

# ***Magnitudo aesthetica*, Aesthetic Greatness**

*Ethical aspects of Alexander Gottlieb Baumgarten's Fragmentary Aesthetica (1750/58)*<sup>1</sup>

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Alexander Gottlieb Baumgarten's *Aesthetica*, which was published only in an incomplete form in the years 1750 and 1758, nonetheless offers, as I shall here argue, in its fragmentary form a systematically structured whole. It is based, as we all know, on his metaphysics, but in addition, as I will try to show, it is tightly linked to his ethics and his reflections on natural theology. But the internal coherence of the *Aesthetica* as a structured whole and the ethical and theological aspects of the work can only be recognized if one knows the entire text of the work. And that is precisely the problem: to have knowledge of the entire text of Baumgarten's *Aesthetica* – which stretches over more than 600 pages in two octavo volumes, containing in sum 904 sections, entirely in Latin, written in a quite complicated, or rather, grammatically sophisticated, hypotactical style. The fate of the *Aesthetica*, which is rightly and deservedly famous for being the work by which Baumgarten established aesthetics as its own, ontologically and epistemologically founded philosophical discipline, seems already to have been in the 18th century what it still seems to be today: the *Aesthetica* is famous, it is recognized to be of great importance in the history of philosophy as well as in respect to historical and systematic questions central to the development of aesthetic theory, the *Aesthetica* is regularly named and mentioned – but it has hardly ever, at least until some years ago, been read and studied in its entirety. For this reason, there are still many aspects of the *Aesthetica*, concerning the internal structure of the work and its theoretical content, as well as concerning its position in the history of philosophy and the history of aesthetics, which still have escaped our attention, but which are highly deserving of wider exposure and which must necessarily be made the subject of further investigation.

In the present essay I will concentrate on the underappreciated connection between aesthetics, ethics and – in this context more alluding to them than explicitly – theological reflections in Baumgarten's *Aesthetica*. I will

try to do this in two steps. First I will provide an outline of Baumgarten's project of aesthetics as such, focussing on its epistemological and (to a more limited degree) its ontological foundation. Secondly I will bring to light the often overlooked ethical aspect of the *Aesthetica*, introducing and interpreting a hitherto almost unread, but at the same time most extensive chapter of the *Aesthetica*, namely, the chapter on aesthetic greatness (*magnitudo aethetica*). This should, in the third place, also illuminate in a tentative way the close connection between aesthetics and theology in Baumgarten's philosophy. But before I will discuss the main points at the heart of my contribution, I will need to preface them with a few words about Baumgarten himself and the fate of his *Aesthetica*, both in his time and since the 20th century.

### **Introduction: Alexander Gottlieb Baumgarten and his *Aesthetica***

Baumgarten (born 1714) finished his studies in philosophy, theology, and philology at Halle in the year 1735. His studies had also comprised – and would continue to involve – a deep occupation with the writings of Leibniz and with the (at that time still forbidden) philosophy of Christian Wolff and his school. He completed his exams in February with a *Disputatio Inauguralis* on the concepts of the high and the low in the Holy Scriptures,<sup>2</sup> followed in September of the same year by his professorial dissertation entitled *Meditationes de nonnullis ad poema pertinentibus (On Some Conditions of Poetry)*<sup>3</sup> which already contains the *nucleus* of his aesthetics. Having then worked for nearly five years as a lecturer at the University of Halle (the *Academia Fridericiana*), where he gave courses, inter alia, on the history of philosophy, logic, metaphysics, ethics, natural law, natural theology, and Hebrew, he obtained, in 1740, by an already 1739 pronounced order of King Friedrich Wilhelm I, a chair as full professor of philosophy at the University of Frankfurt an der Oder (the *Academia Viadrina*). Here he gave, even though with the years more and more prevented from teaching by serious illness, lectures on “all parts of philosophy”,<sup>4</sup> on philology, natural law, social law, and Hebrew grammar. Furthermore, as can be proved by the lecture timetables of the *Viadrina*, he gave for the first time at a German university lectures on aesthetics, starting in the winter term 1742/43. And he gave – something which until today has hardly been recognized in Baumgarten studies – at least one course on dogmatic theology. This course was published on the base of one of his student's notes 11 years after Baumgarten's death in 1773 under the title *Praelectiones philosophiae dogmaticae* by Johann Salomo Semler,<sup>5</sup> professor of theology in Halle, pupil and successor of the famous theologian Siegmund Jacob Baumgarten, the elder

brother and mentor of Alexander Gottlieb. Until his quite early death in 1762, Baumgarten was not only a very popular professor, but also a remarkably successful philosophical author. Among his works, which ought to be mentioned besides his *Aesthetica*, is his very influential *Metaphysica*, which after its first edition in 1739 was republished another six times (7th edition 1779),<sup>6</sup> a fundamental philosophical textbook of altogether 1000 sections which was highly estimated and used for decades by Immanuel Kant and translated (in a shortened and modified version) into German in 1766.<sup>7</sup> In addition, there are his *Ethica philosophica*, first published in 1740 and republished another two times (1751 and 1763), and his commentary on the logic of Christian Wolff, the *Acroasis logica*, published in 1761. It is well known that at many universities in Germany at the end of the 18th century Baumgarten's works – primarily his metaphysics and his ethics – had been canonical academic textbooks. Regarding these publications, what I would like to emphasize here, without explaining it immediately (but I will work to demonstrate that below), is this: Baumgarten's *Aesthetica* and his *Ethica philosophica* can be regarded as *twin-sisters* on the basis of Baumgarten's *Metaphysica* (resting as it does on the four parts of metaphysical teaching established by Wolff, Ludwig Philipp Thümmig and Baumgarten, namely: ontology, cosmology, psychology and natural theology). But even though these three works are in fact tightly connected, Baumgarten's *Aesthetica* could not join the public success of the *Metaphysica* and the *Ethica philosophica*. There are two basic reasons for this exclusion.

(1) Baumgarten's *Aesthetica* remained, as already mentioned in the beginning, incomplete. Originally Baumgarten had planned a division and a combination of a theoretical and a practical section in the book. Of the theoretical aesthetics which was originally planned to have three parts – namely, heuristics (about the invention of beautiful thoughts), methodology (about their combination), and semiotics (about their forms of expression) – the published version of the *Aesthetica* contains only a fragment of the first part, the heuristics. And even in this part – which would altogether have dealt with six criteria of sensory (beautiful) cognition – abundance (*ubertas*), greatness (*magnitudo*), truth (*veritas*), light or brightness (*lux*), certitude or persuasion (*certitudo/persuasio*), and life or vivacity (*vita*) – only the first five are discussed. The missing discussion of the sixth criterion (life) would have treated the effects of beautiful cognition and proposition (in the arts) on human affection and would therefore have been of great importance for the ethical aspect of the *Aesthetica* – a lack still bemoaned by Johann August Eberhard (one of Kant's famous opponents) in 1790,<sup>8</sup> who sought to establish, following Moses

Mendelssohn above all, an aesthetics based principally on a theory of human emotions (*Empfindungen*). Also missing entirely from the theoretical section of Baumgarten's *Aesthetica* are the planned parts on methodology and semiotics – not to mention the entire section on practical aesthetics which Baumgarten could not even think of anymore in 1758.

(2) The second reason that Baumgarten's *Aesthetica* did not attain a real public success has to do with the context of its publication. Consider the first volume of the *Aesthetica* of 1750 (the volume containing the discussion of the first three criteria of sensory cognition, abundance, greatness, and truth within the heuristics). Already two years before it appeared, Georg Friedrich Meier, pupil of Baumgarten who in 1740 (from 1748 as a full professor) became his successor in Halle and a very busy and famous author in his own right,<sup>9</sup> began to publish an extensive work on aesthetics himself which was explicitly founded on the manuscripts of Baumgarten, and was done with his full consent. The work, Meier's *Anfangsgründe aller schönen Wissenschaften*, published in three volumes from 1748 to 1750,<sup>10</sup> not only contained all those parts and sections missing from Baumgarten's *Aesthetica*, but was furthermore written in the much more easily accessible German. The *Anfangsgründe* are not a mere transcription or translation of Baumgarten's manuscripts, but rather Meier's own adaptation of Baumgarten's thought, carried out – in my opinion – in a highly popularised fashion, an adaptation, which – again in my opinion – does not attain the same level of profound and sophisticated philosophical reflection as the fragmentary work of his teacher. At any rate, the fact that on the one hand Baumgarten's *Aesthetica* was incomplete, written in a sometimes fastidious Latin and – notwithstanding the numerous quotations of classical authors – in a very concentrated, acroamatic,<sup>11</sup> and almost esoteric style, whereas on the other hand Meier's *Anfangsgründe* were exhaustive, written in German in a deliberately eloquent style, meant that from the very beginning it was Meier's work which was more often read as the first systematic treatise on aesthetics – not Baumgarten's. That nonetheless – insofar as e.g. Johann Gottfried Herder and (again) Kant are concerned – it were not Meier's *Anfangsgründe*, but it was instead Baumgarten's *Aesthetica* which had a deep impact on the following philosophical discussion on aesthetics, was only brought to light much later by Baumgarten studies from the beginning of the 20th century onwards.

I just want to add that the fate of the *Aesthetica* in its modern editions has hitherto not been much better. The only editions of the entire Latin text have, until recently, been its edition in Italy by Tommaso Fiore and Alessandro Casati (in honour of Benedetto Croce, 1936)<sup>12</sup> and a photo-

mechanical reprint published in Germany (3rd edition 1986).<sup>13</sup> A German translation of the entire *Aesthetica* – in contrast to Italy, where we have two entire translations of the work by Francesco Piselli (1992) and Salvatore Tedesco (2000)<sup>14</sup> – did not exist until 2007.<sup>15</sup> Before that, only a translation of parts of the work by the honourable scholar Hans Rudolf Schweizer had been published in German – but, I have to add, even his extended translation covers only 234 of the altogether 903 sections of the *Aesthetica*.<sup>16</sup> These are the passages containing Baumgarten’s *prolegomena*, his specifications of the preconditions for the successful aesthetician (*felix aestheticus*) in the chapter on natural aesthetics (*aesthetica naturalis*), some parts of the chapter on aesthetic truth (*veritas aesthetica*), and some parts of the chapter on aesthetic light (*lux aesthetica*). Certainly these passages are essential for Baumgarten’s project of aesthetics, but they remain only parts – to the effect that, as I have mentioned in the beginning, the largest part of the *Aesthetica*, over 600 sections comprising more than two thirds of the whole, still remained – at least in regard to research done in Germany – more or less unread, awaiting investigation. And it is these unread sections which include the chapter I intend to elaborate on in the second part of this essay, dealing with the criterion of aesthetic greatness. Before doing that and after these preceding necessary prefatory remarks I would like to give, in the first part, a short compacted outline of Baumgarten’s conception of aesthetics as such.

### 1. Baumgarten’s project of aesthetics

Concentrating for now on Baumgarten’s own evolving definitions of aesthetics, I will firstly and primarily deal with its complex epistemological aspects. Already in the final passages of his early *Meditationes* from 1735 Baumgarten provides it with a first definition (in §§ 115 and 116). According to the distinction the Greek philosophers and the Church Fathers had made between αἰσθητά [*aisthetá*] and νοητά [*noetá*], between objects of sense perception and objects of intellectual cognition, aesthetics – in contrast to logic, and acting as a supplement to it – is supposed to be concerned with sensory things. In the first edition of his *Metaphysica* from 1739 Baumgarten defines aesthetics to be the “science of sensory cognition and proposition” (*scientia sensitivae cognoscendi and proponendi*, *Met.* §533), and in the second and third editions he adds, always in the same section, the further definition of aesthetics as the “logic of the lower faculty of cognition” (*logica facultatis cognoscitivae inferioris*). In the fourth edition of the *Metaphysica* he appends again four further determinations: Aesthetics is the “philosophy of the Graces and the Muses” (*philosophia*

*gratiarum et musarum*), it is a “lower theory of cognition” (*gnoseologia inferior*), an “art of beautiful thinking” (*ars pulcre cogitandi*) and an “art of the *analogon* to reason” (*ars analogi rationis*). In § 1 of the *Aesthetica* of 1750 the definition finally reads: Aesthetics, as “theory of the liberal arts, lower theory of cognition, art of beautiful thinking, art of the *analogon* to reason” (*theoria liberalium artium, gnoseologia inferior, ars pulcre cogitandi, ars analogi rationis*) is the “science of sensory cognition” (*scientia cognitionis sensitivae*). All these determinations give us a clue to what Baumgarten conceives the new discipline of aesthetics to be: (1) Aesthetics shall be a theory of cognition, namely a theory concerning the lower, sensory faculties of cognition; (2) it shall be, as a science, an equivalent supplement to logic; (3) it shall contain an explication of the beautiful; and finally (4) it shall serve as a theory of the arts. Note that Baumgarten does not merely list these elements as a happenstance collection, but rather conceives of them as fundamentally interdependent elements. It will be exactly this tight linking of a theory of cognition, a theory of the beautiful, and a theory of art (in this triad understood metaphysically as grounded in ontology and empirical psychology) which will trigger the philosophical debate over aesthetics in the second half of the 18th century.

The most provocative aspect of Baumgarten’s conception at the time (and it is on this that I wish to concentrate) is a double one: In the first place it is Baumgarten’s definition of aesthetics as a theory concerning the lower, sensory faculties of cognition (*facultates cognoscitivae inferiores*) which implies that there is sensory cognition as such. Secondly – and consequently – it is his claim to understand aesthetics programmatically as an equivalent and autonomous supplementary science next to logic. This is a claim through which Baumgarten – applying the concept of a *philosophia organica*, connecting the entire spectrum of the human faculties of cognition – reacts to a suggestion which Georg Bernhard Bilfinger (a pupil of Wolff whose writings Baumgarten held in very high regard) had already made in 1725.<sup>17</sup> The idea that aesthetics holds a position equivalent to logic and even has an analogous structure finds its roots in Baumgarten’s *Metaphysica*, and more precisely, in his empirical psychology.

According to Baumgarten’s empirical psychology in his *Metaphysica* the faculties of the human mind are subdivided into lower and higher (*inferiores, superiores*) faculties of cognition (*facultates cognoscitivae*) and lower and higher faculties of appetite (*facultates appetitivae*; cf. *Met.* §§ 519–732). For the higher faculties of cognition, intellect, and reason, there already was an *organon* or science since Aristotle: logic. What was still missing and what Bilfinger had demanded was a corresponding science for the

lower faculties of cognition, which include, following Baumgarten (cf. *Met.* §§ 534–623, *Aesth.* §§ 30–37), sense, imagination, sensory perspicacity, sensory memory, the faculty of fiction (*facultas fingendi*), the sensory faculty to foresee, sensory judgement, sensory expectation, and the sensory knowledge of signs (*facultas characteristicistica sensitiva*). The task of becoming the science of these lower faculties Baumgarten now assigns to aesthetics. And, given that all these sensory faculties (with the exception of sense, imagination, and the faculty of fiction) are to be regarded as analogous sensory counterparts to corresponding intellectual faculties, the equivalency between aesthetics and logic is founded in the structure of human cognitive faculties, and therefore in the human mind itself.

But Baumgarten still goes a step further: The sensory faculties of cognition are not only analogous to the intellectual faculties (and therefore vouchsafe the position of aesthetics within epistemology, as having equal psychological footing with logic), but they are even basic (in the sense of *being more at the bottom of inferior*). To make, at first, a more formal point: In the empirical psychology of Baumgarten's *Metaphysica* the lower, sensory faculties of cognition are discussed chronologically first and at much greater length (in 104 sections) than the higher, intellectual faculties (discussed in only 26 sections). The same happens in Baumgarten's outlines of a programme of philosophy, in the *Sciagraphia encyclopaediae philosophicae* (from around 1740) and in the *Philosophia generalis* (also circa 1740, both edited posthumously).<sup>18</sup> And this same priority can be found in his programmatic inaugural lecture of 1740 at the Viadrina University in Frankfurt an der Oder.<sup>19</sup> The science of sensory cognition, to be called *aesthetics*, always obtains the primary position before logic as the science of intellectual cognition within the framework of an exhaustive organic epistemology. Sensory cognition as well as the philosophical theory of sensory cognition are fundamental – as Baumgarten says in § 6 of the *Aesthetica*: “A philosopher is a human being among other human beings and he is doing wrong, if he holds the opinion that such a vast part of human cognition was not proper for him.”<sup>20</sup> – I should mention here that Johann Gottfried Herder's criticism of Baumgarten for characterizing aesthetics as *sorella minoris* of logic (cf. *Aesth.* § 13) is, at least in this point, not justified. Herder insinuates, that since the sensory faculties are more basic than the rational faculties of the soul, aesthetics should be referred to as the older sister of logic, not the other way round.<sup>21</sup> But this is exactly what Baumgarten means: Regarding the structure of the human cognitive faculties, of course sensory cognition is fundamental and therefore to be understood as holding the first place, but, regarding the development of

philosophical sciences, aesthetics is, as a science which at the time still had to be established as such, much younger than logic.

And to make another point as regards content: Baumgarten takes over Leibniz's theory of cognition, but with some crucial modifications. It is well known that, as a corrective to Descartes, Leibniz had distinguished – metaphorically speaking on an ascending scale – between dark, clear (clear-confused and clear-distinct), inadequate and adequate, symbolic and intuitive cognitions (paradigmatically in his early essay *Meditationes de cognitione, veritate et ideis* from 1684). Accordingly, for Leibniz a cognition is dark, if an object is cognized, but not to the extent that one would be able to recognize it and distinguish it from other objects when one happens to cognize it another time. A cognition is confused, in his theory, if it suffices to enable us to recognize the object another time, but without being able to distinguish its single, particular predicates. As example of confused cognition he points to the cognitions we get from sense-perception: colours, odours, and tastes. A cognition is distinct, says Leibniz, if the necessary predicates of the object can be distinguished and be brought – following the principles of non-contradiction and of sufficient reason – into a so-called *nominal definition* (like the geometrical definition of a triangle or the scientific definition of gold). Due to the limited nature of our cognitive capacity (the *malum metaphysicum*), we as human beings can only arrive at distinct and (in mathematics) at nearly adequate cognitions (where the single predicates of an object are further analyzed in regard to their composition). On Leibniz's account, therefore, it remains the sole privilege of God to know everything and every single thing, not merely in its necessary predicates, but also in the infinity of its contingent and merely possible predicates in a fully adequate and at the same time intuitive cognition (simultaneously grasping all, both its variety and its unity in the same act).

Already in his 1735 *Meditationes*, Baumgarten inserts into this Leibnizian scale a modification which is of far-reaching epistemological significance for aesthetics: the clarity of a cognition can be *aesthetically augmented*. Augmentation can take place in two ways, on Baumgarten's account, one logical and one aesthetic. Within the logical domain, a clear and confused cognition can be transformed into a distinct cognition by the determination and selection of the necessary predicates of the object. In this case its clarity is augmented intensively (leading to *claritas intensiva*). The task of augmenting the perfection of intensively clear distinct cognitions (which belong to the intellectual faculty of cognition) is to be performed by logic. But – and this is the essential modification – the clarity of a cognition can



also be augmented in an extensive way, if it can encompass – not distinguishing here between necessary and contingent features – a larger number of predicates of the object in question (which then means *claritas extensiva*).<sup>22</sup> In this case the cognition still remains confused, but it is able to grasp its object over a wider range of predicates which the object – metaphysically and in the knowledge of God – really has (in the full sense of *realitas*, also including what is merely possible, not to be confused with *existentia* as complement to possibility and defined as compossibility).<sup>23</sup> Though, or better: exactly because these extensively clear confused cognitions always involve a rest of dark cognitions (or, in Leibnizian terminology: *petits perceptions*), they are the way in which every human mind,<sup>24</sup> in the ground of the soul (*fundus animae*), reflects (in the sense of *repraesentatio*) the whole universe as if in a mirror.<sup>25</sup> These cognitions, then, are sensory cognitions and their perfection is the task of aesthetics. – Against the background of this concept of extensive clarity, we can easily understand that the first criterion of a perfect (and this is: beautiful) sensory cognition is its abundance (*ubertas*), the richness it contains of the predicates of its objects. And we can easily understand that the best objects for sensory cognition are not abstract items, but the most concrete, namely individual things which – following Leibniz’s doctrine of continuous determination (*omnimoda determinatio*) – have, in addition to their necessary predicates, an infinite number of contingent (as well as merely possible) predicates.

Again, keeping this epistemological concept of extensive clarity in mind, we can now also go into some ontological premises of Baumgarten’s aesthetics. According to Baumgarten’s ontology, every thing (*ens*) is transcendently one (*unum*, a unity, cf. *Met.* §§ 72f.); it is true (*verum*, truth being defined as the well-orderedness of predicates of a thing following the principles of non-contradiction and of sufficient reason, cf. *Met.* §§ 89f.); and it is perfect (*perfectum*, perfection being defined as the agreement of all different predicates of a thing constituting the sufficient reason of it, cf. *Met.* §§ 94f.).

As for truth (*veritas*), Baumgarten distinguishes different levels or aspects of truth. First of all there is metaphysical or objective truth (note: this is an ontological, not an epistemological concept). In the mind of God, where being and thinking are identical, everything – every entity (*ens*) – is metaphysically true, whereas we, as human beings, because of the restrictedness of our cognition (the *malum metaphysicum*), are not able to grasp this objective, metaphysical truth. Every truth that man can grasp is a subjective truth, in the sense that it is a restricted, subjective represen-

tation of the things which in the mind of God really are. This subjective truth is, in its turn, either logical (i.e., regarding necessary predicates) or sensory/ aesthetic (i.e., regarding contingent predicates of the object in question). In the famous §560 of his *Aesthetica* Baumgarten says: “What else is abstraction” – which is the procedural method of intellectual cognition, selecting necessary predicates from its object (i.e., the essentials and attributes founded in its essence) – “if not a loss?”<sup>26</sup> Accordingly, from within our human subjective truth, if we are to reach a (relatively spoken) maximum of objective, metaphysical truth, it will be necessary to combine logical and aesthetic truth, a combination for which Baumgarten coins the term “aestheticological truth” (*veritas aestheticologica*).<sup>27</sup> It is worth dwelling shortly upon Baumgarten’s conclusion here, because it has far-reaching consequences for aesthetics. (1) If intellectual cognition concentrates on the necessary predicates of its objects, and (2) if sensory cognition is the way in which we can also grasp a part of the infinite abundance of its contingent predicates, and (3) if moreover – by dint of our lower faculties of imagination and of fiction<sup>28</sup> – we can by sensory cognition also grasp a part of its merely possible predicates, then (4) sensory cognition – whether we are considering it for itself or its transposition into and its manifestation in works of art – can ultimately reveal aspects of the metaphysical truth which will always escape logical and scientific knowledge, but which nonetheless belong to the reality of things in the divine mind. Aesthetics, then, as the theory and science of sensory cognition, is rightly established as an *organon* or a philosophical instrument to broaden our cognition in regard to that which, in the eminent sense of the word, really is. And there is even a possibility that it – or at least parts of it – could be brought to existence in a work of art.

Before finally talking about the topic of aesthetic greatness, I should make a few remarks about the ramifications of Baumgarten’s concept of perfection (*perfectio*) in its relation to beauty. Beauty (*pulcritudo*) – being beautiful (*pulcrum*) – is no transcendental determination of a thing. Metaphysically and objectively speaking, a thing is perfect (*perfectum*), not beautiful. Or, to put it more forcefully, in God’s mind things are perfect, but not beautiful. At base, beauty is a *phaenomenon* of perfection, the appearance of transcendental perfection to the degree to which it can be grasped by the subjective cognition of the human mind. In §§ 18–20 of his *Aesthetica* Baumgarten clearly defines his concept of beauty as *phaenomenon* of metaphysical perfection; we must always distinguish between things as they really are metaphysically, in the mind of God, on the one hand, and as we cognize them, on the other. Beauty is (merely) a result of

the human cognitions of a thing, the order of these cognitions, and their expression for us (and in this we have the necessary connection between heuristics, methodology, and semiotics in aesthetics). Beauty is only and can only be this *phaenomenon* – the appearance of metaphysical, objective perfection, as it is realized (in the sense of *cognoscere*) and expressed (in the sense of *proponere*) by the subjective human mind.<sup>29</sup> Therefore those definitions of beauty which, because of their seeming inconsistency or even contrariness, had formerly attracted so much attention in Baumgarten studies (namely, *Met.* § 662 and *Aesth.* § 14) are not contradictory at all, but congruent: Beauty is, as *Metaphysica* § 662 says, the perfection of the *phaenomenon* (*perfectio phaenomenon*), that is, it is the metaphysical perfection of the object as it appears to human cognition, and at the same time it is, as *Aesthetica* § 14 says, the perfection of sensory cognition (*perfectio cognitionis sensitivae*), because it is also fundamentally dependent on the sensory faculties of the subject, their disposition, and their education, in the subjective human mind.

## 2. Aesthetic greatness (*magnitudo aesthetica*)

Having thrown, as I hope, a little light on Baumgarten's project and the epistemological and ontological premises of his aesthetics, I can now more efficiently present my second and main point which deals with the ethical aspects of Baumgarten's *Aesthetics*. The strong relations between Baumgarten's aesthetics and his ethics (and to the context of natural theology as well) can best be shown by means of an investigation of the second – and largest – chapter of the *Aesthetica* on aesthetic greatness (*magnitudo aesthetica*, §§ 177–422), situated between the chapter on aesthetic abundance (*ubertas aesthetica*) and aesthetic truth (*veritas aesthetica*). But the topic of aesthetic greatness is in effect not at all restricted to this chapter on the *magnitudo aesthetica*; we already encounter the prerequisites for it in the very beginning of the text. The far-reaching consequences of this concept work in a way which Baumgarten studies until now have almost always overlooked, and concern the significance of the *Aesthetica* as a whole.

I will now introduce and develop three arguments: (1) Aesthetic greatness is, in the first place, linked to Baumgarten's conception of the successful aesthetician and the demands he not only makes on the cognitive faculties, but also on the appetitive faculties of the *felix aestheticus*, introduced in the first chapters of the *Aesthetica*. (2) Aesthetic greatness is, secondly, as claim to the appetitive faculties, in a complementary way linked to the concept of aesthetic abundance, discussed in the preceding chapter (§§ 115–176), as claim to the cognitive faculties. (3) And, thirdly,

aesthetic abundance and aesthetic greatness are, in their complementary coupling, tightly linked to and founded in the concepts of the Kingdom of Nature (*regnum naturae*) and the Kingdom of Mercy (*regnum gratiae*) of the Leibnizian theodicy. A careful investigation of Baumgarten's concept of aesthetic greatness reveals that his aesthetics involves (besides an ontologically founded concept of beauty) not only an epistemological theory of cognition, but also a moral theory of right action, both of which necessarily belong together; likewise – but I will only allude to that in this essay – such an examination of aesthetic greatness can reveal the close connection of his aesthetics and theological reflections.

In chapter II of the *Aesthetica*, on natural aesthetics (*aesthetica naturalis*, §§28–46), Baumgarten discusses the demands on the “natural disposition of the entire mind to think beautifully” (*dispositio naturalis animae totius ad pulcre cogitandum*) of the *felix aestheticus*, “with which he is born” (*quacum nascitur*, §28). The first necessary precondition to become a successful aesthete is an “innate graceful and elegant spirit” (*ingenium venustum et elegans connatum*, §29). To this belong the lower faculties of cognition as well as the higher, rational faculties, intellect and reason, which for their part guarantee the “dominion of the soul over itself” (*animae in semet ipsam imperium*, *Met.* §730) and the harmony (*consensus*) of the lower faculties. In the “graceful and elegant spirit” the higher and lower faculties of cognition must work together harmonically (§38). But there is also a second demand on the natural disposition of the *felix aestheticus*: the demand for a specific condition of his appetitive faculties, of his character (*indoles*), which Baumgarten names “the inborn aesthetic temperament” (*temperamentum aestheticum connatum*, §44) and which he first very briefly defines as the will to follow a “dignified and moving cognition” (*cognitio digna et movens*). In the following §45 of the *Aesthetica* Baumgarten enumerates, in an ascending scale of values, the things to which the *felix aestheticus* should orient his appetitive faculties: Affluence, power, work, leisure, external delights, freedom, honour, friendship, healthiness, “beautiful cognition and its supplement, kind virtue” (*cognitio pulcra cum suo corrolario virtute amabili*), “higher cognition and its supplement, venerable virtue” (*cognitio superior cum suo corrolario virtute venerandi*). The section closes as follows:

Altogether it will be allowed to assign to aesthetic characters a certain innate greatness of the heart, an excellent instinct to strive for great things, especially in those characters who keep attention to how easy the transition is from here to the absolutely greatest things.<sup>30</sup>

From the context of this section and from the references Baumgarten makes to preceding sections and to respective sections in the empirical psychology of his *Metaphysica*, we can find out what is meant by this “greatness of the heart” and “excellent instinct to strive for great things”: It is the striving for moral greatness, understood as liberal orientation of the appetitive faculties to the morally good – given that freedom is in its first and basic meaning defined as the dominion of the mind over itself,<sup>31</sup> where sensory desires and rational motives work together harmoniously. In the demand for “greatness of the heart” and “excellent instinct to strive for great things” which in the *felix aestheticus* necessarily must go together with a “graceful and elegant mind”, the concept of aesthetic greatness is already implicitly introduced in the very beginning of the *Aesthetica*. Furthermore, Baumgarten, as we have just seen, also says that moral greatness – striving for the morally good – is the precondition for the “transition” to “the absolutely greatest things”; the question of just what he intends to say with this remark will be solved, as I will argue below, in the chapter on aesthetic greatness itself.

In the chapter on *aesthetic greatness*, Baumgarten distinguishes systematically between the greatness of the object which is thought (*magnitudo materiae*, §§ 191–216), the greatness of the way of thinking according to the respective greatness of its objects (*ratio cogitationum*, §§ 217–328), and finally the greatness of the subject who thinks (*magnitudo personae*, §§ 352–422). Utilizing the classical rhetorical differentiation between three types of speaking (*genera dicendi*), he additionally distinguishes, not only in the passages on the *ratio cogitationum* but in all three aspects, three different levels: a simple (*tenue*), a medium, and the sublime level. Not being able to unfold within the limited space of this essay the whole sophisticated architecture of these different aspects and levels of aesthetic greatness altogether, I will instead concentrate on the main point of the chapter in question, namely, the aesthetic greatness of the subject or person, also called by Baumgarten aesthetic dignity (*dignitas aesthetica*, § 182), and here again I will concentrate on this subjective greatness of the person at its highest level – the highest, sublime greatness of mind or greatest magnanimity within the aesthetic dominion (*magnanimitas in aestheticis genere maxima*, §§ 394–422).

Baumgarten works out his concept of greatest aesthetic magnanimity in two steps. He carries out the first step not through an argumentative reflection, but rather by means of the rich fund of metaphors and of quotations from antique Roman poetry and rhetoric, describing it as an orientation or approach to the divine, as a rise or ascent “to the heavenly

things” (quote from one of Baumgarten’s students).<sup>32</sup> He carries out the second step through a discussion of Longinus’s concept of magnanimity (μεγαλοψυχία [*megalopsychía*]) from Longinus’s treatise *On the Sublime* (Περὶ ὕψους [*Peri hýpsous*]), particularly insofar as Longinus holds that one of the most necessary preconditions for magnanimity is freedom. It is only in this second step (with additional support from references to corresponding sections in the *Metaphysica* and the *Ethica philosophica*) that Baumgarten’s initial literary description of the greatest magnanimity as an approach to the divine receives its theoretical foundation.

Let us have a look at the first step. Already in § 394 “aesthetic magnanimity in its most excellent meaning” (*magnanimitas aesthetica per eminentiam sic dicta*) is ascribed to a “higher spirit” (*superius ingenium*) and a “heart which is born for immortality and already lives this immortality in its mortal body” (*immortalitati natum vivensque mortali iam in corpore pectus*), to a mind which therefore, with Vergil,

with amazement admires the threshold of the Olympus  
and sees right under its feet the clouds and the stars.<sup>33</sup>

Often – Baumgarten continues with another quotation of Vergil – such a spirit and such a heart

will receive the life of the Gods, will see in the midst of them  
heroes, and will itself be seen by them.<sup>34</sup>

The rule of such an excellent or, as Baumgarten adds, sublime magnanimity is then (in § 399) determined to be a respect for the divine and the submission of all human affairs to it. Baumgarten emphasizes this point by a reference to an earlier quotation (in § 206) from *De natura deorum* where Cicero holds that every great man, if he is virtuous and rightly honours the Gods, will always be “surrounded by a divine breath”.<sup>35</sup> In § 403 Baumgarten himself provides a description of sublime magnanimity, inserting into it a quotation from Horace:

Although a mind which has enough greatness for sublime things is not the one  
of the wise stoic, who,  
*if the universe crashes down shattered,*  
*keeps intrepid in face of the smashing wreckage,*  
it will nonetheless never be tormented by minor troubles nor will it be deprived  
of its calm serenity which emulates the life of the Gods.<sup>36</sup>

In § 404, finally, Baumgarten gives another very poetic, nearly pathetic description of a noble mind endowed with sublime magnanimity:

If such a noble mind really wants to approach strenuously to things, which have to be thought as being greater, it must, as if it had forgotten itself and its ordinary state, be excited and so to speak be torn off to a higher theatre than the one on which it is playing its role day-to-day, it must in such a way be united with the Gods and the heroes, that it seems that it had found a certain heavenly acquaintance with them, not as if it had been expelled to a foreign country, but as if it had been at home in such a community already for a long time, §§ 213, 396.<sup>37</sup>

The references that are given at the end of this passage to § 213, where Baumgarten had illustrated with a quotation from Vergil that only a small number of men “who were kindly loved by Jove, whose virtue fervently carried them up to ether, sons of the Gods”,<sup>38</sup> are able to achieve heroic virtue and a way of life with the hallmark of majestic greatness, and to § 396, where he had cited from Horace that “virtue for those, who do not deserve to die, opens heaven’s door”,<sup>39</sup> serve to emphasize what is meant by all these descriptions: The greatest magnanimity, the highest form of moral greatness, is nothing less than the nearest possible approach, the nearest possible community with the divine.

In the second part of the chapter on aesthetic greatness Baumgarten finally elaborates the theoretical foundation of his definition of the *magnanimitas in aestheticis genere maxima* in the discussion of Longinus, namely the last segments of Περὶ ὑψους (*Peri hýpsous*).

At the end of that fragmentary treatise Longinus investigates, by means of an imaginary dialogue with another (unnamed) philosopher, the question why at that time (probably the first half of the first century A. D.) there were only such a small number of sublime spirits capable of sublime enthusiasm and magnanimity. Against the opinion of the anonymous philosopher, Longinus contends that the reason for this paucity is not to be found in external circumstances, in the political despotism of the Roman Empire, but rather in the inward or mental despotism and the endless war of our desires and passions which lead to vice and to the decline of moral standards, a situation in which every magnanimity is necessarily bound to fade away.<sup>40</sup> At this point Baumgarten takes up the Longinian discourse with the following argument which deserves to be quoted at length (§ 414):

If the bridles of external freedom, if external slavery is mostly made for depressing men’s spirits and to smash down without any difference all their greatest efforts and any great enthusiasm – which I do not deny – then it does not seem

to me erroneous (because contrary things have contrary reasons), if I regard as one of the primary means of assistance for our spirits in order to raise to the really sublime the intimate persuasion of the abundant system of the greatest events, not only events of the past and of the present time, but also and to the largest extent of events that will happen in the future; the system that not only shows us the best and the greatest examples of the sublime and of venerable virtue which can easily be emulated, but which also administers us, with most obvious rules, the most salutary means to bring forth the dominion about ourselves, to escape all inward slavery and to maintain the victory over ourselves. The persuasion, I say, of those things which really have been done and still are to be done, the persuasion which at the same time by divine providence endows men's spirits with such power and such faculties, that not even the fear of death could force them to do something what an unjust tyrant would like them to do: This sensory persuasion is the supernatural complement and supplement to one's inward and psychological freedom.<sup>41</sup>

Baumgarten can only agree with Longinus's argument that the absolutely necessary precondition for magnanimity is not to be seen in an external freedom from political despotism, but in the inward freedom from the despotism of intemperate desires and passions. For Baumgarten, too, freedom primarily consists – as we have just heard – in the freedom from inward moral slavery, a freedom which can be attained in the dominion of the mind over itself which guarantees that sensory passions, too, are ultimately guided by the higher appetitive faculties (*voluntas, noluntas*) according to motives of rational cognition. More interesting, however, and of great significance for Baumgarten's concept of magnanimity, is his interpretation of the relationship between inward and external freedom which underlies the argument of the section just quoted. Three points are especially pertinent here.

(1) Baumgarten does not deny that limitations of external freedom can be a hindrance for magnanimity. If Longinus's anonymous philosopher holds that external slavery as a reason has the prevention of magnanimity as its consequence, then the reverse of this must equally be true: magnanimity as a consequence has its reason in external freedom.

(2) Now – and this is the crucial point in Baumgarten's argument – though this external freedom can physically be prevented by contingent historical, political, or social circumstances, from a metaphysical point of view, however, it is always and steadfastly guaranteed by the "abundant system of the greatest events" (*copiosum maximorum eventuum systema*) resting in the divine choice to establish the best of all possible worlds.



Owing to this system, in which all past, present, and future events are arranged in the best possible way, the human mind is in fact, as Baumgarten says in §729 of his *Metaphysica*, totally independent<sup>42</sup> from all contingent, finite circumstances in this world. In this sense the human mind is – within and against all physical restrictions – metaphysically free.

(3) The “intimate persuasion” which is by definition not an intellectual conviction but a sensory certitude<sup>43</sup> of the divine establishment of the “abundant system of the greatest events” is, as Baumgarten says, the “supernatural complement and supplement to one’s inward and psychological freedom” (*supernaturale libertatis internae complementum ac supplementum*). Therefore, if we take the term *complementum* in its full Wolffian sense (as Baumgarten does), this “intimate persuasion” is the indispensable precondition for the realization of the inward, psychological freedom in terms of the *imperium animae in semet ipsam*. And as this dominion of the mind over itself is in its turn the precondition for morality and moral acting, sensory certitude (not an intellectual conviction) of the divine establishment of the best of all possible worlds is itself a necessary condition for moral greatness as willingness to act accordingly to the morally good. Only both together, the inward, psychological freedom as dominion of the mind over itself and its precondition, the intimate sensory persuasion that God created this world as the best of all possible worlds – only both together comprise the greatest, sublime magnanimity, the *magnanimitas in aestheticis genere maxima*.

I want to make a final remark on an interesting reference that Baumgarten makes precisely in this context to his *Ethica philosophica* (1740). In §416 of his *Aesthetica*, following closely to the section just discussed, he defines the state of sublime magnanimity as well as state of tranquillity (*status tranquillitatis*). With reference to the *Ethica* he furthermore defines it – not surprisingly – as the state of the virtuous man (*status virtuosus*). But let us have a closer look at the passage in the *Ethica* which Baumgarten refers to. There, in §443, he says:

[I]n a person, in whom is such an amount [of cognition] as is demanded by the state of virtue – in abundance, greatness, truth, clarity, certitude and vivacity – in this person reigns the state of light, or the moral dominion of light; a person, in whom isn’t such an amount of cognition, is in the state of darkness, in the moral dominion of darkness.<sup>44</sup>

And he continues in §444:

A man, even a most rational man, who enjoys a rich, exact, great, vivid and also even distinct cognition of morality of a kind which is even near to [rational – D. M.] conviction or demonstration, can nonetheless be in the state of darkness. Only the virtuous man is in the state of light. But the duty of the virtuous man is also to extend the realm of the dominion of light and to act in accordance with the light itself; this means to walk in the light as much as one is able to.<sup>45</sup>

Two points need to be made here. The first regards an obvious allusion to Leibniz. With the metaphor of the “moral dominion of light” (*regnum lucis morale*) Baumgarten refers to Leibniz’s Kingdom of Mercy (*regnum gratiae*), a concept he explicitly names in the introduction to the second edition of his *Metaphysica* (1742).<sup>46</sup> If we follow Leibniz, God has established this world on the one hand as a Kingdom of Nature, in which there is the greatest possible variety of things and their determinations in unity, and on the other hand and at the same time God has established this world as a Kingdom of Mercy, in which everything “will turn out to be the best” for rational and morally good beings.<sup>47</sup> Without going into more details in the context of this essay now, my argument is the following: It does not seem far off, in my opinion, to find in these two complementary Leibnizian concepts the principles which structure, concerning their mutual relatedness and concerning their argumentative contents, the first two chapters of Baumgarten’s *Aesthetica* – namely the chapter on aesthetic abundance and the chapter on aesthetic greatness.

We can finally see that these two concepts already underlie Baumgarten’s discussion of the successful aesthetician. The demands on the *felix aestheticus* in chapter II of the *Aesthetica* on natural aesthetics were the demand for a “graceful and elegant spirit” and the demand for a “greatness of the heart”. The “graceful and elegant spirit” concerns the cognitive faculties of the *felix aestheticus*, and corresponds to the first criterion of sensory cognition, being aesthetic abundance (*ubertas aethetica*) with the claim that aesthetic cognition must grasp its objects in the greatest possible variety of their predicates, in accordance, on the level of the restricted subjective human cognition, to the greatest possible variety of the things in the world – the Kingdom of Nature. The “greatness of the heart”, on the other hand, concerns the appetitive faculties of the *felix aestheticus*, to which then corresponds the second criterion of sensory cognition, namely aesthetic greatness (*magnitudo aethetica*), the highest subjective form being sublime magnanimity. Sublime magnanimity itself turned out to be a community of the virtuous man with the divine – or, as we can now say, a state which shows the virtuous man to be a member

of the Kingdom of Grace. The theological background, here in terms of Leibniz's metaphysics and of natural theology, of Baumgarten's ethical demands on the aesthetician and on aesthetics as such is worth further investigation. In my opinion it is not wrong to call Leibniz the last "great Christian metaphysician".<sup>48</sup> And I think that it is not wrong either to call Baumgarten the first philosopher who transforms this Christian metaphysics into an aesthetic theory.

And to finally conclude with the second point: If we take seriously the connection of aesthetic magnanimity to the *Ethica philosophica*, where Baumgarten insists on the demand that we do not only have to cognize what is morally good, but that we also have to act in accord with this cognition in order to extend the realm of the Dominion of Light, then works of art, too – as sensory reflections not only of man's cognitive faculties, but also of his appetitive faculties and his possibilities to strive for the good – can contribute not merely to our knowledge of the world, but also reveal where our actions should finally lead to.

God reveals himself to us in the perfection, the utmost variety in unity, of the world, in the Kingdom of Nature, and he reveals himself in the constitution of this world which is such that everything turns out to be the best for morally good persons in the Kingdom of Grace. Man can come near to God by striving for the perfection not only of his cognitive, but also of his appetitive faculties. In this last point I believe there is (especially in the chapter on aesthetic greatness) a fundamental ethical and theological meaning for aesthetics as theory of sensory cognition. This ethical and theological import of aesthetics for Baumgarten has hitherto not been realized to the extent it deserves. But it opens up a new horizon for the understanding and the evaluation of the complexity of Baumgarten's aesthetic theory in the history of aesthetics.

## Notes

1. The manuscript of this essay was given as a lecture at the Annual Conference of the Nordic Society for Aesthetics, "Aesthetics & The Aesthetic: Historical & Contemporary Perspectives", in Uppsala, Sweden, 29 May–1 June, 2008. It is – having been worked over and brought into a concentrated form – essentially based on my introduction in: Alexander Gottlieb Baumgarten, *Ästhetik* [Lat. – Germ.], translated, with an introduction, notes and indexes ed. by Dagmar Mirbach, vol. 1–2 (Hamburg 2007), vol. 1, xv–lxxx. My greatest thanks go to my dear friend and colleague Dr. C. E. Emmer, of Emporia State University (Emporia, Kansas), for his very conscientious corrections of this text.

2. [Alexander Gottlieb Baumgarten]: *Disputatio chorographica inauguralis, Notiones superi et inferi, indeque adscensus et descensus in chorographiis sacris occurrentes, evolvens quam ex amplissimi philosophorum ordinis decreto. Praeside Christiano Benedicto Michaelis, [...] publico eruditorum examini subiicit responsurus Alexand. Gottl. Baumgarten* [...], Halle 1735; cf. Francesco Piselli and Claudia Rondini, “L’alto e il basso nella Sacra Scrittura. La dissertazione di laurea di Alexander Gottlieb Baumgarten”, *Bibbia e Oriente* 218, anno 45/4 (2003), pp. 193–262.

3. Cf. the Danish translation of the text: Alexander Gottlieb Baumgarten, *Filosofiske betragtninger over digtet* [Dan.], oversat fra latin og forsynet med noter af Per Aage Brandt i samarbejde med Søren Kjørup, og ledsaget af et essay, “Baumgarten og æstetikens grundlæggelse”, ved Søren Kjørup (Kopenhagen s. a. 1968); its bilingual edition [Alexander Gottlieb Baumgarten], *Reflections on Poetry, A. G. Baumgarten’s Meditationes philosophicae de nonnullis ad poema pertinentibus* [Lat. – Engl.], translated with the original text, an introduction and notes by K. Aschenbrenner and W. B. Holther (Berkeley/Los Angeles 1954); and its bilingual edition Alexander Gottlieb Baumgarten, *Meditationes philosophicae de nonnullis ad poema pertinentibus. Philosophische Betrachtungen über einige Bedingungen des Gedichts* [Lat. – Germ.], translated and with an introduction by Heinz Paetzold (Hamburg 1983).

4. Meier, *Baumgartens Leben* (cf. note 9), p. 20 – English translation D. M.

5. Alexander Gottlieb Baumgarten, *Alex. Gottl. Baumgartenii Praelectiones theologiae dogmaticae. Praef. adiecit Ioh. Salomo Semler* (Halle 1773); cf. Alexander Baumgarten, “Praelectiones philosophiae dogmaticae (extracts [§§ 1–14, Lat. – Germ.])”, edited by Dagmar Mirbach and Thomas Nisslmüller, in: *Alexander Gottlieb Baumgarten – Sinnliche Erkenntnis in der Philosophie des Rationalismus* (Jahrbuch Aufklärung), ed. by Alexander Aichele and Dagmar Mirbach (Hamburg 2008), pp. 305–350.

6. Alexander Gottlieb Baumgarten, *Metaphysica*, photomech. reprint of the 7th edition Halle 1779 (Hildesheim and New York 1969). In this essay quotations of and references to the *Metaphysica* advert to this edition.

7. [Georg Friedrich Meier], *Alexander Gottlieb Baumgartens [...] Metaphysik* [1st edition Halle 1766], new, extended edition [redacted by Johann August Eberhard], Halle 1783 (reprint with an introduction, a concordance and a bibliography of Baumgarten’s works by Dagmar Mirbach, Jena 2004). To Georg Friedrich Meier cf. below and notes 9 and 10.

8. Cf. Johann August Eberhard, “Versuch eines Plans zu einer praktischen Aesthetik. Den Kunstrichtern zur Prüfung vorgelegt”, in: *Philosophisches Magazin*, ed. by Johann August Eberhard, vol. 3, Halle 1791 [piece 1, 1790], pp. 1–54, p. 13.

9. From Meier, who for his whole life was a great admirer of his academic teacher and predecessor, we also have the most extensive and detailed obituary on

Baumgarten: [Georg Friedrich Meier], *Alexander Gottlieb Baumgartens Leben, beschrieben von Georg Friedrich Meier*. Halle 1763; cf. [Georg Friedrich Meier], “Georg Friedrich Meier: Baumgartens Leben”, ed. by Dagmar Mirbach, in: *Alexander Gottlieb Baumgarten – Sinnliche Erkenntnis in der Philosophie des Rationalismus* (Jahrbuch Aufklärung), ed. by Alexander Aichele and Dagmar Mirbach (Hamburg 2008), pp. 351–373.

10. Georg Friedrich Meier, *Anfangsgründe aller schönen Wissenschaften*, vol. 1–3, Halle 1748–50 (2nd, corrected edition 1754–59; photomech. reprint Hildesheim 1976). For Meier’s report about his use of Baumgarten’s manuscripts cf. his introduction to the *Anfangsgründe*, vol. 1, p. III.

11. Acroamatic writings: Textbooks with basic concepts and axioms for the use in academic lectures, to be illustrated by oral speech (from Greek ἀκρόασις [akrōasis]: lecture). – Baumgarten often felt obliged to defend his acroamatic style, cf. e.g. the ‘Vorreden’ to the 2nd – 4th editions of his *Metaphysica* (cf. Alexander Gottlieb Baumgarten, *Die Vorreden zur Metaphysik*, edited, translated and commented by Ursula Niggli, Frankfurt a. M. 1998) and the ‘Vorreden’ to the 2nd edition of his *Ethica* (1750).

12. Alexander Gottlieb Baumgarten, *Aesthetica, iterum edita ad exemplar prioris Editionis annorum MDCCCL–LVIII spatio impressae. Praepositae sunt Meditationes Philosophicae de nonnullis ad poema pertinentibus, ab eodem auctore editae anno MDCCXXXV* [Lat. texts redacted by Tommaso Fiore, introduction by Alessandro Casati]. Bari 1936 [for Benedetto Croce to his 70th birthday].

13. Alexander Gottlieb Baumgarten, *Aesthetica*, photomechanical reprint (3rd edition) of the edition Frankfurt a. d. Oder 1750 (Hildesheim/Zürich/New York 1986).

14. Alexander Gottlieb Baumgarten, *Estetica* [It.], Italian edition by Francesco Piselli, [Milan] 1992 (reprint 1993). – Alexander Gottlieb Baumgarten, *L’Estetica* [It.], redacted by Salvatore Tedesco, translation by Francesco Caparrotta, Anna Li Vigni, Salvatore Tedesco, scientific consult by Elisa Romano (Palermo 2000).

15. Alexander Gottlieb Baumgarten, *Ästhetik* (2007), cf. note 1.

16. Hans Rudolf Schweizer, *Ästhetik als Philosophie der sinnlichen Erkenntnis. Eine Interpretation der ‘Aesthetica’ A. G. Baumgartens mit teilweiser Wiedergabe des lateinischen Textes und deutscher Übersetzung* [Lat. – Germ.] (Basel/Stuttgart 1973), pp. 106–315. – The shorter (lacking the extracted passage of the chapter on *aesthetic light*), but more popular edition of Schweizer’s partial translation of the *Aesthetica* is Alexander Gottlieb Baumgarten, *Theoretische Ästhetik. Die grundlegenden Abschnitte aus der ‘Aesthetica’* (1750/58) [Lat. – Germ.], translated and ed. by Hans Rudolf Schweizer (Hamburg 1983; 2nd, corrected edition 1988).

17. Cf. Georg Bernhard Bilfinger, *Dilucidationes philosophicae de Deo, anima humana, mundo et generalibus rerum affectionibus*, Tübingen, 1725 (3rd edition

1746), § 268. For Baumgarten's conception of an *organic philosophy* cf. his *Sciagraphia*, § 25, his *Philosophia generalis* (for both cf. note 18) and his inaugural lecture at the *Viadrina University* (cf. note 19), and in the latter Baumgarten's note 2 to § 12.

18. Alexander Gottlieb Baumgarten, *Sciagraphia encyclopaediae philosophicae. Ed. et praefatus est Ioh. Christian Förster*, Halle 1769. – Baumgarten, Alexander Gottlieb: *Philosophia generalis. Edidit cum dissertatione prooemiali de dubitatione et certitudine Ioh. Christian Foerster*, Halle 1770.

19. [Alexander Gottlieb Baumgarten], *Alexander Gottlieb Baumgarten eröffnet Einige Gedancken vom vernünfftigen Beyfall auf Academien, und ladet zu seiner Antritts-Rede [...] ein* [1st edition Frankfurt a. d. Oder 1740], Halle (2nd, extended edition) 1741. Cf. Alexander Gottlieb Baumgarten, "Gedancken vom vernünfftigen Beyfall auf Academien", with an introduction and notes ed. by Alexander Aichele, in: *Alexander Gottlieb Baumgarten – Sinnliche Erkenntnis in der Philosophie des Rationalismus* (Jahrbuch Aufklärung), ed. by Alexander Aichele and Dagmar Mirbach (Hamburg 2008), pp. 271–304.

20. *Aesth.* § 6: "[...] philosophus homo est inter homines, neque bene tantam humanae cognitionis partem alienam a se putat [...]." – *Tanta pars* can also be understood in the sense of "important part". All English translations from Latin quotations D. M. For better legibility omissions are only marked in the latin texts given in the notes, not in the respective English translations.

21. Cf. Johann Gottfried Herder, "Plan zu einer Aesthetik", in: Johann Gottfried Herder, *Frühe Schriften 1764–1772*, ed. by Ulrich Gaier (*Johann Gottfried Herders Werke in zehn Bänden*, vol. 1) (Frankfurt a. M. 1985), pp. 653–676, p. 666.

22. Cf. Baumgarten, *Meditationes* §§ XVI–XVIII; *Met.* §§ 531, 634.

23. Cf. *Met.* §§ 36, 55.

24. To be more precise: every monas, also including non-rational ἐντελέχιαι [entelechiai] and souls, cf. Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz, *Monadologie* (1st edition, in German, 1720), §§ 14, 19. For the *pétits perceptions* cf. Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz, *Discours de métaphysique* (1686), § 33.

25. Cf. Leibniz, *Monadologie*, § 56.

26. *Aesth.* § 560: "Quid enim est abstractio, si iactura non est?"

27. Cf. *Aesth.* § 424, § 427; cf. for this differentiation of aspects of truth the helpful diagram to *Aesth.* § 424 in a student's manuscript of a lecture by Baumgarten on aesthetics, transcribed in Bernhard Poppe, *Alexander Gottlieb Baumgarten. Seine Bedeutung und Stellung in der Leibniz-Wolffischen Philosophie und seine Beziehungen zu Kant, nebst Veröffentlichung einer bisher unbekanntten Handschrift der Ästhetik Baumgartens*, (Diss.) (Borna-Leipzig 1907), pp. 59–258, p. 215; cf. Baumgarten, *Ästhetik* (2007), vol. 2, p. 995.

28. To Baumgartens concept of the faculties of imagination (*fantasia*) and fiction

(*facultas fingendi*) cf. Dagmar Mirbach, “Alexander Gottlieb Baumgarten – *Phantasia, facultas fingendi* og *phantasmata/ fictions*”, translated into Danish by Sune Liisberg, in: *Slagmark. Tidsskrift for idéhistorie*, 46: *Fantasien i filosofien* (Aarhus 2006), pp. 33–47.

29. Cf. the definition of aesthetics in *Met.* § 533 as *scientia sensitive cognoscendi et proponendi*.

30. *Aesth.* § 45: “Licebit ergo temperamentis aestheticis tribuere MAGNITUDINEM aliquam PECTORIS CONNATAM, instinctum in magna potissimum, praesertim apud attendentes, quam facilis inde transitus sit ad maxima, [...]”

31. Cf. *Met.* §§ 725, 730.

32. Poppe (1907), p. 213, § 394: “Wann jemand imstande ist, daß sie in seinen Gedanken nichts von ihrer Anmut und Würde verlieren, so hat er die höchste ästhetische Großmut, und so ein Geist wird bis zu himmlischen Dingen aufsteigen, und sie werden in seinen Gedanken nichts von [ihrer – D.M.] Würde verlieren.”

33. Vergil, *Ecl.* 5, 56f.: “insuetum miratur limen Olympi, / Sub pedibusque videt nubes et sidera”. – Latin classical texts are quoted here and in the following according to Baumgarten’s quotations in the *Aesthetica*. English translations D.M.

34. *Ibid.* 4, 15f.: “deum vitam accipiet, divisque videbit / Permistos heroas, idemque videbitur illis.”

35. Cic., *De nat. deor.* 2, 167: “Nemo vir magnus sine aliquo afflatu divino unquam fuit.”

36. *Aesth.*, § 403: “Quanquam satis magnus sublimibus animus, non est sapiens ille stoicus, quem,

*Si fractus illabatur orbis,*

*Impavidum feriant ruinae,* [Horaz, *Carm.* 3, 3, 7f.]

non levioribus tamen ille curis afficitur, nec ex tranquilla superum vitam imitante serenitate deturbatur.”

37. *Aesth.* § 404: “Quod si vero nobilis eiusmodi animus actu velit ad grandia cogitanda accedere, quasi suimet ipsius et ordinarii sui status oblitus, excitandus est, et velut extra se rapiendus in maius theatrum, quam in quo quotidie personam agit, et ita divis heroibusque miscendus, ut excelsam aliquam cum iisdem familiaritatem contraxisse, nec tanquam in alienum orbem delatus, sed in eiusmodi consortio dudum habitans appareat, §§ 213, 396.”

38. Vergil, *Aen.* 6, 129–131: “pauci, quos aequus amavit / Iuppiter, atque ardens evexit ad aethera virtus, / Diis geniti, potuere”.

39. Baumgarten there quotes Horaz, *Carm.* 3, 2, 21–24: “Virtus, recludens immeritis mori / Caelum, negata tentat iter via, / Coetusque vulgares et udam / Spernit humum fugiente penna”.

40. Cf. Longinus 44, 8.

41. *Aesth.* § 414: “Si qua libertatis externae fraena, si qua servitus externa dep-

rimendis animis retundendisque maximis quibusvis et studiis et incitationibus apprime facta sunt, quod nullus nego: nec extra oleas vagari mihi videar, si, propter oppositorum oppositas rationes, in primis auxiliis animorum ad vere excelsa levandorum numerem intimam persuasionem de copioso maximorum eventuum systemate, non praeteritorum solum et praesentium, sed etiam maxima ex parte adhuc expectandorum, non optima solum et maxima sublimitatis ac venerandae virtutis exempla simpliciter ad imitandum proponente, sed etiam saluberrima proferendi in semet ipsum imperii, fugiendae servitutis moralis omnis internae, victoriaeque in semet ipsum obtinendae remedia consilii evidentissimis subministrante, persuasionem, inquam, de veris eiusmodi rebus et gestis et gerendis, quae simul eam animabus vim largiatur ac potentiam divinitus, ut ne mortis quidem metu possint eo compelli, quo tyrannus improba poscens destinaverit, supernaturale libertatis internae psychologicaeque complementum ac supplementum.”

42. Cf. *Met.* § 729: “[...] quatenus per istud systema, anima, ut nunquam, ita in nullis actionibus suis liberis, ab ullo finito patitur realiter, totalis hoc sensu ab omni totoque mundo animae adscribitur independentia [...]”; cf. Meier, *Baumgartens Metaphysik*, § 536: “[...] so wird ihr [ der Seele – D. M.] in diesem Verstande [...] eine gänzliche Unabhängigkeit von allen Dingen der Welt zugeschrieben.”

43. Cf. *Met.* § 531: “[...] Certitudo sensitiva est PERSUASIO, intellectualis CONVICTIO [...].”

44. *Eth.* § 443: “[...] in quo [...] est tanta [cognitio – D. M.], qua ubertatem, gravitatem, veritatem, claritatem, certitudinem et vitam, quantum status virtutis poscit, in eo praestat STATUM LUCIS, s. regnum lucis morale; in quo non est tanta, ille est in STATU TENEBRARUM, regno tenebrarum morali.”

45. *Eth.* § 444: “Homo vel maxime rationalis [...], admodum copiosa, exacta, gravi, vivida etiam immo distincta moralium cognitione gaudens, ad convictionem usque vel demonstrationem etiam, tamen esse potest in statu tenebrarum; solus virtuosus in statu lucis est [...]. Sed huius etiam officium est et regni lucis pomperia proferre [...], et luci ipsius proportionate agere, i. e. AMBULARE IN LUCE, quantum potest, [...].”

46. Cf. Baumgarten, *Die Vorreden zur Metaphysik* (1998), p. 42f.

47. Leibniz, *Discours de métaphysique*, § 37: “[...] daß sich für die Guten alles zum Besten wenden muß” (Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz, *Hauptschriften zur Grundlegung der Philosophie*, translated by Artur Buchenau, with an introduction and notes by Ernst Cassirer [Hamburg, 1996], vol. 2, part 2, p. 388).

48. Hermann Glockner, in: Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz, *Monadologie*, translated, with an introduction and notes by Hermann Glockner (Stuttgart 1954), p. 9. – English translation D. M.



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