

DEMETRIUS CANTEMIR

Romanian Cosmogony in the Century of Lights – a Contribution to Natural Philosophy –

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Abstract. Demetrius Cantemir can be considered actual for having made very good use of logic, in a time when few dared it. In his ambitious attempt to elaborate a “System of Knowledge” for his followers beginning with a Metaphysics in line with the European philosophers of the time, Cantemir synthesized in his work Oriental wisdom with European knowledge, enriched by the results of his own logical reasoning and by always respecting the strong authority of the Church. Distrusting the “art of mathematics” in describing nature, like later Hume and Kant, he built a “cosmogony” with modern ideas and – by first applying the Aristotelian logic to Aristotle’s Postulates for Motion – he has logically inferred interesting “relative theories”¹. This constitutes a valuable scientific legacy of his and even if he could not interpret them otherwise than ‘being absurd’ in the realm of the Metaphysics of his time, his logic results are a valid contribution to Natural Philosophy, turning him into an European philosopher with similar orientations as Descartes in method and intent and featuring similar intuitions as Newton in respect to the ‘uncreated’ (‘true’) Time and in the clear distinction made between the ‘true’ (absolute) Time and the relative’, sensible (measured) time, as was also formerly suggested by the Holy Fathers of the Church.

Keywords: Metaphysics, J.B. van Helmont, Aristotle, Descartes, Newton, logic, reasoning, relativity.

Demetrius Cantemir – a rationalist philosopher with faith in God

The Romanian prince Demetrius Cantemir (1673-1723) was forced by history to spend over 20 years in Constantinople – first as an Ottoman hostage for his reigning father, then as ambassador of his brother. He managed to take best advantage of this long stay there, in the first place for his study and documentation, to clarify his orientations and aspirations, preparing himself in

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¹ Striking at first glance for any physicist of the present times is the *wording* of these logically inferred „relative theories” which are thus *resembling* to notorious results of modern physics. Therefore the present paper is a Comment aimed to explain ... how this was possible! (All format emphasizeings belong to the author.)