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GOODNESS AND BEAUTY IN PLATO

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ABSTRACT: *In the first part of this paper I argue that beauty and goodness are at least coextensive for Plato. That means that at least with respect to concrete particulars, everything that is good is beautiful and everything that is beautiful is good. Though the good and the beautiful are coextensive, there is evidence that they are not identical. In the second part of the paper I show significance of this relation. In ethics it implies that the good is the right. It also allows one to see how platonists can believe that goodness exists in mathematics. And it explains the usefulness of mathematics in moral education.*

KEYWORDS: *Plato, beauty, goodness, coextension, mathematics*

RESUMO: *Na primeira parte deste artigo argumento que o belo e o bem são, pelo menos, coextensivos para Platão. Isso significa que, pelo menos no que diz respeito às características concretas, tudo o que é bom é belo, e tudo o que é belo, é bom. Embora o bem e o belo sejam coextensivos, há evidências de que não são idênticos. Na segunda parte do artigo, mostro o significado desta relação. Na ética implica que o bem é o correto. Permite também ver como é possível aos platônicos acreditar que exista bondade nas matemáticas. E isso explica o uso das matemáticas na educação moral.*

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: *Platão, beleza, bondade, co-extensividade, matemática*

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1. Introduction

In this paper I would like to explore the relation between goodness (*to agathon*) and beauty (*to kalon*) in Plato. In the first place it will be argued that the evidence suggests that at the very least Plato believed there was a biconditional relation between goodness and beauty. That is, everything that is beautiful is good and everything that is good is beautiful. However, the evidence concerning the relation between beauty and goodness almost always has to do with concrete particulars, as opposed to Forms. In other words, it is almost always the case that where Plato speaks about the relation between beauty and goodness he is speaking about concrete particulars, whether these be persons, actions, or other objects of the sensible world. Very little, if anything, is explicitly said about the relation between beauty and goodness in the intellectual realm, the realm of the Forms. There are only a few passages where Plato could be taken to be speaking about beauty and goodness in the intellectual realm, and even in these few passages it has to be argued that he is in fact referring to the Forms. Thus when I say that beauty and goodness are biconditionally related in Plato, this has to be taken as referring to the sensible realm of concrete