

Youchkevitch, A. P.

[Professor Olszewski correctly raises...]

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Artykuł umieszczony jest w kolekcji cyfrowej Bazhum, gromadzącej zawartość polskich czasopism humanistycznych i społecznych tworzonej przez Muzeum Historii Polski w ramach prac podejmowanych na rzecz zapewnienia otwartego, powszechnego i trwałego dostępu do polskiego dorobku naukowego i kulturalnego.

Artykuł został zdigitalizowany i opracowany do udostępnienia w internecie ze środków specjalnych MNiSW dzięki Wydziałowi Historycznemu Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego.

Tekst jest udostępniony do wykorzystania w ramach dozwolonego użytku.



The above sketch is dangerously oversimplified. Not only are my categories crude, but I have ignored national differences of tradition and other approaches to the understanding of nature. In particular, the "hylozoistic" tradition of the Renaissance, reappearing as German "*Naturphilosophie*", whose significance has been seriously underestimated.

A. P. Youchkevitch

Professor Olszewski correctly raises a series of problems concerning the periodization of the history of science. The attempt to periodize the general history of natural and mathematical sciences, as suggested by Professor Kedrov, deserves much attention. Many principles recommended by him are correct. The concrete characteristic of particular periods, however, gives rise to objections.

This applies, first of all, to the period A, defined by Professor Kedrov as a natural-philosophic period — when the rudiments of nature's knowledge are part of a single, undifferentiated philosophical science. Kedrov extrapolates the peculiarities of the brief developmental epoch of Greek thought over the whole of the Antiquity. Was, however, the astronomy of Babylonians natural-philosophic? Was the entire mathematics of Greeks, their statics and hydrostatics, their astronomy and so forth a part of philosophy and was the natural-philosophic method of thinking really peculiar to them? But the mentioned sciences did play a leading role in the Greco-Roman world. If I am allowed to delineate this period A with two or three words, I should say that it was a period of formation of natural and mathematical sciences in the true sense of this word.

The period *a* was — according to Professor Kedrov — a scholastic one, in which the false sciences astrology, magic, alchemy and others were prevailing. It is true that this was the period of scholasticism dominating in philosophy and that scholasticism exerted influence on science. On the other hand, there developed mathematics, astronomy, mechanics (Oxford and Paris) and so on. The development of cognition was not so simple and so one-sided a process. There is, besides, no reason to oppose — as Professor Kedrov does — Europe to Mussulman countries. The philosophic and theological scholasticism, hampering the progress of science, and the struggle of the progressive scientific thought against the former existed both in Christian and Moslem countries.

At last, not quite fortunate was the denomination of the period B as empirical and collecting. This may be attributed to the cycle of biological sciences, but not to science as a whole. In that period, the leading role was being already played by the complex of mechanical-mathematical and in part physical, that is theoretical sciences.