αἰὼν-παῖς; he does not refer, however, to the traditional Zeus but to the ἑαυτοῦ Δία, that is to Heraclitus' Zeus. This means that Clemens considered that there was a personification of the philosopher's god in the fragment, even though he made the mistake of giving the name of Zeus to this god<sup>13</sup>. Even if αἰὼν is considered as another name which is used by Heraclitus' thought in order to present the highest divinity – the σοφόν, this divinity cannot be exhausted by a name. Furthermore it makes no matter that this is the name of Ζηνός, of the highest traditional god (fr. 32).

Proclus, *In Tim.* 2, 101 f (Diehi), thinks that ὁ δημιουργός is presented playing, while he is creating the world : Ἄλλοι δὲ καὶ τὸν δημιουργὸν ἐν τῷ κοσμοῦργεῖν παίζειν εἰρήκασιν, καθάπερ Ἡράκλειτος. But, of course, the idea of a personal god has no place in the philosopher's mind (fr. 32) and even more the idea of a creator god (fr. 30). Quiring<sup>14</sup> is not right in his approval of Proclus' interpretation. Besides, the sequence of the text makes it clear that Proclus gives a christian meaning to the god-creator's παιδιά : ... πᾶσαν αὐτοῦ (namely creator's) τὴν περὶ τὰ νέα δημιουργήματα πρόνοιαν παιδιὰν ἂν τις καλέσειε<sup>15</sup>.

Hippolytus, finally, to whom we owe the fragment, thinks that «everything» is represented in it : Ὅτι δὲ ἔστι παῖς τὸ πᾶν καὶ δι' αἰῶνος αἰώνιος βασιλεὺς τῶν ὄλων, οὕτως λέγει (and the Heraclitean text continues). We also have another interesting passage of his, *Philosoph.* 9, 9 : Ἡράκλειτος μὲν οὖν φησὶν εἶναι τὸ πᾶν διαιρετὸν ἀδιαίρετον, γενητὸν ἀγένητον,

12. The participles συμφερόμενος διαφερόμενος, which are added in the place of the expression παιδός ἢ βασιληῆ, that was not suitable in the order of Lucian's writing, are a Heraclitean pair of words, but they are transported here from another phrase (fr. 10).

13. This may be owed, perhaps, to a misunderstanding of the role that the word Ζηνός has in the meaning of fr. 32.

14. H. Quiring, *Heraklit. Worte tönen durch Jahrtausende*, Berlin 1959, 78.

15. Plutarch, *De E* 21, 393 e, sees the image in an analogous way (παῖς ποιητικός, that is a creative child). Cf. Phil., *De aet. mundi* 42 (Loeb) : ... ὁ τεχνίτης (θεός) οὐδὲν κομιδῆ νηπίων παίδων διαφέρων, οἱ πολλάκις παρ' αἰγιαλοῖς ἀθύροντες ψάμμον γεωλόφους ἀνιστᾶσι κάπειθ' ὑφαιροῦντες ταῖς χερσὶν πάλιν ἐρείπουσι : a clear reference to the Homeric picture : O 362 ff.



θνητὸν ἀθάνατον, λόγον αἰῶνα, πατέρα υἱόν, θεὸν δίκαιον. After three antithetical pairs, from which only the pair θνητὸν-ἀθάνατον reminds us of the Heraclitean expressions, since it consists of a clear reference to fr. 62, then we have some non-antithetical pairs from which only the first is of any importance to our subject, referring to the pair : λόγος-αἰών. Both of the terms are Heraclitean in character, but they are, so to say, dressed up in a christian garment, as the sequence itself reveals : πατέρα υἱόν, θεὸν δίκαιον in Hippolytus' text. The αἰών as well as λόγος are both transformed in to a christian sense. The problem here is, whether or not the relation λόγον αἰῶνα is justified, either from an Heraclitean point. As we will see below, the combination between the terms αἰών and λόγος is not incompatible within the extent of the Heraclitean thought : λόγος and αἰών are two different names for the one and only factor of everything – the divine rule. Although the referred to combination λόγος-αἰών does not contain any special significance and it does not elucidate the meaning of fr. 52, however, Hippolytus' opinion cultivates the idea that αἰών is referred to πάντα, and this notion is, perhaps, the only secure observation which we owe to the ancient commentators of the fragment.

The interpretations, which are suggested for the term αἰών of fr. 52 in recent and present times, have, for the most part, to do with the traditional meaning of the word : time, cosmic time, lifetime, eternity<sup>16</sup>. But, the fragment is stated in such a way, so that the term αἰών takes the place of a law, of a universal king; this is indicated by the ending of the fragment : παιδὸς ἢ βασιληΐη, which means αἰών – παῖς πάντων βασιλεύς, an expression which is found in fr. 53, where an analogous thought is presented by another name : πόλεμος. Here we have the relation αἰών—παῖς/πεσσοί, which is only referred to in the relation ἔν – πάντα (the same is with the relations γνώμη – πάντα (fr. 41), θεῖος νόμος – πάντα (fr. 114), πόλεμος – πάντα (fr. 53) etc), if we bear in mind the termination παιδὸς ἢ βασιληΐη.

Just as in fr. 53, πόλεμος is lauded as the law, creator and king of everything, also as in fr. 41, the γνώμη is considered that ἐκυβέρνησε (: κυβερνᾷ) πάντα διὰ πάντων, also as in fr. 114 the θεῖος νόμος κρατεῖ (πάντων)

16. See U. v. Wilamowitz-Möllendorff, *Euripides' Herakles*, Berlin 1933<sup>2</sup>, 363-364. E. Zeller-W. Nestle, *Die Philosophie der Griechen 1*, Leipzig 1920<sup>6</sup>, 807, 2. Diels, *VS 22 B 52*. F. S. Brecht, *Heraklit*, Wuppertal 1949, 127. Paul York v. Wartenburg, *Heraklit*, «Archiv für Philosophie» 9 (1959) 227 ff. J. Burnet, *Early Greek philosophy*, Cleveland/New York 1962, 139. A. Jeanniere, *La pensée d'Héraclite d'Ephèse et la vision présocratique du monde*, Paris 1959, 67 ff. H. Herter, *Das Leben ein Kinderspiel*, BJ 161 (1961) 73ff. Cf. Marcovich, *Heraclitus* 494.



... και ἐξαρκεῖ πᾶσι και περιγίγνεται (πάντων), in the same way in fr. 52 αἰὼν takes the place of a law which is presented with the special emphasis that it does express the eternal movement and vividness of everything. The word αἰὼν would sound in the philosopher's thought as αἰεί-ῶν, which characterizes his κόσμος. Fr. 30 : Κόσμον τόνδε, τὸν αὐτὸν ἀπάντων, οὔτε τις θεῶν οὔτε ἀνθρώπων ἐποίησεν, ἀλλ' ἦν αἰεὶ και ἔστιν και ἔσται πῦρ αἰείζωον ἀπτόμενον μέτρα και ἀποσβεννύμενον μέτρα<sup>17</sup>. This, here, κόσμος is an eternally alive organism, an autonomous and absolute one ; there is no god or man-creator. Perhaps we should not suppose that here the philosopher wants to upset a definite aspect, the aspect that the world has been created at some time (ἐποίησεν) by a personal, divine or human being. Such an aspect seems to be unknown to the Greek thought. In any case, however, even if we suppose that Heraclitus fights against an aspect conventionally created by himself, what has a central significance is that the idea of an eternal world appears without having any beginning or end, a world eternally alive. In this fragment, the αἰεὶ εἶναι is identical with the αἰεὶ ζῆν [ (ὁ κόσμος) ... ἦν αἰεὶ και ἔστιν και ἔσται (ὅς) πῦρ αἰείζωον... ] This relation enlightens the problem which has already been placed : why the philosopher chooses the traditional word αἰὼν as a name for the law of everything, the one and only factor of everything. In Homer, already, the word αἰὼν serves the same notion, as we have noticed previously, with the word ψυχή, which means «life» in that text (Π 453, ε 523).

The one factor that rules everything is identified with the θεὸς in Heraclitus, though it has different names (λόγος, σοφόν, ξυνόν, γνώμη, αἰὼν, θεῖος νόμος (his principal names)<sup>18</sup>. Especially, the word αἰὼν is obviously projected by the face of a divinity in fr. 52<sup>19</sup>. And this phenomenon is not irrelevant to the tradition : αἰὼν is connected with the idea of god. The following passage from Herodotus (7, 46, 4) is characteristic : Ὁ μὲν θάνα-

17. Cf. Philol., fr. 21 : ... ἀλλ' ἦν ὁδε ὁ κόσμος ἐξ αἰῶνος και εἰς αἰῶνα διαμενεῖ ... ; there is a strong similarity to Heraclitus' fr. 30. Cf. (l. c.) ἐπεὶ δέ γε και τὸ κινεόν ἐξ αἰῶνος εἰς αἰῶνα περιπολεῖ and διαμένει (ὁ κόσμος) τὸν ἄπειρον αἰῶνα. Also cf. Emped. fr. 16 : Ἥ γὰρ και πάρος ἦν τε (Kranz-Schneidewin) και ἔσσεται, οὐδέ ποτ' οἶω, /τούτων ἀμφοτέρων κενεώσεται ἄσπετος αἰὼν ; fr. 17, 11 : τῇ μὲν γίνονται τε και οὐ σφισιν ἔμπεδος αἰὼν. If Empedocles alluded to Parmedides with this verse and made a silent criticism against him (fr. 30 : χούτως ἔμπεδον αὔθι μένει), he would be in great compatibility with Heraclitus' way of thinking.

18. Cf. W. Nestle, *Euripides*, Stuttgart 1901, 27. In Heraclitus (and Euripides), Αἰὼν-νόμος - Δίκη are different names for the same notion: law of the world, law of the nature.

19. Cf. Zeller-Nestle, *Die Philosophie der Griechen* 1, 807, 2. The αἰὼν is identified with divinity in fr. 52. Cleve, *Greek Philosophy* 1, 85.



τος μοχθηρῆς ἐούσης τῆς ζῆς καταφυγὴ αἰρετωτάτη τῷ ἀνθρώπῳ γέγονε, ὁ δὲ θεὸς γλυκύν γεύσας τὸν αἰῶνα φθονερός ἐν αὐτῷ εὐρίσκεται ἔων. Here, the word αἰών, as it is concerned with the θεός, accepts a revaluation of its traditional meaning and it means the eternal life<sup>20</sup>. Thus we have additional reasons, which explain why the philosopher calls the divine law of everything with the word αἰών. And even more, if we have in mind that αἰών has a divine character, we certainly pass, through the tradition itself, to the image of the child, by which αἰών is represented. Because it is exactly in the mythical tradition, that the image of the playing child-god<sup>21</sup> is often found. A characteristic, altogether, case, is that of Dionysus Zagreus, because Zeus makes him king of the world, of gods and men, ebentthough he is a child<sup>22</sup>. And yet, the representation of this god as a playing child deceived by Titans with παιδαριώδεα ἀθύρματα<sup>23</sup>, must be brought up to earlier orphical theogony which is not ignored by Heraclitus. Kern<sup>24</sup> thinks that Heraclitus' text reveals an orphical influence. But he also notes<sup>25</sup> : *Heraklit hat das Recht, die orphische Vorstellung umzudeuten und umzuformen, und hat es hier sicherlich getan, aber in dem Gedenken, den König der Götter ein spielendes Kind zu nennen, ist ihm die Theogonie der Orphiker vorgegangen*<sup>26</sup>. A. Dieterich<sup>27</sup>, denies every correlation with the orphical tradition<sup>28</sup> and he believes in Heraclitus' originality : *Der Vergleich des Götterkönigs mit einem spielenden Kinde braucht gewiß auf nichts Orphi-*

20. Aristotle, *Metaph.* Λ 7, 1072 b 29-30, gives to αἰών the same importance : Ζωὴ καὶ αἰών (cf. the Homeric ψυχὴ τε καὶ αἰών, Π 453, ι 523) συνεχῆς καὶ αἰδῖος ὑπάρχει τῷ θεῷ. Aristotle also recognizes the divine character of the word αἰών in tradition : *De caelo* A 9, 279 a 22 ff. And he goes on : Τὸ γὰρ τέλος τὸ περιέχον τὸν τῆς ἐκάστου ζωῆς χρόνον . . . αἰών ἐκάστου κέκληται. Κατὰ τὸν αὐτὸν δὲ λόγον καὶ τὸ τοῦ παντός οὐρανοῦ τέλος καὶ τὸ τὸν πάντα χρόνον καὶ τὴν ἀπειρίαν περιέχον τέλος αἰών ἐστίν, ἀπὸ τοῦ αἰεὶ εἶναι εἰληφώς τὴν ἐπωνυμίαν, ἀθάνατος καὶ θεῖος.

21. In this regard, see F. Wotke, *Παιῖς* in *RE*, 1942.

22. Kern, *Orphicorum fragmenta* 207 and 205.

23. Kern, fr. 34. About the παιδαριώδεα ἀθύρματα Kern, *Die boiotischen Kabiren*, «Hermes» 25 (1890) 5-6.

24. *Orpheus. Eine religionsgeschitliche Untersuchung*, Berlin 1920, 53 (cf. 56, 6). He correlates the older Kabirus with the playing Dionysus-Zagreus of the earlier orphical theology (about παιῖδα Kabirus, the καλλιπαιδα whose the original worship-place was, perhaps, Lemnus, see Wotke, *Παιῖς*, *RE* 2429-2430).

25. *Kabiren* 6.

26. Cf. W. K. C. Guthrie, *A history of Greek philosophy* 1, Cambridge 1962, 472, 2.

27. *Nekyia*, Leipzig/Berlin 1913, 75.

28. See also H. Diels, *Herakleitos*, Berlin 1909<sup>2</sup>, 13.

*sches zu gehen (Kern, «Hermes» XXV, 6), sondern kann original heraklitisch sein.*

But it is not only the Orphical presentation which precedes. Also the Homeric description of the child who is playing on the sand<sup>29</sup> is figurative enough, so that, perhaps, this had especially attracted the philosopher's attention<sup>30</sup>. Bernays<sup>31</sup>, first of all, connected the Heraclitean presentation with the Homeric image of the child who is playing on the seashore and many researchers succeed him, who correlate the two descriptions trying to achieve some concept enlightening the content of the Heraclitean image. Of course, the value of such correlations is very relative, because, even, if we suppose that Heraclitus had in his mind the Homeric or the Orphical presentation<sup>32</sup>, it would not oblige his thought to be expressed in its own limits; the philosopher transforms the image so that it may reflect his own philosophical thought, so that it may represent everything in the extent of his own meditation.

Besides, we also have the description of the Cretan Zeus as a young man or a child<sup>33</sup>, who incessantly died and came into life again<sup>34</sup>; this is not irrelevant to the Heraclitean thought which sees everything dying and being again brought to life. Nothing, however, gives a witness that Heraclitus has any relation with the Cretan tradition.

Teichmüller<sup>35</sup> prefers to search in an Egyptian area, outside of the Greek boundaries: correlating the αἰών-ταῖς with the Egyptian god Harpocrates<sup>36</sup> he finds four similar concepts: god, child, the eternal one, the king

29. O 360 ff.

30. A clear allusion of the Homeric verses, which present the image of the child-god (O 362 ff.), is contained in fr. 70: Ἡρ. παίδων ἀθύρματα νερόμικεν εἶναι τὰ ἀνθρώπινα δοξάσματα. Only that here there is expressed a completely different idea, an opinion about the human beliefs.

31. *Heraklitische Studien*, in *Gesammelte Abhandlungen* 1, Berlin 1885, 58-59.

32. Cf. W. Nestle, *Heraklit und die Orphiker*, «Philologus» 64 (1905) 375: *Hier also liegt die Sache so, daß Heraklit in der spekulativen Bedeutung, die er dem Zeitbegriff beilegt, den Orphikern gefolgt ist, die Bezeichnung aber im Anschluß an Homer selbst geprägt hat.*

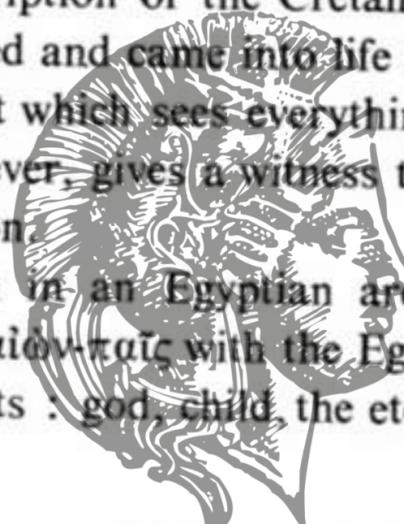
33. Dictaeus Zeus is presented «beardless»: *Etym. Magn. Δίκτης*. Cf. P.-M. Schuhl, *Essai sur la formation de la pensée grecque*, Paris 1949<sup>2</sup>, 94.

34. On an inscription that was found under the ruins of the temple of Dictaeus Zeus at Palaeocastro there have been preserved some fragments of an ancient hymn giving some informations about the birth and the worshipping of the *immortal child* (See Wotke, *Παις* l.c.)

35. *Neue Studien zur Geschichte der Begriffe* 2, Gotha 1878, 188 ff.

36. This correlation is also admitted by P. Tannery, *Pour l'histoire de la science Hellène*, Paris 1930<sup>2</sup>, 185.

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of the world. But Harpocrates is the Sun who appears in a life, every dawn, like a child, and who dies, every night, in order to come to life again the next day and so on. It is not about a child, who is playing, who is busy with or absorbed in the game of *πεσσοί*. Teichmüller<sup>37</sup> gives an explanation about this point but he goes far from the line of child-Harpocrates : *Die Vorstellung eines Brettspiels der Götter weist gerade nach Ägypten, denn das Spiel ist, wie Brugsch (Die Ägypt. Gräberwelt 18) bemerkt, so alt als Ägypten, ja noch darüber hinaus, denn selbst die ägyptischen Götter und die Todten in der Unterwelt spielen Brett.*

Gladisch's<sup>38</sup> point of view, nearly similar to that of Teichmüller's, is that all this is about the ancient Persian god Zervan Akarana. But Zervan, as well as Harpocrates, is not but the Sun (Mithras) and it is impossible that fr. 52 can be interpreted in such a way, namely that the figure of «sun»<sup>39</sup> is hidden behind *αἰῶνα*.

A reference to the Egyptian god Harpocrates or to the Persian one Zervan would be possible if one started from fr. 6 : (Ἥλιος) νέος ἐφ' ἡμέρη ἐστίν. Even, Teichmüller<sup>40</sup> considers this idea to be borrowed, the whole contents of it, from the Egyptian theology. But if we have in mind that this conceptions is also found in the primitive people, who exactly believed that a new sun comes up every morning, then it is not possible for us to consider Egypt as the only creator and source of such a conception. We, accidentally, discover this notion in the Egyptians, in the primitives and in . . . Heraclitus<sup>41</sup>.

Stohr, although he tends to accept a close relation between Heraclitus and Zaratustra, rejects the aspect that Heraclitus simply makes a Zoroastrian philosophy. Cleve<sup>42</sup>, mentioning Stohr's opinion, emphasizes the difference between Ahura Mazda, Zaratustra's god, who knows and judges everything, and Heraclitus' god, who is a playing child.

So, this problem cannot accept a definite examination : it is impossible for one to describe, in a single line, the concrete image of the tradition,

37. *Neue Studien* 2, 195.

38. *Herakleitos und Zoroaster*, Leipzig 1859, 86 ff.

39. Cf. Lackeit, *Αἰών*, *RE* 66 : *Es erscheint übrigens nicht ausgeschlossen, daß wir in der altpersischen Zervanvorstellung die gemeinsame Urquelle für alle Aion-Gestalten vor uns haben.*

40. *Neue Studien* 2, 205 ff.

41. Besides, there is a basic problem about the relation of the Heraclitean thought with primitive conceptions, but this is impossible to be examined here.

42. *Greek philosophy* 1, 87.



being the philosopher's source of inspiration, which urged him to achieve the structure of this riddle, named fr. 52.

Certainly, every correlation has its own value and even if it does not enlighten the problem of the source of the Heraclitean inspiration, however it contributes to the study on a wider circle of ideas which are referred to the theme «god-child-king». Since the figure παῖς serves the idea of god's immortality in different religions<sup>43</sup>, it is natural that we discover different possibilities for a correlation with Heraclitus' fr. 52. But each one of the researchers, who finds a way through the Greek or foreign tradition, presents the similarities he discerns in a general and absolute way and he does not emphasize the differences. The image of the πεσσεύων παῖς only, which we do not see in any of the traditional presentations, either a Greek (Homeric, Orphean, Cretan) or a foreign one (Egyptian, Persian), could give witness that Heraclitus achieves an original creation of his own.

Nador<sup>44</sup> opens a different way. He thinks that the material which fr. 52 is made up of is a riddle: *a playing child . . . what is this?* In the case of the riddles which have the form of a definition, we can, according to Nador, reconstruct the question out of the given form (that is the answer); and the example he is based on, in Heraclitus' fr. 52<sup>45</sup>. Independently of how clever the idea is, it cannot be based somewhere. Besides, even if we consider Nador's opinion as a simple hypothesis and we reconstruct the question so that the Heraclitean sentence be either in a dialogical form (analogous to that of Lucian, in which the fragment is presented divided in a question and an answer) or in the form of a riddle with its answer (παῖς παίζων πεσσεύων· τί ἐστίν; the answer: αἰὼν<sup>46</sup>), as Nador thinks, the aphorism παιδὸς ἢ βασιληῆς keeps being inexplicable. Of course, this phrase cannot be considered as an answer, which gives us the possibility to reconstruct a question out of it. What causes a strong impression is the figurative structure of the whole text and not the paradox that characterises a riddle. The

43. Also, in Christianity, Christ's image as a child-god has the same meaning.

44. *Egy sájátos aforismatípus szerkezetéről és antik előzményeiről*, «Antik Tanulmányok» 5 (1958), 229-232, I have seen the contents of this work in a summary, written in German by the author himself, in BCO 5 (1960) 381-382.

45. Cf. Gigon, *Heraklit 23: In Frg. 51 will Heraklit das engste Verhältnis der Einheit der Gegensätze erklären. Er tut dies in einem Beispiel, das er in lapidarer Einfachheit hinter der Frage, die hinter einem Doppelpunkt folgen läßt. Es wirkt wie eine paradoxe Antwort und Auflösung der Frage (ähnlich Frg. 52 . . .)*.

46. Cf. Ramnoux, *Héraclite ou l'homme entre les choses et les mots*, Paris 1959, 305, makes analogous remarks to another of Heraclitus' fragments, fr. 48: *What is that which has the name of life and does the work of death? The answer: that is the bow.*



philosopher, trying to speak descriptively about his αἰῶνα, states his words, in such a way, so that one thinks there is presented a παῖς-θεός, sitting in the throne of the world. But the philosopher seems to say : imagine the αἰῶνα as a playing child who is throwing the πεσσοὶ (a game like chess), and you will conceive the meaning of everything as if the whole world is a child's kingdom<sup>47</sup>. Heraclitus conceives the way of action of the only factor, which predominates over everything, in such a way, as if he is playing with everything.

A play is an impressive and fluid situation. So, it is not such a strange thing that the philosopher chooses this image, in order to show the changeability of the world<sup>48</sup> in connection with the idea of its eternal vividness, that is suggested, as we have seen, by the term αἰών. A play, of course, presupposes a player and a field, it also has a name and it is played according to fixed rules. Here we meet the problem of the relation between the general idea (αἰών) and the image (παῖς παίζων πεσσεύων) : Was it the observed image that inspired the philosopher concerning the αἰών or had the αἰών already been formed as a concept in his thought, before the philosopher had found an outlet for being expressed through the child's image ? Or are the image and the philosophical concept simultaneously born in his thought, being developed mutually and coherently, before they turn to expression ? How can we conceive the way, through which the child-aion's play, the cosmic play, keeps incessantly played ? And also who watches over the observance of the game rules ? Is by any chance, the αἰών a player and, at the same time, a referee ? Is the game-regulation based upon an internal necessity<sup>49</sup> ? And yet, if all things, the human beings included too, constitute the chechers

47. The interpretation that Diels, Kranz, Nestle etc. make (*VS* 22 B 52 and Kranz *Gleichnis und Vergleich in der frühgriechischen Philosophie*, «Hermes» 73 (1938) III; Nestle, *Heraklit* 373-375) παῖς = Knabe (a boy) is not secure. On the contrary, Zeller-Nestle, *Die Philosophie der Griechen* 1, 807, and other researchers, too, translate the term quite rightly : παῖς = Kind (a child). Talking about a child and not a boy, we can justify the highest god's presentation. Cf. Cleve, *Greek philosophy* 1, 86.

48. Cf. Eurip. fr. 864 N<sup>2</sup> : παίζω· μεταβολάς γὰρ πόνων ἀεὶ φιλῶ. According to Aelian, *VH* 12, 15, Euripides is here presenting the god Hercules saying these words (cf. Pl. *Cra.* 406 c : φιλοπαίσμονες γὰρ καὶ οἱ θεοί). It is worth noticing that παίζω is here essentially connected with the concept «alteration».

49. Cf. J. Huizinga, *Homo ludens*, 1939<sup>3</sup>, 45 ff. : *Spiel ist eine freiwillige Handlung oder Beschäftigung, die innerhalb gewisser festgesetzter Grenzen von Zeit und Raum nach freiwillig angenommen, aber unbedingt bindenden Regeln verrichtet wird, ihr Ziel in sich selber hat.*

of the game<sup>50</sup>, is everything considered as a toy under the authority of the αἰών, depended on a child's hands? And if all things keep changing and passing from one situation to another, does it happen, so, in order that the child's soul get pleased?

The «key» for the interpretation of the fragment seems to be in the significance of the image, which is presented so vividly here, namely the image of the child who is playing, who πεσσεύει<sup>51</sup>. But, of course, it would be difficult to consider πεσσεύων as the center of the meaning in the fragment. If the philosopher had intended to give a special emphasis and significance to πεσσεύων with regard to the motion of the thought in the frames of this sentence, we might have expected that a relative aphorism would be added at the end: e.g. πεττεία πάντα and not παιδὸς ἢ βασιληΐη, which just conduces to the integration of the meaning of the child's image as a god-king of everything. The informations we have about the game of πεττεία<sup>52</sup> in ancient times<sup>53</sup> do not help us in realizing the meaning of fr. 52. Not only the origin of the game is obscure<sup>54</sup>, but also — what we are mainly interested in — the way in which it had been played. Besides, there had been many kinds of πεττεία. From Sophocles' fr. 393 (πασσά πεντεγράμμα καὶ κύβων

50. Cf. Pl., *Lg.* 1, 644 d: Θαῦμα μὲν ἕκαστον ἡμῶν ἠγασώμεθα τῶν ζῴων θεῖον, εἴτε ὡς παίγνιον ἐκείνων εἴτε ὡς σπουδῇ τινι συνεσθηκός. In addition to this general reference of the whole animal world to the category of a divine play, a special emphasis is given on the aspect that every human being is not but a toy in god's hands: *Lg.* 7, 803 c: Ἄνθρωπον ... θεοῦ τε παίγνιον εἶναι μεμηχανημένον.

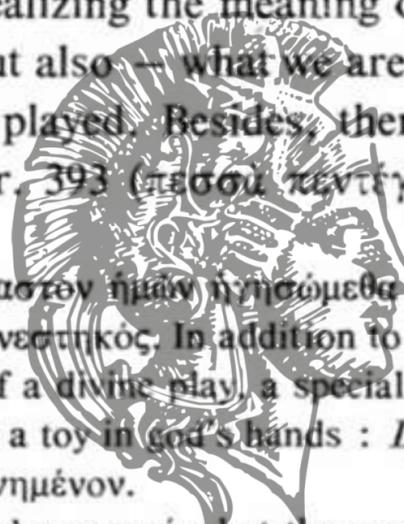
51. In Pl., *Lg.* 10, 903 d, the god is called πεττευτής, but the game depicts the changes of the souls there. Consequently, in addition to the series of the relation αἰών-παῖς, παῖς-θεός we also have πεττευτής-θεός here. Cf. *Lg.* 7, 803 c: Ἄνθρωπον ... θεοῦ τε παίγνιον εἶναι μεμηχανημένον. In Phil., *De vit. Mos.* 6, 31 (Loeb), we meet the same image with a different name: Τύχης γὰρ ἀσταθμητότερον οὐδὲν ἄνω καὶ κάτω τὰ ἀνθρώπεια πεττευούσης. The author seems to state joined two proverbs that might be popular: τύχης γὰρ ἀσταθμητότερον οὐδὲν and τύχη ἄνω καὶ κάτω τὰ ἀνθρώπεια πεττεύει. Cf. Guthrie, *Greek philosophy* 1, 472, 2: He supposes that we have an echo of fr. 52 and 60 in the above passage from Philo. Also, a result of a metaphor from the game of πεττεία is the following phrase from Antiphon, *VS* 87 B 52 (Harporc. ἀναθέσθαι): Ἄναθέσθαι δὲ ὡσπερ πεττὸν τὸν βίον οὐκ ἔστιν. Cf. Stob. *Serm.* 278: Πεττεία τινὶ ἔοικεν ὁ βίος. And also Aeschylus' (*Supp.* 13) πεσσονομεῖν is metaphorically used: it means to arrange changing situations by means of a continuously improving process. Cf. Pl. *Lg.*, 10, 903 b: Οὐδὲν ἄλλο ἔργον τῷ πεττευτῇ (θεῷ) λείπεται πλὴν μετατιθέναι τὸ μὲν ἄμεινον... Hsch.: Πεσσεύων μετατίθεσο τὴν γνώμην ἐπὶ τὸ κρεῖττον.

52. The etymology of the word πεσσός from which the words πεττεύω and πεττεία, πεσσονομῶ etc. are produced, is obscure: Boisacq, *Dict. etym.*

53. See Lamer's very extensive titled *Lusoria tabula* in *RE*.

54. Hdt. 1, 94, 2 ff. Gorg. *VS* 82 B II a, 30 (1, 302, 2). Pl. *Phdr.* 274 c-d. *E.M.* s.v. πεσσοί.

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βολάς), we infer that the game had been played by means of five lines<sup>55</sup>, on which πεσσοί were played. It might have been a simple and usual kind of πεττεία. In general, it was an intellectual game which required a faculty for organizing and regulating and a mind which can conduct the movings of πεσσοί according to some reason<sup>56</sup>. This game is not similar to κυβεία, where the cubes are cast just in chance<sup>57</sup>. Lassale<sup>58</sup> was not right when he thought that in Heraclitus' fr. 52 the child is playing with the cubes. Schuster<sup>59</sup>, first of all, has refuted him, rightly contending that the play had not been with cubes but with πεσσοί, which were regularly arranged<sup>60</sup>. We can also discriminate πεττεύειν from ἀστραγαλίζειν in an analogous way<sup>61</sup>.

In fr. 52 πεττεύειν gives us the especially concrete image of the game of πεττεία : an arrangement of the draught-pieces and a playing action directed by a specific order and regulation. According to Schuster<sup>62</sup>, the image of the child who is playing draughts, aims at the concept of the time intervals of the world, which are eternally succeeding each other just as a child arranges his draughts, he explains, and he upsets them again, so do the time intervals of the world : one succeeds the other while the world is organized and comes back to the original unity of fire<sup>63</sup>. Wilamowitz<sup>64</sup> notices that the image shows the *incessant playing of creation and destruction*. Lackeit<sup>65</sup>

55. E.M. ὅν ἡ μῆσις ἱερά ἐκαλεῖτο. See Lamer, *Lusoria tabula* 1970 ff.

56. In the Greek literature παιδία is often opposite to σπουδή (see, for example, Pl. *Lg.* 1, 644 d; about Plato's and Aristotle's points of view see K. Βουρβέρης, *Παιδιά και Παιδεία*, Ἀθήναι 1956, 9 ff., 33 ff.); these opposites find their unity in the case of the game of πεττεία.

57. Cf. Lamer, *Lusoria tabula* 1938 ff., 1967 ff.

58. *Die Philosophie Herakleitos des Dunklen von Ephesos* 1, Berlin 1858, 264.

59. *Heraklit von Ephesus*, Leipzig 1872, 130, 1.

60. Cf. M. Κοκολάκης, *Μορφολογία τῆς κυβευτικῆς μεταφορᾶς*, Ἀθήναι 1965, 58.

61. We do not know whether the anecdote, referred by Diogenes Laertius 9, 3, that Heraclitus ἀναχωρήσας δ' εἰς τὸ ἱερόν τῆς Ἀρτέμιδος μετὰ τῶν παιδῶν ἡστραγάλιζε, is connected with a remembrance of some Heraclitus' words. The hypothesis that here is made a hint at the image of fr. 52 because of a confusion between πεττεύειν and ἀστραγαλίζειν seems to be improbable. Macchioro mistakenly identifies the ἀστράγαλοι with πεσσοί (Guthrie, 1, 478, 2). Teichmüller, *Neue Studien* 2, 198-200, sees in the anecdote the fact that Heraclitus cannot discriminate πεττεία from κυβεία.

62. *Heraklit* 131-132.

63. This interpretation stands near to Diogenes Laertius' text 9, 8 (*VS* 22 A 1 = 1, 141, 20) : γεννᾶσθαι τε αὐτὸν (he means the world) ἐκ πυρός και πάλιν ἐκπυροῦσθαι κατὰ τινὰς περιόδους ἐναλλάξ τὸν σύμπαντα αἰῶνα. The expression τὸν σύμπαντα αἰῶνα makes Kranz suspect that it may be a citation.

64. *Euripides* 364.

65. *Aion* 54 and 82.



follows this opinion, too. In this it is ascribed a pessimistic mood to Heraclitus, but this is completely wrong. Zeller<sup>66</sup>, expounding child's playing as declarative of the living change of the things, rejects such an idea, namely here it is expressed a pessimistic opinion<sup>67</sup>. Rohde<sup>68</sup>, even more, emphasizes the optimistic message of the fragment : the becoming is a pleasure, a refreshing, a delight for all the things ; the alternation is a going up and down in the play of becoming. Diels<sup>69</sup> tries to catch the meaning of the fragment by a side-way : the government of the world seems to be a child's play for everyone who does not possess the «key» of the logos-theory. Also Brieger<sup>70</sup> cannot see the meaning of the fragment itself consistent with logos ; presupposing that the concept of the play suggests the consideration of a creation out of any purpose, Brieger notices that it is impossible for the αἰών, that is purposelessly playing, to aim at the cosmic logos, so he approves of Diels' interpretation. Here, we have to keep in mind that the concept of παις negatively serves the logos' teaching in the Heraclitean text : fr. 79, the relation between man and god is collated with the relation between a child and a man of full age ; the two pairs are knitted together in an analogical relation upon a common base, the construct «infancy-wisdom». Fr. 117, a drunken man appears, whom a small child is leading by the hand and who has no conscience of his course, since he has his soul ὑγρή (cf. fr. 118). Fr. 70, the human opinions are characterized as παίδων ἀθύρματα. Fr. 56, here there is a riddle presented by the image of the children who are killing lice. It is already known from Homer and it is clarified that those who do not participate in the common logos, are able to conceive the common denominator of opposite actions. Fr. 74 ; οὐ δεῖ ὡς <παιδας> τοκεῶνων . . . its meaning is obscure<sup>71</sup>.

The previous fragments aim at the meaning of logos. But fragment 52 must be considered by a different way of thinking ; it is not possible to

66. *Philosophie der Griechen* 1, 807, 2.

67. See Diels, *Der antike Pessimismus*, Berlin 1921, 14 : To Heraclitus it is ascribed the idea of an unreasonable changing from light to darkness, from day to night, from life to death and fr. 52 is considered, in addition to other fragments, that it expresses a pessimistic idea.

68. *Psyche* 2, Tübingen 1910, 154.

69. *Herakleitos* 29.

70. *Die Grundzüge der heraklischen Physik*, «Hermes» 39 (1904) 204.

71. The word παις is found in fr. 20, too, but, there, it serves another meaning the continuance and unity of life and death : Human beings come in life and they wish to live, but they go to their death and leave their children behind, who, also, follow the same course.



be supposed that the phrase is said under the suggestion which is proposed by Diels and Brieger : that for those who do not possess the key of the logos-theory, αἰὼν seems to be a child's play. Even the termination of the fragment : παιδὸς ἢ βασιληίῃ, is so obviously aphoristic that it would be impossible for us to consider that the sentence is circumspectly stated or under a definite presupposition, as an indirect assault, for example, against those who do not hold any communion with the world logos.

Snell<sup>72</sup> tends to give a medial solution. He explains, successfully noticing that we could not understand why Heraclitus keeps himself away from the Homeric image of the child who is playing on the sand, if we did not find something special in the draught-playing, which is caught by Heraclitus, that the child has a feeling of joy as he casts the draught-pieces here and there, arbitrarily and unreasonably ; every single way, however, leads to some «significance», every new position is full of meaning. And last, Snell concludes that the attraction for the spectator derives from this mixture of meaningfulness and absurdity<sup>73</sup>. This interpretation seems to be reasonable, nevertheless it is basically wrong : the child does not cast the draught-pieces but he arranges them and directs their movings in a regulated game. All the things are draught-pieces which keep incessantly removing and changing their places<sup>74</sup>, they get organized and combined with others, they dissolve their combinations in order to form other ones and so on.

In fr. 52 the draught-playing represents the playfulness of the things, their transition from one condition to another : fire-water-earth-water-fire ... (frr. 31, 36), immortals-mortals-immortals ... (fr. 62), life-death-life (frr. 62, 48)<sup>75</sup>, alive-dead-alive ... young-old-young ..., awake-asleep-awake ... (fr. 88) etc.

God is a king. Not a father who obliges his children to fight, as in fr.53, but a child who plans, who plays draughts. He, the draught-playing child-god, has imposed a play on the world and has distributed to all the things the roles which they will have during the performance of this play. Of course, here it is not meant that there is an inventor and procreator of the game,

72. *Sprache* 373.

73. Cf. Ramnoux, *Héraclite* 449.

74. The mutual role-changing is expressed with various words and schemes in the Heraclitean text : ἀνταμοιβή (fr. 90), transition (μεταπεσόντα fr. 88) or θάνατος - γενέσθαι (fr. 36), ἀθάνατοι - θνητοί, θνητοί - ἀθάνατοι (fr. 62) etc.

75. Cf. Burnet, *Early Greek philosophy* 154 : *The living and the dead are always changing places (fr. 88), like the pieces on a child's draught-board (fr. 52).*



as Cleve<sup>76</sup> believes but a performer and referee of a game which is eternally played (cf. fr. 30).

The «player», the child-god, named αἰών, organizes and plays the game in such a way, so that the draught-pieces, that is all things, continuously take a different form, they play different roles, they go in different combinations but, nevertheless, there is always a constant μέτρον in all the movements. It is the divine rule that predominates over everything the eternal life, one and only, through all the fluctuations of its forms. The αἰών-παῖς is the ἔν and πεσσοὶ are πάντα.

But, although in the image of the child who plays draughts, the one (παῖς) is distinguished from the many ones (πεσσοί), in the image of the world, as Heraclitus conceives it, the divine factor exists in all the things and, while they now take this form and then another one, while the play of the world incessantly appears under new phases, the divine factor predominates over them as an internal regulation. This is a game played self-sufficiently and automatically, so there is no player who wins or loses it. Also, all the things change their places mutually and regularly, so that there are no «draught-pieces» here, whose motion will judge the success or the failure of the cosmic play.

If we wished to appeal an analogous image, we should say that all things take part in an eternal dance and, at any moment, their «figures» produce a new shape, which has a logos in itself. This logos passes from one condition of the things to the other and it constitutes their unity, the unity ἔν-πάντα (fr. 10, 50).

Although the image of the «playing-draughts child» is a guide to the way of action of the only factor of everything, however, the fragment does not end with the word πεσσεύων. And, in addition to it, the termination of the fragment does not appear as a general aphorism on the base of the draught-playing image but on the base of the image of παῖς : παιδὸς ἢ βασιληῆ. Here, also, it would be convenient to make the question whether the philosopher depends on the tradition, using this phrase, or it is only an expressive model serving the sense of omnipotence, just as the one in fr. 53 does (πόλεμος . . . πάντων βασιλεύς), which is usual to the hymns.

I think that Herodotus' anecdote (1, 114, 1-115, 2) about Cyrus is important. One day, when Cyrus was a small boy, he was nominated king by the other children he was playing with : . . . παίζοντες σφέων αὐτῶν ἐστήσαντο βασιλέα. Afterwards the child-king Cyrus' story was spread out (Hrd. 1,

76. *Greek philosophy* 1, 83 ff.



120 ff.). Consequently, one, on the bases of the above mentioned anecdote by Herodotus, may wonder whether some play «of the king» was usual among children, which might have had some relation with the draught-playing, and, whether the philosopher had in his mind such an image. Cherniss' suggestion that the words *παῖς* and *βασιλεὺς* are a technical terminology of the game, is interesting but it remains a priori<sup>77</sup>. In any case, however, the phrase *παιδὸς ἢ βασιληίη* justifies the definition of the divine law as «king of everything», and so does the expression *πάντων βασιλεὺς* in the fr. 53. And even, on the base of the sentence preceded, we can construe this phrase as a deficient one and complete it : *παιδὸς <παίζοντος πεσσεύοντος> ἢ βασιληίη*.

We know that Heraclitus likes to express his ideas deficiently, so we should not expect him to repeat again the words which are connected with *παῖς* (*παίζων, πεσσεύων*) at the end. But, now, an essential question arises : whether the philosopher wishes the *παῖς* to be implied in the termination, too, accompanied with the words that follow it. Because there is the reasonable suggestion that the termination *παιδὸς ἢ βασιληίη* emphasizes the image of the child who reigns over all the things, that there is expressed in a poetic color the thought that it is a child's soul that governs all the things. If, however, the termination exalts this thought, it does not mean that the image of *παῖς* loses all of its other colors here : it is the child who plays, who plays draughts, an eternal, immortal, divine child, a childlike divine strength which rules over everything. The child's reign, certainly, is not an autonomous action ; on the contrary, it makes a question arise : how can the child's way of action as king of everything be determined ? Through a reconstruction of the sentence, through the formation *αἰῶνος – παιδὸς παίζοντος πεσσεύοντος ἢ βασιληίη* it becomes clear that the divine factor's way of action, as a king of everything, consists in *παίζειν* and, concretely, in *πεσσεύειν* : the child performs its reign by playing, by directing the movements of the «draught-pieces».

If everything is a game, which is incessantly played, the most recommended player of this game would be, certainly, the «child», because the playing exactly designates his way of life. As a result, it is impossible for a pessimistic speculation of fr. 52, suggesting, for example, that the fate of the world appears to «take the risk» of being in a child-king's hands, that everything is arbitrarily and purposelessly cast here and there ; so a significant claim cannot be maintained. Such a consideration would be reason-

77. If it is the terminology of the game, then we have to think of it as a kind of chess, the king being its most powerful chess-piece.



able, if it was either about cube-playing or the παῖς was presented as an «infant» (like fr. 79), when we could suspect that it might be about a child-god, who is irresponsibly playing the game of the world. The παῖς, however, in fr. 52 appears as a god-king who plays a regulated game.

The aspect that Heraclitus thinks that world and life are not a serious matter, since they are only a play would be unreasonable. Nietzsche<sup>78</sup> ascribes such a thought to Heraclitus : *Es ist ein Spiel, nehmt's nicht zu pathetisch und vor allem nicht moralisch*. Nothing permits us to suppose that Heraclitus is disposed to see everything as a game, which is played in fun, in order that, for example, the divine strength, which directs the game, be pleased.

Although pleasure consists an inseparable element of the game<sup>79</sup>, it may not be considered as its purpose<sup>80</sup>. Pleasure is only a following condition in the phenomenon of the child who plays the game of the world<sup>81</sup>. Here it is not easy to discern some definite intentionality. The play itself is an action, not accepting any general intentionality, it is something made purposeless by its own nature, though it contains some particular purposes ; these are imaginarily scheduled and either they are put into practice or they remain simple tendencies for realisation.

In any case, in Heraclitus' thought, the image of the playing child represents, first of all, the eternal life, which pulsates in the world, that is an eternal child ; in this way, all the things are explained by the play, which is the expression of their eternal vividness.

The image of the world as a game accepts one more interpretation : the world is not a real being but a conventional existence, a phenomenal creature, the result of the self-deception of the divine strength that plays. Every playing child lives a different, paradoxical truth, which is separated from the truths of the real life ; he creates a separate world and there he

78. *Die Philosophie im tragischen Zeitalter der Griechen*, in *Werke* 3, ed. K. Schlechta, München 1966, 378.

79. Cf. Pl., *Lg.* 7, 820 c : διατριβὴν τῆς πεττείας πολὺ χαριεστέραν πρεσβυτῶν διατριβόντα . . . Plato, considering the draught-playing as a base for comparison, in order to express how pretty play is the old men's discussions, suggests that the draught-playing was thought to be a pretty play.

80. Cf. Eurip., *Iph. Aul.* 196 : πεσσῶν ἡδομένους μορφαῖσι πολυπλόκοις.

81. Heraclitus' fr. 84 a (μεταβάλλον ἀναπαύεται), though the subject is not shown in it, and also fr. 77 a (ψυχῆσι τέρψιν ἢ θάνατον ὑγρῆσι γενέσθαι), which sounds as a later paraphrase of fr. 36, have to be considered as suggestive of the thought that the things, through a change, achieve a pleasure analogous to that of a player, which is caused by the alternations during the process of the game.



lives just as he does in the world which surrounds him. This is, certainly, a self-deception, since the child, as he plays, substitutes the real world for the conventional one. The question is whether the hypothesis can be considered as a base for the interpretation of Heraclitus' fr. 52. Besides, this aspect of the game seems to be innovating in some way and it is impossible for such an idea to be born in the climate of this early meditation<sup>82</sup>; what, however, makes such an interpretation impossible, like the one stated above, is the πεσσεύων which denotes that it is about the image of a definite play. Otherwise, that is if the thought that everything is a play were especially emphasized, there would be such a phrase in the termination of the fragment: παιδιὰ πάντα. The παῖς, at the end, as we have already noticed, is connected with the previous phrase and it is accompanied by images that follow it: παίζων πεσσεύων. It is impossible for the word πεσσεύων to be closed in parenthesis so that the image of the world as a game played by the child-king remain alone.

If we did not like to restrict ourselves to the special image of the draught-playing, which suggests the sense of regulation and thoughtful direction of the movements of things, we should emphasize the insufficiency of a «rational» interpretation of fr. 52. Because the image of παῖς adds a special attraction to the becoming of the world and it emphasizes its aesthetical value. Only Nietzsche has emphasized the aesthetical color of the Heraclitean image<sup>83</sup>; he has talked about *Spiel des Künstlers und des Kindes* indiscriminately and he has also characterized Heraclitus as an «aesthetical man»: *so schaut nur der ästhetische Mensch die Welt an*. According to Nietzsche Heraclitus has no reason to oblige him to prove (as Leibniz does) that our world is the best among all the possible worlds. It is enough for him, Nietzsche writes, that the world is the beautiful, innocent play of Aion<sup>84</sup>.

Of course, the image of the fragment presents a world that is arranged and moved under the direction of one and only divine law, which is contained in the world, but this interpretation does not exhaust the image. The philo-

82. Cf. in general, Huizinga, *Homo ludens* 1939<sup>3</sup>: an attempt for attributing every civilization with man's impulse for playing. E. Fink, *Spiel als Weltsymbol*, Stuttgart 1960 (see mainly 26 ff., 36 ff.), tries to show that the «play» is a symbol especially significant for a philosophy of the world and Heraclitus' fr. 52 urges him to do so.

83. Cf. Θ. Βέικος, *Nietzsche. Μία μεταφυσική τῆς τέχνης*, Θεσσαλονίκη 1970, 69 ff.

84. *Werke* 3, 376-77: *Heraklit hat ja keinen Grund, nachweisen zu müssen (wie ihn Leibniz hatte), daß diese Welt sogar die allerbeste sei; es genügt ihn, daß sie das schöne unschuldige Spiel des Aion ist.*



sopher's aim is to show the attraction and the beauty of the world, to express its aesthetical value. The spectator-philosopher is charmed by the sight of the cosmic play, he looks at it and he thinks of it, he gets delighted and creates the image of the world in himself, providing to it a significance and, also, an aesthetical value.

## ΗΡΑΚΛΕΙΤΟΣ, ΑΠΟΣΠ. 52

### Περίληψη.

Τὸ ἀπόσπασμα 52 τοῦ Ἡρακλείτου, τὸ ὁποῖο θεωρεῖται ἤδη ἀπὸ παλιὰ ὡς ἓνα ἰδιαίτερα αἰνιγματικὸ καὶ δυσπρόσιτο κείμενο, ἀναλύεται, ἀπὸ φιλολογικὴ καὶ φιλοσοφικὴ ἄποψη, στὰ συστατικὰ του μέρη (*αἰῶν-παῖς παίζων πεσσεύων - παιδὸς ἢ βασιληίη*) καὶ διερευνᾶται διεξοδικὰ τὸ νόημά του μέσα στὰ ἱστορικὰ πλαίσια τοῦ ἀρχαϊκοῦ κλίματος σκέψης. Προτοῦ ἐπιχειρηθῆ μιὰ προσέγγιση τοῦ φιλοσοφικοῦ νοήματος τοῦ κειμένου αὐτοῦ, παρουσιάζονται κριτικὰ τόσο οἱ ἀρχαῖες ἐρμηνεῖες τοῦ ἀποσπάσματος (Λουκιανὸς, Κλήμεντος, Πρόκλος, Ἴππολύτου) ὅσο καὶ οἱ πρὸ ἐνδιαφέρουσες ἀπὸ τὶς νεώτερες (Kern, Teichmüller, Gladisch, Schuster, v. Wilamowitz, Zeller, Brieger, Diels, Snell, Cherniss, Nador, Guthrie κ. ἄ.).

Ἡ ὅλη διαπραγμάτευση τοῦ προβλήματος καταλήγει στὶς ἀκόλουθες θέσεις : 1) Ὁ *αἰῶν* εἶναι ὁ μοναδικὸς θεὸς παράγων πού διέπει αἰῶνια τὰ πάντα στοὺς συνεχεῖς μετασχηματισμούς τους ἀπὸ τὴ μιὰ μορφή στὴν ἄλλη, εἶναι τὸ αἰῶνια ζωντανὸ παιδί πού παίζει τὸ παιγνίδι τοῦ κόσμου. 2) Ὁ θεϊκὸς αὐτὸς *παῖς* ἀπεικονίζει μὲ τὸν μοναδικὸ τρόπο ζωῆς καὶ ἐνεργείας του, δηλαδή *παίζων*, τὸν τρόπο ὑπαρξης τοῦ κόσμου ὅλου. 3) Ὁ θεὸς-παῖς παίζει τοὺς *πεσσοὺς*, οἱ ὁποῖοι ἀπεικονίζουν τὰ πάντα, σ' ἓνα διατεταγμένο παιγνίδι : ὅλα μετακινοῦνται ἀδιάκοπα, ἀλλάζουν θέσεις, ὀργανώνονται καὶ ἀποδιοργανώνονται χωρὶς τέλος. 4) Ἡ εἰκόνα αὐτὴ τοῦ παιδιοῦ πού *βασιλεύει* μέσα σ' ὅλα, τοῦ παιδιοῦ πού παίζει αἰῶνια τὸ παιγνίδι τοῦ κόσμου, προσδίδει ἐπίσης χάρη καὶ αἰσθητικὴ ἀξία στὸ κοσμικὸ γίγνεσθαι : Ὁ κόσμος παρέχει τὴν εἰκόνα ἑνὸς ὁμορφου καὶ χαριτωμένου παιγνιδιοῦ καὶ ἡ κάθε φάση του, μὲ τὸν διαφορετικὸ κάθε φορά συνδυασμὸ τῶν πεσσῶν, παρουσιάζει καινούργιο ἐνδιαφέρον, σχηματίζει ἓνα νέο νόημα καὶ ἀποπνέει μιὰ γοητεία.

Θεσσαλονίκη

Θ. Βέικος

