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SUMARIO

Diálogos, 98 (2015) | pp. 007

PRESENTACIÓN

EN TORNO A LA FILOSOFÍA POLÍTICA DE PLATÓN

Las tres obras políticas mayores de Platón, es decir las obras que se dedican explícita y principalmente al estudio de una o varias dimensiones de lo que significa vivir en una *polis* –la *República*, el *Político* y las *Leyes*– han sido objetos de un sinnúmero de estudios por más de veinte siglos, hasta tal punto que cabe preguntarse sobre la relevancia de este numero de *Diálogos*.

No obstante su sencillez, la contestación más obvia y probablemente más verdadera, es que, por su carácter intrínseco, estas obras se prestan a ser objetos de acercamientos tan nuevos cada día como el sol de Heráclito. Los artículos que componen este número de *Diálogos* evidencian la gran diversidad de perspectivas y temas innovadores desde los cuales es posible todavía entender esta parte de la obra platónica. Las pepitas filosóficas nuevas se encuentran no sólo en la *terra* todavía parcialemente *incognita* que son las *Leyes*, sino también en el *Político* y en la *Républica*, a pesar de que podría pensarse que los inmensos recursos de este famoso diálogo se hayan agotado a lo largo de siglos de interpretaciones e interpretaciones de estas interpretaciones.

Los dos primeros artículos toman a Sócrates como protagonista político principal y se enfocan sobre todo en la *República*. El de Annie Larivée examina la consistencia del personaje de Sócrates en este diálogo y los demás diálogos socráticos de Platón, a partir del estudio del requisito socrático de examinarse a si mismo. El artículo de Nickolas Pappas se

enfoca en la noción de consentimiento, analizándola a partir de la situación de ignorancia de los que no son filósofos en la ciudad y que deben atenerse a las reglas establecidas por los que saben, es decir los filósofos gobernantes.

Las tres contribuciones siguientes son sobre las *Leyes*. El artículo de Francisco Lisi argumenta en contra de una lectura utópica de la ciudad de Magnesia, y a favor de su naturaleza de construccion teórica. Andreas Avgousti abre caminos nuevos sobre el papel político del pueblo y de la reputación en la obra de un filósofo que muchos consideran como poco favorable a la expresión política del pueblo. Esta novedad, sin embargo, no significa que las *Leyes* no tienen ninguna relación con el resto de la obra política de Platón. Luc Brisson enseña detalladamente que la estructura de la ciudad de Magnesia en este último diálogo del filósofo es perfectamente consistente con la de la ciudad en palabras edificada en la *República*.

Esta consistencia del pensamiento político de Platón en su conjunto, y de su pensamiento en general, la destaca también Christopher J. Rowe a propósito del *Político* respecto a la *República* y otros diálogos. Sin embargo, la aportación mayor de su artículo es que nos enseña que en el *Político*, Platón está en diálogo con Protágoras y la definición sofística de la política y del político.

Mas allá de las interpretaciones minuciosas de todos estos diálogos, tomados separados o en conjunto, los dos últimos artículos proponen lecturas más abarcadoras de temas o aspectos del pensamiento político de Platón. Propongo bosquejar la importancia de los lugares en la filosofía política de Platón, como espacios en donde se concretizan maneras de pensar y de vivir, orientadas por creencias individuales o colectivas en lo que son los valores más importantes. En fin, Monique Dixsaut analiza en la filosofía de Nietzsche los ecos de la desconfianza platónica hacia la democracia y al tipo de vida que este régimen nos propone. Explica en particular el significado distinto del concepto de genealogía en las obras de cada uno de estos dos filósofos.

Mis sinceros agradecimientos son para los autores de este número de *Diálogos*, para el director de la revista, el Dr. Carlos Rojas Osorio, por haber acogido de entrada con entusiasmo mi propuesta editorial, y para Ruby Stella Rojas y Alejandro Toledo que se encargaron de la parte técnica de la edición de este número, tanto en su versión impresa como en su versión electrónica.

Étienne Helmer

Diálogos, 98 (2015) | pp. 011

«AN UNEXAMINED LIFE IS NOT WORTH LIVING FOR HUMAN BEINGS»

A POLITICAL INTERPRETATION OF SOCRATES' WATCHWORD

ANNIE LARIVÉE

> *«Has there ever been anyone else, slave or free man, whose deliverance from illness had been due to Socrates?»*
>
> Socrates in the *Gorgias*, 504d

Abstract

According to a widely held view, the disappearance of the elenchus *in the middle and late dialogues would indicate an important shift in Plato's thought. This shift would be so radical that the Socrates found in the Socratic dialogues would not be the same as the Socrates of the* Republic. *Whereas the first would be a faithful representation of the real –historical– Socrates, the second would be a false, «platonised» Socrates. I challenge this view by shedding light on the continuity between the Socratic dialogues and the* Republic *concerning the issue of the examination of the soul. Paying attention to this continuity enables us to perceive the unity of Plato's project (which is motivated by a concern for politics) and to reject the idea*

of the two Socrates or worse, of a «schizophrenic Socrates,» as Vlastos once put it. My analysis rests on a political *interpretation of Socrates' famous watchword: «An unexamined life is not worth living for human beings».*

* * *

According to a widely held view, which the works of Gregory Vlastos served to reinforce, the disappearance of the elenchus from the dialogues of maturity would signal an important shift in Plato's thought. This shift would be so radical that the Socrates found in the so-called Socratic dialogues would not be the same as the Socrates of the *Republic*. Whereas the first would be a faithful representation of the real Socrates, the second would be a false, «platonised» Socrates. This hermeneutic perspective merits discussion because of the presuppositions on which it depends. These presuppositions have considerable implications towards the status of the true opinion and the question of knowing to whom the Socratic exhortation to practice philosophy is addressed – to humanity as a whole or to a small number of people? In this article, I will attempt to shed light on the continuity that exists between the Socratic dialogues and the *Republic* by focusing on the issue of the examination of the soul. In my view, this continuity, which finds it source in a political concern, calls for the rejection of the hypothesis of a rupture in Plato's thought, of the two Socrates, or worse, of a «schizophrenic Socrates.»[1]

«An unexamined life is not liveable for human beings»

I begin by citing a passage from Vlastos concerning the possible break between an authentic Socrates and a platonised Socrates, described as

[1] «I have been speaking of *a* 'Socrates' in Plato. There are two of them. In different segments of Plato's corpus two philosophers bear that name. The individual remains the same. But in different sets of dialogues he pursues philosophies so different that they could not have been depicted as cohabiting the same brain throughout unless it had been the brain of a schizophrenic. They are so diverse in content and method that they contrast as sharply with one another as with any third philosophy you care to mention, beginning with Aristotle's.» Vlastos 1991, 45-46.

«crypto-oligarchical.» This passage clearly highlights the philosophical, ethical, and political implications of such a rupture:

> How profoundly democratic in the broader sense of the term *these* are [namely, «Socrates political sentiments and loyalties»] we can see by comparing him on this point with Plato in the *Republic*. To confine, as Plato does in Books IV to VII of that work, moral inquiry to a tiny elite, is to obliterate the Socratic vision which opens up the philosophic life to all. If «the unexamined life is not worth living by a human being» (*Ap*. 38a), Plato's restriction of the examined life to an elite would have been seen as making life not worth living for the mass of human beings […] Socrates democratized moral philosophy: he brought it within the reach of the «many».[2]

The principal components of Vlastos' reasoning could be summarized as follows:

1) The Socratic dialogues present an accurate portrait of Socrates.
2) In these dialogues –especially the *Apology*, which is a dialogue that Plato wrote early in his career– Socrates emphasizes the value of moral inquiry for all.
3) Thus, the historical Socrates, who was *demophilic*, opened the access to moral inquiry and philosophical life *to all*.

Furthermore,

4) In the *Republic*, Socrates restricts philosophical examination to the intellectual elite. (Remind dialectics

[2] Vlastos 1991, 18.

is the last stage of the philosopher's education; this kind of examination is not opened to all.)

5) Since the real Socrates was himself a *demophile* who encouraged everyone to philosophize, it becomes apparent that the philosophically elitist Plato lurks behind the Socrates of the *Republic*.

The conclusion seems evident. However, it rests on a false implicit premise. This premise is that, *examination* (here *exetasis*) on the one hand, and *moral inquiry* and *philosophical life* on the other, would be, without qualification, perfect synonyms. But what exactly are we to make of Socrates' assertion, in the *Apology*, that an unexamined life is not worth living, or even liveable?[3] Does he mean that each person should devote their life to the philosophical investigation of the nature of the virtues and the Good? That people cannot live well, or even live at all, without an active and personal engagement in such «moral inquiry»? And furthermore, is dialectics, as described in the central Books of the *Republic*, really what comes to replace Socratic examination?

Context of the statement

Vlastos bases himself on the famous statement in the *Apology*, ὁ δὲ ἀνεξέταοτος βίος οὐ βιωτὸς ἀνθρώπῳ (38a5-6), to argue that Socrates «opens up the philosophic life to all». It is worth looking into the meaning of that short sentence, probably the most famous of Plato's corpus. In the *Apology,* Socrates states that he spends his life philosophizing; by this, he refers to the task of submitting to examination, *exetazein*, that the god (indirectly) gave him.[4] From a methodological

[3] βιωτός is traditionally translated as «worth living». However, adjectives ending with *-tos* simply express possibility. Saying that life is «not liveable» is much stronger than to say that it is «not worth living», but I suspect that this is what Plato's Socrates had in mind.

[4] In the sentence «You shall no longer engage in this search nor philosophize» (*Ap*. 29c), «nor» is «epexegetic» according to Vlastos, since «for Socrates, to philosophize is to examine», Vlastos 1994, 4. Brisson's translation of 28e expresses the same idea: «[...] vivre en philosophant, c'est-à-dire en soumettant moi-même et les autres à l'examen.»

standpoint, the examination consists in a questioning in search of definitions based on refutation; but what is its aim? The verb *exetazein* is not very frequent in the Platonic corpus. It is interesting to note that the terms relating to *exetasis* have a military meaning, as they indicate the inspecting of troops, the passing in review of soldiers to ensure that each one of them is rightly equipped and in his exact place.[5] Also, in 28e-29a, Socrates appeals to the same picture, when he compares his mission to a kind of military duty and evokes the «post» (*taxis*) where the god has placed him.[6] Taking this military meaning seriously should lead us to believe that the examination, whose importance for all is highlighted by Socrates, does not have as its objective a kind of philosophical questioning on the morals that everyone should engage in (a type of Kantian invitation –before its time– to use one's own understanding). It would rather be a kind of verification, of inspection to which a person must agree to be *submitted*; a sort of inspection in which individuals may face admonishment for their behaviour, their orientation, and their value, or for the role they are expected to have in the whole of which they are a part.[7] Further, this submission to examination, as Plato presents it in the

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[5] After the general meaning («examine well or closely scrutinize, review»), it is the second meaning listed in the LSJ: «of troops, inspect, pass in review». For the literal meaning, see Xenophon, *Anabasis* 5, 3, 3; Thucydides 4, 74, 3; 6, 42, 1; 6, 45, 1; 6, 96, 3; 6, 97, 3; 7, 33, 6 etc.; for the figurative sense, see Demosthenes, *On the Crown*, 320.

[6] Socrates claims that his *exetasis* mission was not freely chosen. Rather, it was linked to a *taxis* that was ascribed to him: «This is the truth of the matter, men of Athens: wherever a man has taken a position (οὗ ἄν τις ἑαυτον τάξη) that he believes to be the best, or has been placed by his commander, there he must, I think, remain and face danger, without a thought for death or anything else, rather than disgrace. It would have been a dreadful way to behave, men of Athens, if, at Potidaea, Amphipolis and Delium, I had at the risk of death, like anyone else, remained at my post where those you had elected to command had ordered me (ἐι ὅτε μέν με οἱ ἄρχοντες ἔταττον), and then, when the god ordered me (τοῦ δὲ θεοῦ τάττοντος), as I thought and believed, to live the life of a philosopher, to examine myself and others (φιλοσοφοῦντά με δεῖν ζῆν καὶ ἐξετάζοντα ἐμαυτὸν καὶ τοὺς ἄλλους), I had abandoned my post (λίποιμι τὴν τάξιν) for fear of death or anything else.» 28d-29a.

[7] In the *Apology*, Socrates makes many references to the fact that he regularly blamed his fellow citizens of Athens in that regard. Brisson describes Socrates' mission as «une pratique de la philosophie entendue comme refutation révélant la valeur d'un être humain.» Brisson 2001, 94.

short dialogues, appears as a rebuttal of the pretension to knowledge in the search for definitions. However, as the statement in 38a shows well, that testing does not relate, in the end, to the intellectual ability of each citizen to find the definition of moral concepts, but rather to his life. The warnings given by Socrates after his condemnation show it clearly: life, *bios*, is the *object* of the examination.

> You did this [namely, sentenced Socrates to death] in the belief that you would avoid giving an account of your life (οἰόμενοι μὲν ἀπαλλάξεσθαι τοῦ διδόναι ἔλεγχον τοῦ βίου), but I maintain that quite the opposite will happen to you. There will be more people to test you (πλείους ἔσονται ὑμᾶς οἱ ἐλέγχοντες), whom I now held back, but you did not notice it. [...]. You are wrong if you believe that by killing people you will prevent anyone from reproaching you for not living in the right way. To escape such tests is neither possible nor good […].
>
> *Apology*, 39c

Therefore, in order to understand what Socrates really means when he says, ὁ δὲ ἀνεξέταστος βίος οὐ βιωτὸς ἀνθρώπῳ, one must resist the temptation to artificially separate this famous sentence from the dramatic context of the *Apology*. Indeed, we must keep in mind that during his trial, Socrates wants to convince the judges of the tremendous utility of the very unpleasant tests he imposed on his fellow citizens. So, when Socrates affirms that «an unexamined life is not liveable», perhaps we should not interpret it as «Philosophize! Dedicate your life, as I do, to an inquiry about the nature of the virtues, otherwise, you will not live well,» but rather as: «Let me examine you! Because life will not be worth living, it will not be liveable, if you condemn me in order to escape the unpleasant inspection prescribed by the god.» «You need someone like me to appraise your life, to make you realize that you don't live as you should, that you don't possess the knowledge you claim to possess, and

that this has a negative impact on your personal *bios*, as well as on our collective *bios*.»

Indeed, the reason Socrates was accused and faced capital punishment is not because he invited his fellow citizens to dedicate themselves to a free investigation into the nature of moral concepts. Rather, it is because he publicly submitted respected and influential Athenians to a humiliating test. His «inspection» revealed the inadequacy of their supposed virtue, of their supposed knowledge, and made clear, consequently, that they were usurping a «post» (*taxis*) which they did not deserve in the «life», the *bios*, of the *polis*. This is the kind of ignorance which, should it not be brought to light and denounced, risks making life, collective life in particular, not *biotos*, not liveable.[8] The examination to which everyone must be *submitted* essentially has, then, for its objective to reveal the real state of the soul –its ignorance, *amathia*– and the need for care, that is to say, the need for education. Now, if this is the aim of Socrates' mission of examination, such a test still exists in the *Republic*. And this test, contrary to what Vlastos claims, far from being reserved to the intellectual and political elite, still applies to the whole of citizens. This is what I now want to demonstrate.

Continuity and transformation of the examination of souls as testing mode

If this continuity escaped Vlastos' attention, and if he thought it necessary to postulate the existence of two Socrates, it could simply be because he was not looking in the right place. For what takes the place of the testing and refutation to which Socrates personally submitted his interlocutors in the early dialogues is not dialectics, as Vlastos implicitly suggests. Rather, I would argue that it is the testing designed to verify which souls contain «gold», «silver», or «bronze». It is this testing which serves to distinguish the type of nature each citizen possesses, in order to

[8] Collective life risks not being «liveable» in a very literal way if this type of usurpation leads to tyranny, for example.

assign them their particular requisite post, their *taxis*.[9] Two principal reasons surely explain the failure to recognize this basic continuity between the Socratic examination of the early dialogues and the various methods of testing mentioned in the *Republic*, the *Politics*, and the *Laws*. First, there is the fact that interpreters typically concentrate their attention on questions of method rather than on intended purpose or aim (in this case, the elenchus that occurs in the context of a definitional inquiry).[10] And second, there is the fact that, following Vlastos, research became increasingly focused on the term *elenchos*. However, *elenchos* is but one of the numerous expressions used to designate the testing to which Socrates submits his interlocutors. In order to provide a significant picture of the continuities and ruptures between the early dialogues and the great political works concerning this issue, we must first rid ourselves of this blinding fixation on the term ἔλεγχος to examine terms like οκέψις, ἐξέτασις, πεῖρα and βάσανος.[11]

This being said, the differences between the modes of examination of the soul in the Socratic dialogues and the *Republic* seem, at first glance, so profound that it may be excessive to see a significant continuity between them. First obvious change: while Socrates submitted a particular soul to an examination taking the form of a discursive exchange in the Socratic dialogues, in the *Republic* the philosopher-kings surreptitiously submit the soul of the citizens as a collective to a series of tests, such that those whose natures are under examination are unaware of being subjected to such scrutiny. The leaders are to observe the behaviour of children while

[9] See *Rep.* IV, 415b-c for example.

[10] See Smith 1998, 152.

[11] R. Robinson, who wrote before Vlastos' work focused the attention of interpreters on the term *elenchos*, could still appreciate that terminological diversity. See Robinson [1941] 1984, 7: «[…] such is the Socratic elenchus,» he writes, «often referred to also as *exetasis* or scrutiny and *basanismus* or assay.» In fact, the word *basanismos*, which means «torture» according to the *LSJ*, does not appear in Plato's dialogues. We do find, however, many occurrences of the term *basanos* (16 occurrences) and *basanizein* (30 occurrences) in the platonic corpus.

they play,[12] and that of the youth in the context of their physical or intellectual training.[13] And, in particular, leaders are to place guardian apprentices into certain destabilizing situations to observe their reactions. Each step of the guardians' education is described as a form of testing.[14] The citizens of Socrates' imagined city are thus constantly submitted to an examination aiming to reveal the true nature of their souls, and to determinate the role which they shall be called upon to assume in the *polis*.

The second change is even more radical. In fact, in the earlier dialogues, the testing by Socrates essentially aimed to purge souls of their false opinions – and particularly from the belief that one knows when one does not (*amathia*). In contrast, in the *Republic,* the test aims to select

[12] *Rep*. 537a-b. In the *Statesman*, the art of statesmanship will weave the polis's fabric using only citizens who possess a good nature and will identify them by observing children's behaviour in play: «it will first put them to the test in play (παιδιᾷ πρῶτον βασανιεῖ), and after the test (μετὰ δὲ τὴν βάσανον) it will in turn hand them over to those with the capacity to educate them and serve it towards this particular end.» (308d4). See also *Laws* 735a4, 736c2.

[13] The way young people react to studies constitutes, as such, a test that reveals which citizens are meant to become guardians, *Rep.* 503e1. See also *Letter VII,* 340d-341a: «Those who are really not philosophers but have only a coating of opinions, like men whose bodies are tanned by the sun, when they see how much learning is required, and how great the labor, and how orderly their daily lives must be to suit the subject they are pursuing, conclude that the task is too difficult for their powers; and rightly so, for they are not equipped for this pursuit. But some of them persuade themselves that they have already sufficiently heard the whole of it and need make no further effort. Now this is a clear and infallible test to apply to those who love ease and are incapable of strenuous labour [...].»

[14] Socrates explains that once they reach the age of thirty, the best ones will be selected: «[…] then, you'll have to look out for the ones who most of all have this ability in them and who also remain steadfast in their studies, in war, and in the other activities laid down by law. And after they have reached their thirtieth year, you'll select them in turn from among those chosen earlier and assign them yet greater honours. Then you'll have to test them by means of the power of dialectic (τῇ τοῦ διαλέγεσθαι δυνάμει βασανίζοντα), to discover which of them can relinquish his eyes and other senses, going on with the help of truth to that which by itself is. And this is a task that requires great care.» *Rep*. 537d. Once the guardians in training go down into the cave again and occupy offices, Socrates explains that «in these too, they must be tested (καὶ ἔτι καὶ ἐν τούτοις βασανιστέοι) to see whether they'll remain steadfast when they're pulled this way and that or shift their ground.» *Rep.* 540a1.

the souls which have the best *ability to maintain* certain beliefs. The goal of the examination is no longer to *detach* the soul from some of its opinions; it rather aims to test the soul's ability to stay firmly attached to the true belief transmitted to it. Concerning the future guardians, Socrates explains that

> we must choose from among our guardians those men who, upon examination, seem most of all to believe throughout their lives that they must eagerly pursue what is advantageous to the city and be wholly unwilling to do the opposite. […] we must observe them at all ages to see whether they are guardians of this conviction and make sure that neither compulsion nor magic spells will get them to discard or forget their belief that they must do what is best for the city.
>
> *Rep*. 412d-e

Modes of testing will be developed for each of the three possible alternatives to lose a true belief, namely: 1) By «theft», that is to say, through forgetting or through dissuasion by argument; 2) by «violence» or «compulsion», when one abandons the true belief because of suffering; 3) by «magic spells», when one is seduced by pleasure or when one is shaken by fear. The souls will thus be examined (here, the verbs used are βασανίζειν and σκοπεῖν) by being placed in certain critical situations corresponding to these three possibilities of losing a true belief through the pressure of circumstances.[15]

At first sight, the differences seem enormous between the examination to which Socrates submits his interlocutors in the early dialogues, and the modes of testing presented in the *Republic* (as well as in the *Politics* and the *Laws*). Thus, can we really speak of continuity between these two testing practices?

[15] These are beliefs that will make the citizens care first and foremost for the well-being of the *polis*.

From a corrective horizon to a preventive horizon

First, despite the difference in method, in both groups of texts the task remains the same –to uncover the soul, to reveal its nature, its state. But more importantly, these divergent methods and approaches can be explained by a difference in the *political context*.[16] Indeed, in the early dialogues, Socrates is faced with individuals whose souls have been corrupted by a hastily constituted society– a sick *politeia* in the terms of the *Republic*, a sick collective way of life or *bios*. In view of these conditions, his task is essentially *corrective*. It consists in an attempt to repair –if at all possible– the damage caused by a deficient education and defective political institutions. To do this, he must inculcate his fellow citizens with an awareness of the necessity of taking care of their souls, and of having recourse to the competence of the expert who is apt to proffer such care, the τεχνικὸς περὶ ψυχῆς θεραπείαν.[17] But in the great political works, the point of view is radically different: Socrates takes the liberty of imagining how one could prevent the emergence of evil. His task is no longer to provide corrective individual care. Rather, it is to imagine what political conditions could render life liveable from psychological and civic points of view. The move away from the elenchus would thus not signify that Socrates –or Plato– abandoned the idea of a direct participation by all in philosophical life (that he ever subscribed to such an idea is doubtful). Rather, it reflects the fact that, from the perspective of imagining a form of preventive political care, the negative therapeutic process of purging false beliefs becomes less pertinent. Indeed, in a preventive context, it is the transmission of true beliefs assuring the «health» of the soul which takes precedence over everything else. Such a difference in orientation can moreover clearly be discerned in the choice

[16] See Larivée 2003, 98-102.

[17] *Laches* 185e4-6. On the political scope of the *elenchos*, see Balaudé 1996, 36.

of vocabulary. Since terms related to *basanos* are predominant, we see that the refutation of falsity gives way to a form of positive affirmation of value.[18]

Furthermore, although I will not demonstrate it here, the value attributed to true belief in the *Republic* does not denote a fundamental change in Plato's philosophical orientation. In the *Meno*, we find the statement that true belief has the same worth as knowledge about how to conduct one's life. Recall that according to Vlastos, it is with this text that Socrates' fundamental conviction –that an unexamined life is not worth living– would completely collapse:

> When this conclusion is reached [namely that «for governing action aright true belief is as good as knowledge»] a whole row of Socratic dominos will have to fall, including the fundamental conviction that «The unexamined life is not worth living by a man». For if true opinion without knowledge does suffice to guide action aright, then the great mass of men and women may be spared the pain and hazards of the «examined» life: they may be brought under the protective custody of a ruling elite who will feed them true beliefs to guide their conduct aright, without allowing them to inquire why those beliefs are true. Access to the critical examination of questions of good and evil, right and wrong, may then be reasonably withheld from all but the elite, and even from them until they have finished the mathematical studies which will prepare them for enlightenment. So in the *Meno* we see Plato well started

[18] While, in most cases, «to refute» (*elenchein*, *exelenchein*) involves an attempt to reveal the falsity of someone's claim (especially in the judicial context), *basanizein*, *basanon lambanein*, rather means that one attempts to attest the value of a claim. Originally, the *basanos* is the touchstone that confirms that a metal is, indeed, gold (and not merely a fraudulent alloy). In the context of a trial, the *basanos* to which a slave is submitted aims at attesting the *veracity* of his master's claims. The citizen who was accused was invited to give his slaves over to his accuser so that they could be submitted to torture in order to prove the veracity of his own declarations. See Dorion 1990, 320 *sq* and 324 *sq*.

> on a course that will take him to the other extreme from convictions he had shared with Socrates in the Elenctic Dialogues: the doctrine of the philosopher-king looms ahead.[19]

The falseness of this reasoning becomes apparent once the purpose of the examination advocated by Socrates in the *Apology* is understood. But, in addition, one must draw attention to the constant insistence, in the early dialogues, on the necessity of having recourse to certain experts on the care of the soul, as one would have recourse to the advice of a doctor or a physical trainer. This insistence rests on the implicit valorisation of true belief, for the individual who requires and follows the expert's advice does not himself possess knowledge.[20] Furthermore, the idea that knowledge should not be accessible to all in every occasion and in any conditions is already being held by Socrates in the prologue of the *Protagoras*. There, he explains to the young Hippocrates that the nourishment of the soul should be «ingested» only while abiding by the advice of an expert on the matter. In short, the epistemological elitism of the *Republic* is already well at work in the so-called Socratic dialogues. We thus must resist the anachronistic temptation to construe the Socratic plea for care of the soul as an invitation to self-therapy.[21]

Surely, from a historical point of view, it is not implausible that by moving from a corrective therapeutic perspective based on individual testing to a preventative approach of a collective and political nature, it was Plato's aim to implicitly critique the method of his master. That the corrective method based on refutation and admonition proved to be fairly

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[19] Vlastos 1991, 125.

[20] Socrates makes a paradigmatic use of the figures of the physician and of the master gymnast in the *Crito* (47a-b), the *Protagoras* (313d-314a), the *Laches* (184e-185e), and the *First Alcibiades* (128c).

[21] I defended that thesis in my PhD dissertation, *L'Asclépios politique. Étude sur le soin de l'âme dans les dialogues de Platon.*

ineffective is witnessed implicitly by the destinies of certain of Socrates' disciples represented in the early dialogues, such as Alcibiades or Charmides. It was known to Plato's contemporaries that these disciples had, in the end, turned out to be failures.[22] However, from a strictly *dramatic* point of view, the coexistence of these two styles of testing –corrective and preventive– in no way threatens the coherence of Socrates' persona. He can challenge the reigning corruption by way of the *elenchos* in certain dialogues, while believing in the pertinence of a collective, educational, and political solution in others. Plato's dialogues thus only present a single Socrates. And even if he occasionally hears voices, nothing indicates that he is schizophrenic.

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[22] In his Book, Scott devotes a lot of attention to Socrates' failure. See Scott 2000.

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WOMEN AT THE GYMNASIUM AND CONSENT FOR THE *REPUBLIC*'S CITY

Nickolas Pappas

Abstract

The workers in the Republic's *city are expected to consent virtuously to its constitution, recognizing the governance as good. Yet working people will begin living under the regime unequipped to perceive its goodness; and the* Republic *says almost nothing about how they will change in this respect. Only one passage suggests a transformation among the workers. When Socrates describes women guardians exercising alongside men, he says that practice will arouse ridicule. The subsequent acceptance that he predicts, extending the Athenians' earlier acceptance of male gymnastic nudity, suggests a mechanism by which the city's workers will come to consent robustly.*

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The problem of women at the gymnasium

The proposal that women exercise alongside men occupies one Stephanus page in *Republic* Book V.[1] Socrates has argued that the good city's governing class will include women; now he adds that to be strong

[1] *Rep.* V, 452a-e.

on the battlefield they will have to exercise. This being Greece, that means exercising naked at the gymnasium.

When healthy men and women disrobe and exert themselves together, there is bound to be sex. So the argument leads to «erotic necessities» and to the regulations that the new city will impose to engineer future generations. But before he even speaks of the sexual consequences of naked exercise, Socrates pictures its risible effect. People will laugh, and especially at the sight of old women jumping around.[2]

Why the thought of laughing mockery before the thought of sex? Surely not because Socrates (or Plato) finds women's bodies any less erotic than men's. For in the next breath Socrates reminds his interlocutors that everyone had also laughed when *male* gymnastic nudity came to Athens. It happened not long ago, he says, implying that this is how he knows what happened and can inform the young men he is talking to. The practice reached Athens from Crete and Sparta, and the city's wits made jokes about men undressing to exercise.[3] The laughter was replaced by understanding and a preference for the new practice, and that will happen again this time, and *then* we can talk about sexual realities; as if to say that the supreme topic is how a public perceives and accepts the regime it lives under.

The past change that Socrates describes took place among Athenian men at large, for all male citizens went to the gymnasium. I take it the change he predicts will involve the general public too. The guardian women will be visible not only to male guardians but to all the other men as well. So it is not too much to call this change a moment within the great question about the public in the *Republic*, namely the question of how the citizenry will come to understand and esteem the new constitution. The topic of women guardians at the gymnasium tends to get only a passing nod from Plato's readers, except as part of the history of philosophical feminism. I

[2] *Rep.*: erotic necessities, V, 458d; laughter especially at old women's nudity, V, 452b-c.

[3] *Rep.* V, 452c.

propose that the passage in question rewrites, in a tight small script, an image of public virtue, specifically the virtue at work in the citizens' acquiescence to being governed. Citizens have changed their minds before now to accept a change for the better; they can change their minds again when the new regime arrives.

The double argument for consent

The treatment of the city's first class establishes the terms for understanding the third class's relationship to the city. A familiar problem of consent surfaces in connection with the *Republic*'s philosophers, and the challenge of convincing them to undergo the turn that their own philosophizing makes unattractive, to accept what Plato's readers know as «going back into the cave.»[4] And as different as the philosophers will be from the new city's other people, the discussion is the same in one respect. There is a distance between arguments that persuade within the established good city and those that persuade in «this» world, this one being a world that does not contain a Platonic city and has never contained people reared according to its educational proposals.

Socrates explains what argument will induce the philosophers to rule. They exist as philosophers because the city trained them in the subject, he tells Glaucon, so they owe their city a debt that philosophers in existing cities are free of. Justice requires that they serve as rulers in recognition of the benefit their city granted them.

Even if the argument strikes us as compelling it is vulnerable to a criticism.[5] Philosophers who have come to understand the good should be moved to govern in order to increase the good in the city. Who led them to the knowledge they possess should not matter; and to be a

[4] *Rep.* VII, 520b-c.

[5] I am grateful to Allan Silverman for this and related points, which occurred in a discussion that turned a very different paper into this one.

philosopher is to possess just this knowledge of the good itself, and to possess it as sufficient for motivating action.

But Glaucon, to whom Socrates offers the argument about reciprocating benefits, does not possess the mind of the philosophical ruler, and perhaps he only sees a short way into that mind's workings. Many of the *Republic*'s readers are in the same position as Glaucon, being as they are the products of something less than the full education that includes the good. Readers might understand principles of justice even without that greater study of the Good;[6] Glaucon evidently does. For him the appeal to the new city's philosophers generates as much agreement as the argument needs.

The worries over how to persuade philosophers to rule go far beyond «Fair's fair.» But it is those very worries that make my point. The less satisfying you find the appeal to reciprocal justice as grounds for the philosopher's rule, the more willing you ought to be to picture that appeal as something external to the real argument, a foreground representation of the deeper considerations that will persuade true philosophers. The *Republic* needs arguments suited to the existing world to show its readers that the city makes moral sense, even if the functioning city will proceed on the basis of arguments as yet unstated (because unheeded as yet).

The working classes

I do not want to remain on the subject of philosopher-kings. They and the other guardians occupy so much of Plato's attention that we forget how much of the city is made up of the third class. And then we forget to ask what arguments will convince the other citizens to abide by the new regime – arguments to them that we, outside the new city, will also be able to accept.

[6] The *Republic* sometimes nods at the distance between its own study of justice and a fuller understanding of the good; thus VI, 504b; IV, 435c-d.

Victor Hanson's *The Other Greeks* has the moral authority it does, in its portrayal of ancient citizen-farmers, not merely because histories neglected them but because that neglectful treatment left most people out of history.[7] Combine the farmers with all non-farming trained professionals found in a city like Athens, and this third class easily accounts for 85-90% of the new city. So dwelling on how to talk philosophers into ruling amounts not so much to putting the cart before the horse as to unhitching the horse from an enormous cart – almost to worrying about the wrong consent. I would rather unbalance the inquiry in favor of the city's third class where Plato's argument unbalances it in favor of his top-tier philosophers, a striking group but *ex hypothesi* also the group most easily convinced of the new city's merits.

The productive or working class will have to join in the political system of the city as much as the philosophical class will have to administer that system. And the treatment of the philosophers suggests two constraints on the answer we want regarding the working class. First, agreement has to come to more than barely tolerating the yoke of law and government. Nothing is worse than a grudging spirit.[8] Second, we should expect some distance to exist between what *we* find persuasive, here outside the *Republic*'s city, and what effective persuasion might look like within that city, among long-time participants in its society. The richer, thorough, philosophical approval Plato wants may remain incompletely appreciated by us outside the new city, if life in that city is one of the conditions productive of the approval.

Rachana Kamtekar makes the first point, seeking to go beyond grudging approval, when she distinguishes the agreement to be sought in the new city from the lesser consent that modern social-contract theories

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[7] Hanson 1995.

[8] Plato *Rep.*: Adeimantus complains that the rulers won't be happy, IV, 419a; Glaucon wonders why they will choose the worse life of governing, VII, 519d. Modern commentators come across a version of this complaint when worrying about the argument meant to bring philosophers back into the cave. As just men and women they should be cheered to be acting justly. Persuading them feels like persuading people to be happy. See Smith 2010.

aim at.[9] In the *Republic* the value of agreement accrues to all citizens, not only to the state being consented to. In other words Plato wants more than the political «legitimacy» that is demonstrated through consent. And as far as possible the citizens should all base their agreement on what the city is actually like. They ought to love the city for the right reason, that it is a good city.

Kamtekar may overstate the moral uplift that needs to come with *homonoia* «concord, civil harmony» but she sees correctly that mere acceptance of rule would not rise to the *Republic*'s own stated goal of *sôphrosunê* «moderation, temperance.» Wisdom resides among the rulers and courage may be found in the armed class that Plato calls auxiliaries, but the city's moderation cannot confine itself to a single class as those virtues do. If it did, I imagine, this virtue would indeed look like acquiescence to a powerful ruler. That is, if moderation were the working class's task alone, it would be a reflexive virtue, manifesting itself in just and unjust cities alike as unconditional obedience. To a thoroughly pliant populace it would not matter whether commands ought to be obeyed; their being commands would be enough; and we would lose sight of the relationship between moderation and awareness of what is good. Instead of such a condition however the *Republic* describes a reciprocity in which all parties accept the form of government they live with, the rulers agreeing to rule with moderation and the rest moderate in their agreement to be ruled. As Kamtekar puts it, «the ruled, rather than being simply dominated by the rulers, believe that their rulers should rule over them.»[10]

The working class will not even call the city's governors *despotas* «lords» and «rulers» as people do in other cities, but *sôtêres* «saviors, preservers» or *epikouroi* «assistants,» so agreeable do they find the goals

[9] Kamtekar 2004, 132. In describing and discussing Kamtekar's portrayal of the *Republic* I will not comment on her contrast with modern theories of consent. Hobbes, for one, proposes a more extensive meeting of the minds under his sovereign than simple descriptions of his theory acknowledge.

[10] *Rep.*: wisdom in rulers, IV, 428d-e; courage in soldiers, 429b-c; *sôphrosunê* throughout, 431e-432b. The ruled «believe that their rulers should rule»: Kamtekar 2004, 131.

to which the governors commit themselves.[11] These people are bringing about what the workers want. What Thrasymachus called the *sumpheron* «interest, profit, advantage» of the stronger may motivate the governors of existing cities, but in the city to come those who govern will be seen as seeking what profits everyone.[12]

In her desire to find moral uplift for all citizens, Kamtekar plays down the instrumental interest Plato might have in *homonoia*, as a preventive to civil war. Yet from Plato's perspective it would be no small matter to free his city from the permanent conflict built into the political life of Sparta, where the new governors were said to declare war on their Helots every year so as to be able to kill them at will.[13] And if Kamtekar goes too far in the virtue she expects from the working people, she expects too little virtue to develop among those who obey the city's laws.[14] Law-abiding behavior will not generate everything Plato has led us to demand from virtue, according to Kamtekar. The city's farmers and craft workers can only count as agreeing to being governed if they do so on the basis of recognition that the government is good; and the psychological justice that such recognition calls for is treated as only ever the product of a philosophically-guided education in values

You may believe, *contra* Kamtekar, that the *Republic* credits law-abiding behavior with instilling genuine virtue in the soul. Even so, her general point stands as a constraint on any account of political consent in the *Republic*. The productive workers must have some understanding of the city's goodness when they agree to be bound by its laws; to the extent they can see such a thing, they agree to being governed because they see the government as good, and not merely as useful to them as they would have been in the absence of any such city.

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[11] *Rep.* V, 463a-b; Kamtekar 2004, 158.

[12] *Rep.* I, 338c.

[13] Plutarch *Lycurgus* 28.4. Plutarch attributes this information to Aristotle.

[14] Kamtekar 2004, 147n.27; cf. 155.

From one concord to another

The second constraint in one way is optimistic, that is to say the idea that motivational principles operative before the city's existence be distinguished from those at work in the city. As the appeal to simple justice might show Glaucon why philosophers rule without exhausting their true motives for doing so, likewise the productive class as now constituted might agree to live in the good city for reasons distinct from those that will motivate the fourth generation, the first workers' great-grandchildren, born without knowledge of other systems.

Any ambitious educational program assumes some such discrepancy between initial and later motives. Many high school students begin college because they think they will earn more money with a degree. If their education has merit, they finish college glad to have experienced it regardless of how much more they earn. There is no point telling them beforehand that they are reasoning incorrectly. Their experience in school ought to take care of that. Insisting on the right motivations in place before the student begins looks like a display of confidence in the value of education but is something more like a failure of confidence.

As far as the workers in Plato's city are concerned, the substantive agreement that Kamtekar calls for must be present among the ones I am calling the great-grandchildren, those who do not have even grandparents to tell them about other ways of life. The intrinsic merit of the city presupposes that it fosters virtue in its citizens. So does its long-term survival, given that the agreement to being governed that comes from moderate people will perpetuate itself far better than grudging consent does. But the first members of this class in the newly founded city can have reasons for consenting to be governed that don't begin in virtue in the same way that they continue in virtue.

Consider one account of the producers' consent that has been proposed in numerous ways, maybe most cogently by C. D. C. Reeve. Whatever else distinguishes the city philosophically, it also has features of a laissez-faire economy. People who earn their keep as farmers or

professionals will be able to live as they had, but freed from the chore of democratic procedures and the risk of death at war. The city's auxiliaries will do the fighting while benevolent philosophers take on the drudgery of administration. And this government is cheap, with lean soldiers who own nothing of value living in open public barracks. The workers will not be able to earn too much, but they will also be saved from poverty in case they earn too little.[15] This is the city for making money in, whatever other goals the founders had in mind for it.[16] Reasoning prudentially, the city's productive workers will find its constitution a better deal, according to their own financially oriented values, than any other kind of city.

Even without accepting everything that Kamtekar says about the citizens in the *Republic*'s city, one can share her suspicion that something has gone wrong if all workers feel this way forever. For then their value is moneymaking, which would have been their goal in any existing city. Their consent is bought, in a very literal sense; and we are left imagining their moderation as a manifestation of that immoderate desire called *philarguria* «money-love.» The good city has not improved the workers' lives if their agreement depends on the same motives that had always driven them.[17]

But although the first condition for understanding the workers' consent dictates that we reject Reeve's analysis, the second condition tempers that response. Kamtekar may be right about what keeps the first workers' great-grandchildren moderate in the established city, without thereby being right about their great-grandparents' grounds for consenting to the city as it is originally organized. Money-love might do the job, as the prospect of a higher salary brings students to an education that they will come to treasure for reasons having nothing to do with money. They can come to do well but stay to do good; there's no contradiction in that. If anything it is a cheering thought.

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[15] *Rep.*: soldiers own nothing of value, III, 416d-417b; low cost of guardians, IV, 420a; limits on how rich or poor working class can be, IV, 422a.

[16] Reeve 1988, 205.

[17] Kamtekar 2004, 147.

Not every motive lets itself be transformed into every other one. Workers who sign on to the new constitution in the thought that this government will be prime for bloody takeover are not likely to be rehabilitated. The desire for wealth strikes me as closer to the best final value for the working class. Reeve calls the pursuit of wealth partially good, to which Kamtekar replies that on Plato's view it should be «simply false.»[18] She is assuming that only money-love can be at work in someone's approval of a society conducive to moneymaking. Surely that is a false assumption. If the new constitution does facilitate moneymaking, the workers will not only consent to living in the city but also will judge the city to be *good* for the pursuit of wealth. How wise the city's founders were to restrict each person to a different job ¡How bravely they enforce that rule even when it would be convenient to abandon it! Today there are people who support laissez-faire economic policies because such policies benefit them individually, others for libertarian reasons that Plato would frown at; but some see a free market as the only realistic path to feeding and housing a large population. If you believe *that*, you may support a free market on principle, and it would be facile to say you were corrupted by the love of money in doing so.

Loving money does not start you on the path to *eudaimonia*. But recognizing the city's goodness at facilitating money-making could well be the first step at understanding what makes it generally good. For if the city's workers admire the city from the beginning, out of respect for the policies through which it improves the local economy, then that goodness of the city's, while not a complete good, should (*pace* Kamtekar) be seen as partial good. These features making the city profitable for the productive class follow from the organizing principles that make the city good *tout court*.

[18] Kamtekar 2004, 147.

Mechanisms for generating consent

Habituation will not suffice to turn the first incomplete reason for consent into an adequate reason. The great-grandchildren will indeed find it easier to obey the city's laws, and not even know that alternative legal systems exist. And if the *Republic* does suggest a causal connection between obeying good laws and acquiring virtue, then several generations' worth of obedience by the city's third class may well bring out psychic balance –rule by reason– in this class. But as valuable as that change in the workers' souls is, it does not accomplish the change that moderation calls for.

Nor is it easy to find another mechanism in the *Republic* that generates the appropriate consent. In one respect the noble lie is meant to do so; in another way the expulsion of adults from the city. Most loosely we say «education.» But as George F. Hourani observed almost a lifetime ago, in among all its calls for education for rulers and auxiliaries the *Republic* only once mentions education for the working class, and that in a passing acknowledgment about cobblers' learning the shoemaking trade. While the philosophers and the troops below them are turning into new human beings, the *Republic* does not call for or plan the transformation of its farmers or wheelwrights into anything but what they already are.[19]

Indeed the very problem of the philosophers' consenting to rule is described in a way that implies that the working classes remain the same. Requiring the philosophers to descend into the dreary cave as rulers can only mean that the prisoners represent the people of the good city. Socrates has already called them *homoious hêmin* «similar to us» to suggest that they are also like people in Athens, or like human beings everywhere. But the lucky soul who leaves the cave and returns is mocked and then hated, as if to say that discontent with philosophical rule must be a trait of all working people everywhere.[20]

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[19] Hourani 1949; cf. Kamtekar 2004, 159.

[20] *Rep.*: philosopher «returns to the cave,» VII, 539e; prisoners in cave, VII, 514a-515a; similar to us, VII, 515a; returning philosopher reviled, VII, 516e-517a.

As for the plan to move everyone over ten years old into the countryside, it would be a shame if that succeeded – but really, how could it? «Everyone» over ten years old will go out to work in the fields.[21] If this means only the parents of guardians the scheme be effective, but then it is irrelevant to generating the *workers'* consent. And if all farmers, doctors, wheelwrights, and blacksmiths are moving to the villages outside the city walls, the children and their leaders will perish. Or are we supposed to imagine merry children tacking soles onto shoes, and pounding hot iron into swords? When a guardian-in-training sprains an ankle, will the philosophers bring a child doctor to wrap the joint? Not a bad premise for a TV series; as a political plan it would collapse within weeks, and with it the hopes of winning the working class over.

That leaves the noble lie. All citizens grew up together underground, but some of them with gold in their souls, others silver, the rest with bronze and iron and the like.[22] Call it the birth of political advertising or a cynical appropriation of religion to serve the state, the noble lie is the best known point at which the new regime enters the souls of its people. And so it might seem to contain or to constitute the persuasive appeal that engages the working class. So we have to realize that Plato proposes the noble lie with the guardian class particularly as its audience. Socrates says they will want to persuade *malista ... autous tous archontas* «especially the rulers themselves,» and if that fails then *tên allên polin* «the rest of the city».[23] But the rest of their city is something of an afterthought as regards the noble lie.

For one thing, the lie presupposes that other acts of education have already taken place. Socrates calls it a «Phoenician» kind of thing, because a population's birth out of earth calls to mind the founding of Thebes by Cadmus the Phoenician. That story condones betrayal and civil warfare, when the newly sprouted Theban men hack one another to pieces, so

[21] *Rep.* VII, 540e-541a.

[22] *Rep.* III, 414b-415c.

[23] *Rep.* III, 414c.

anyone knowing the original Phoenician tale would hear the noble lie and wonder how soon this city's people will start killing each other.

Therefore the state may reveal the story only under the managed conditions identified in Book II. Those ready to be told the noble lie will have heard so few other myths that they do not picture themselves joining in the anti-social behavior the myths promote. Socrates introduces this discussion in the context of producing good guardians; so they will be the only audience prepared to hear the noble lie.[24]

The censorship of myths and *mimêsis* does include loopholes that can be stretched to include the city as a whole. Socrates orders that no one hear it said that a god causes evil, and that other ugly secrets remain classified information. And if comedies and tragedies are denied a chorus, we know that no one in town will see them performed.[25] How broadly Plato intends his censorship to apply might be open to debate, though if the entire populace were going to be remade by the reforms it is surprising that Socrates does not say so. But even if all citizens receive a filtered version of Greek myth before hearing the noble lie, that fact undermines the lie from serving as foundation for the workers' consent, given that the workers will have to have been transformed by the new pedagogy before the new pedagogy comes to persuade them.

Despite the theoretical possibility that workers hear the noble lie, though, it is striking that a recent complaint about the lie and something that resembles a defense of it both read it as a tale told to rulers.

The complaint is Malcolm Schofield's, that the *Republic* elaborates the myth of metals that legitimates differences among citizens, but not the common autochthonous birth that ostensibly promotes unity among them. What the noble lie really means in the city is its social ranking not its

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[24] *Rep*. II, 376c-e.

[25] *Rep.*: no one to hear that god causes evil, II, 380b-c; some stories divulged to few, II, 378a; no chorus for bad drama, II, 383c. See II, 381e (mothers ignorant of stories about shape-changing gods), III, 386a (certain things «should not be heard, from childhood on»).

familial unanimity.[26] This message goes to the guardians.[27] Accordingly, although Schofield calls the noble lie the «charter myth for Plato's good city,» he emphasizes that it «is aimed at the rulers in the first instance.»[28] Jonathan Lear, meanwhile, developing something more like a defense of the noble lie, imagines adults in the city looking back on the story they'd believed in youth only to realize that it was truer than they'd realized.[29] But this optimistic denouement can only take place among the philosophers atop the city's hierarchy, inasmuch as only they will have undergone the education that shows them the oneiric qualities of sensory life.

By contrast, when farmers hear their children and grandchildren repeating some nonsense about having been underground –farmers who saw those children every day, out in the open air– they would wonder who ever could have believed the story. Having had no philosophy they will not reflect that all life is like a dream, any more than they will think they are prisoners in a cave. Rather than take hold with succeeding generations, as Glaucon predicts it will,[30] the lie will goad working citizens into unbelief, and distrust toward the city's mendacious regime.

Phthonos: *the problem of overcoming envy*

It is unfortunate that the metals in souls have such unequal worth – or even that they are metals, being therefore materials of some standard value. The *Republic*'s division of labor only calls for citizens to perform distinct tasks, as if one of them were a shovel and the other a saw. But

[26] Schofield 2009; some points amplified in Schofield 2007. On unequal uses of the lie's two elements see Schofield 2009, 105-106.

[27] For the rulers to remain sensible of their place in the city, they will need reminding that gold is in their souls but not in most of their fellow citizens' souls. The differentiating moral of the story is the moral that the guardians need to hear, so that they remember, for example, why they may not touch gold.

[28] Schofield 2007: «charter myth» 138; «aimed at rulers» 159.

[29] The thoughtless life of childhood, with its trust in sense-experience, really does resemble a dream, as they had been told it did; only the dream-status of childhood is to be understood metaphysically rather than mythically. Lear 2006, 33-34.

[30] *Rep.* III, 415d.

gold is worth more than silver, and both of them outrank bronze and iron in value. Picturing the newborn citizens with a hammer in one soul, a spear in a second, and a stylus in a third, would not have to imply hierarchical distinction as much as the metals do. This is to say that the lie creates a problem of consent more than it solves one. Hammers and plows have no need to envy shields or writing tables, but bronze is being invited to envy gold. A money-loving third class most of all will find functional difference transmuted into difference in value.

In citing inequality of worth as the legacy of the noble lie, I am saying that agreement among the city's classes, especially agreement by the working class to rule by the other two, is the problem of overcoming envy. Grudging acceptance of rule means tolerating a difference in power that one does not consider justified. Why those guardians in power and not me, or not all of us farmers together? The city's workers will see the rulers deciding every policy question, and being so honored for the effort that their fellow citizens put up statues after some rulers' deaths and celebrate them as if they were gods. The brave soldiers will come back from battle to heroic treatment.[31] Won't the productive class want glory too?

The expulsion and the lie have enough trouble generating consent under the conditions already identified. If they do not solve the problem of envy, at least it would reassure us if the *Republic* sometimes voiced the hope that envy would be overcome in the good city.

The Greeks had two words for envy: *phthonos* and *zêlos*. The latter was milder and even had positive meanings, implying healthy admiration and a wish to emulate. I envied your ability to wake up before dawn, so I started forcing myself out of bed earlier. The acceptability of such envy is indicated by the fact that I can *tell* you I envy your early rising; *zêlos* is the envy that dares to speak its name.

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[31] *Rep.*: statues to rulers, VII, 540c; honours to soldiers, V, 460b.

It is different with the malicious envy known as *phthonos*, which bespoke a grudging spirit. If *zêlos* sometimes implies wanting for yourself what someone else has, *phthonos* leaves you wishing the other didn't have it.[32]

Plato's dialogues recognize the *phthonos* that motivates people, especially motivating them to rebel against legitimate order. There is envy at work early in the city's decline, according to *Republic* VIII. The parallel decline into disorder that the *Menexenus* funeral speech discovers, in its history of the preceding century, is attributed to the *phthonos* with which other cities responded to the pre-eminence that Athens enjoyed after the Persian War. Other dialogues too treat *phthonos* as if it were common, as when the *Philebus* associates it with comedy's audience, or Socrates at his trial accuses his fellow Athenians of *phthonos*.[33]

Set against unseemly envying behavior we have the creator god in Plato's *Timaeus*, who makes the world by reason of not feeling *phthonos*, thus not grudging the existence of a beautiful world. The Platonic or pseudo-Platonic *Hipparchus* claims that Hipparchus, in his days as tyrant, did not think he ought to *sophias phthonein* «begrudge wisdom» to any citizen.[34]

Plato would have, or should have, expected the Athenian men of his time to respond resentfully to the political innovations in the *Republic*. The new city takes a man who voted (thus helped to rule), fought, and earned money, and it distributes his activities among three groups it keeps rigorously distinct. Choruses in Aristophanes boast of their military achievement at Marathon, a service that the plays perceive as the source of Athens's debt to those citizens. In *Wasps* the old men see their participation on juries as personal power. They introduce themselves as

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[32] On *phthonos* see Sanders 2014.

[33] *Phthonos*: in city's decline, Pappas and Zelcer 2015, 203-204; in tyrannical souls, *Rep.* IX, 579c, 580a; by other cities toward Athens, *Menex.* 242a; as pleasure at ills going to others, *Phil.* 48b; by public toward Socrates, *Ap.* 28a.

[34] Plato: creator god without *phthonos*, *Tim.* 29e; tyrant Hipparchus, *Hipp.* 228c.

veterans and jurors as if those two things went together, as if crediting their political privileges to their time at war.[35] Far from welcoming the reform that releases them from military service, they will begrudge any proposal that takes away their influence and prestige.

The possibility of this class's *phthonos* comes up in the *Republic* while Socrates is defending rule by philosophers. Adeimantus raises the sensible worry that people will not sit still for philosophers to gain kingly power. Socrates replies that people do not know philosophers. They have only seen corrupted posers to the title. Showing the public what real philosophers are like will put their worries to rest; for, aside from a few people who react harshly to government no matter what its character is, those who are treated gently and «without *phthonos*» tend to become gentle in return, and «without *phthonos*» themselves.[36]

So Plato does picture envy arising, and not the admiring kind, among the populace to be governed under the new regime. As long as the many of Athens view their putative rulers with *phthonos*, any consent they have to offer will be grudging indeed.

But if the right problem has been identified, the solution proposed is a non-starter. Grudging envy does not come into existence reciprocally as aggression and anger do. It is one thing to say that your anger toward me inspires my answering anger; even to propose (hopefully) as the *Phaedrus* does that your *erôs* toward someone gives rise to an answering *anterôs* «counter-love» in that person.[37] These reciprocations occur often enough to be expected responses to one's own desirous love or anger. *Phthonos* is not like that. Those below exhibit *phthonos* toward those above and not vice versa. Plato has flagged a problem that faces his city –a problem calling for moral acculturation for the first citizens– and then offered only platitudes.

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[35] Aristophanes: service at Marathon, *Ach.* 698-699, *Wasps* 707-711; power as jurors, *Wasps* 575, 620; chorus introduces itself, *Wasps* 230-241.

[36] *Rep.* VI, 500a.

[37] *Phr.* 255d; on «counter-love» see Halperin 1986.

Although this passage fails to justify rule by philosophers, it does notably acknowledge the threat posed by *phthonos*. Given *phthonos* among the working class, the city will know neither *homonoia* nor any other kind of *sôphrosunê*. Between the founding of the city, whatever means that founding calls for, and the time of the producers' great-grandchildren, something must bring the masses of Athens to esteem their rulers without the envy that so often hardens those out of power.

Nudity at the gymnasium

Where other stratagems failed, the example of consent that I began with might point the way toward where Plato thinks an answer lies. Several elements in what Socrates says about women guardians' nudity contribute to making the passage a comment on political consent: first that it is about *dress*, second that it invokes *laughter*, and finally that it addresses the ambiguous meaning of *sight*.

Dress. For modern readers the first of these, the fact that Socrates is talking about changes in what (if anything) people wear, might be what makes them pass by the passage. Modern audiences know very well how the public gets used to different ways of dress. They see the change every season as a new fashion catches on. Against this unreflective response we have to start by seeing that Socrates is making a different point when he predicts that the residents of his city will stop laughing at naked women exercising. Innocent of modern fashion, he hopes for something better than habituation. When athletic nudity first arrived from Sparta, he says, people came to see it as better, just as the people of the city to come will see women's nudity as better and so not to be laughed at.

The difference is partly cultural. Change in dress was not routine in classical Athens, where tales of a change were told either as traumas or as modifications serving a purpose.[38] For instance, when Athenian women

[38] I look into ancient stories about change in dress –most of the stories coming from Herodotus– in *The Philosopher's New Clothes: The Theaetetus, the Academy, and Philosophy's Turn against Fashion* (Routledge, London, 2015 [forthcoming]).

stopped pinning their dresses together and took to wearing sewn garments, Herodotus does not assume that styles simply changed. Some crisis must have brought the change about, so he tells of Athenian men's invading Aegina, all but one killed in the battle, and that one returning to find the other men's widows furious. The widows took out the pins that held their dresses together and stabbed that lone survivor to death, and this is why Athenian men no longer let their women wear pinned-together garments.[39]

In today's terms, Herodotus practices something more like social history while Thucydides is a military historian, so there is less about custom and dress in Thucydides. Even so he tells a brief narrative of Greek wardrobe changes, in the prefatory section of his history known as the «Archaeology,» that begins with all men fully armed and ends with the «recent» Spartan innovation of athletic nudity.[40]

Plato must have had the passage from Thucydides in mind when writing about female guardians. These are the only two texts from classical Athens that call gymnastic nudity a recent arrival, a considerable mistake given that nudity in Athenian gymnasia probably began centuries before the conversation represented in the *Republic* and before Thucydides composed his history.[41] It serves Plato's purposes to give nudity a recent date of arrival, for then Socrates can pretend to tell Glaucon and Adeimantus, who are both young enough not to remember some events that he does, the mechanism by which public sentiment changed. But that conveniently recent date is justified by the authority of Thucydides.

The narrative in Thucydides also gives dress as covered in *Republic* V its political significance. Thucydides begins with a stage in which all men went around armed and armored, surely a source for the image in Hobbes (who translated Thucydides) of a war «of every man against

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[39] Herodotus *Histories*: changes in dress, IV, 78-80; 189; Athenian change to sewn garment, V, 87.

[40] Thucydides *Peloponnesian War* I.6.2-6.

[41] Thucydides I.6.5. The practice seems to go back to 700; see McDonnell 1991.

every man.»[42] He passes into peacetime, during which –in Athens at least– aristocrats dressed to display their social importance. Then the Spartans take a step toward universal concord, and certainly away from *phthonos*, as each man dressed in ordinary clothes.[43] It is not that short and simple dress became the latest thing in Sparta; rather Thucydides is measuring the progress toward *isonomia* or equality under the law. In that spirit he closes with the terminus of sartorial equality, nudity at the gymnasium, which he also credits the Spartans with.

We do not call Spartan government democratic, but it illustrates the movement toward democratic imagery that takes place within an aristocratic system's governing caste. The Spartans act as *peers* do, in both senses of that word, being equals amongst themselves and lords over against their subject population.[44] But the *Republic* is conceiving a city without the terrifying governance that took place in Sparta, and what Plato takes over from Thucydides here is the fraternal side of the peerage, the social development that carries a population beyond difference, therefore beyond *phthonos*. Far from being a trivial manifestation of the progress he hopes for, the guardians' habit of dress is in his context the most natural symbol of political progress. Accepting this one small reform will work as the public's acceptance of overall reform works.

Laughter. Laughter in ancient Greece, certainly the laughter that Socrates imagines at the gymnasium – perhaps all laughter – is exclusionary and aggressive.[45] This fact alone makes laughter politically meaningful, for as Socrates pictures it the mockery threatens to finish off their new constitution before they have even established it. Being as it is the manifestation of *phthonos*,[46] laughter represents the opposite of consent.

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[42] Hobbes *Leviathan* 13.

[43] Thucydides I, 6.3.

[44] The male citizens in Sparta called themselves *homoioi* «equals» or «similar» (i.e. similar to one another) in recognition of this peerage; see Herodotus VII, 234.2, Xenophon *Constitution of the Lacedaemonians* X, 7; XIII, 1; 7.

[45] For a recent discussion of the aggression in laughter see Kivy 2003.

[46] *Phil.* 48a-50a. See Harte 2010 on *phthonos* in comedy.

A local tradition held that Theseus, who unified Attica's villages into a *polis* to create the city of Athens, first appeared among Athenians in outdated clothing. He wore a *chitôn* down to his feet, as only women still did, and his hair was braided. Some men mocked him when he came to Athens, asking what maiden of marrying age was wandering around alone.[47]

That Theseus was laughed at for his unfamiliar dress establishes mockery of what is being worn as the first stage in constitutional change. His being called a girl suggests that Athenians think worthy new leadership will first appear as women coming to govern.[48]

Soon enough the *Republic* will speak of deadlier laughter, when the philosopher comes back into the cave and stumbles. As at the new city's gymnasium, this laughter aims at the governing philosophical class.[49] The *sôphrosunê* that is supposed to mark the happy integration of all three classes into the city cannot begin until after the laughter has stopped. It is a lucky thing all round, not just for the future of naked exercise, that Athenians learn how to stop laughing.

Sight. The allegory of the cave does not consider what the returning prisoner is wearing. He does not have time to change before climbing back down to the ignoramuses. But in a more oblique way the story continues the themes of the earlier passage, picking up on an ambiguity between ways of seeing that is at work in Book V.

I already said that in chronicling the change that Athenians already went through, Socrates appeals to a process distinct from the habituation that we find at work in changing fashion. The wags who ridiculed male nudity at the gymnasium changed their minds. He says *ephanê* «it

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[47] Pausanias *Description of Greece* I, 19.1. Pausanias is a late source; but the archaic poet Bacchylides spoke of Theseus in striking dress: Bacchylides 18, lines 53-54. See Davie 1982, 26.

[48] Aristophanes *Eccles.* makes the theme explicit, but talking about *Eccles.* would embroil us in the question of influence between it and the *Republic.*

[49] *Rep.* VII, 517a. On laughing at philosophers, *Gorg.* 484d-e, *Theaet.* 172c.

appeared» that it was better to exercise naked; and because it was better in *reality* to unveil or publicize the body, the humorousness of the *appearance* had to be set aside. Nudity might be *to en tois ophthalmois dê geloion* «what is funny to the eyes,» but in a truer respect shameful behavior is the only *opsis* «appearance, sight, spectacle» that deserves to be responded to with laughter.[50] The same realization will come to members of the public in the new city's gymnasium.

There is a peculiar step in this argument. When Socrates calls it *ameinon* «better» to strip for exercise than to *sugkaluptein* «cover, veil, hide» such things, he must mean that nudity is preferable by virtue of being an uncovering, and because it permits the body to be seen. He is speaking as the Greeks often did when they tried to justify their own custom of nudity. Despite later sources that implausibly explain Greek athletic nudity as having enhanced performance in competition, the dominant ancient account seems to have been that the purpose and value of such nudity lay in their exposing the body to view, as in a report that Spartans used to inspect their male population during public workouts, or a tale about trainers at the Olympics stripping to prove that they were men.[51]

The Thucydidean vision of nudity as political equality too is compatible with nudity's enabling visibility; for we find other calls to literal transparency among the *Republic*'s political reforms and as applying to the peers who constitute the guardian class. The guardians' living area inside the city is visible to all. They have no secret lives, because anyone who wants to is permitted to walk into their quarters. They send their children to battlefields to see how wars are fought. What is *not* seen implies injustice and perversion, such as the invisibility of the naked man who had hidden himself inside a bronze horse (for implicitly sexual purposes). Hiding is

[50] *Rep.* V, 452d-e.

[51] Claims about enhanced performance, Pausanias I, 44.1, Dionysius of Halicarnassus *Roman Antiquities* VII, 72.3-4; Spartans inspected their men, Aelian *Varia Historia* XIV, 7; trainers at the Olympics, Pausanias V, 6.7-8. The essential discussion remains Bonfante 1989.

what the city does to faulty guardians, i.e. to the infants born to undeserving warriors or born with a defect. The city does not want to admit those children to its governing class, so the rulers *katakrupsousin* «hide them away.»[52]

Appreciating the argument in this way steers us toward its central difficulty. The literal visibility that the exercisers' bodies have, and the metaphorical visibility of the reason for the practice, both treat vision as an image of reason or knowledge. It «appeared» to the people of Athens that it was better to strip for exercise, meaning that they understood the reasons for doing so. They did with their rational faculties something like what they did with their eyes. And yet Socrates calls the eyes the obstacle to such change in athletic practice. Those joking locals who laughed at naked wrestlers went wrong in the first place because they trusted their vision. What they laughed at was «what is funny to the eyes,» and it should not have been. As examples of the bodily senses, the eyes mislead and distract a reasoning soul.

The general form of the ambiguity occurs in the *Republic*'s metaphysics, for which sight and light represent the best knowledge while also exemplifying sense perception in its untrue and corrupting aspects. It is a commonplace to say that philosophers make vision a metaphor for knowledge, but only half true. Socrates does compare the good to the sun and the soul to the eye. At the same time he separates philosophers from «view-lovers» or lovers of sights, and the intelligible realm from «the visible.»[53] In such moments eyesight stands for the bodily senses as a whole, being one sense among the others, a part of the sensory apparatus in other words, which is to say a metonym for the senses. Thus *metonymically* vision represents the ignorant senses even though, *metaphorically* speaking, vision looks like knowledge.

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[52] *Rep.*: barracks open, III, 416d; young guardians watch battles, V, 466e; 467e; invisibility in story of Gyges, II, 359c-360b; within that story the naked corpse, II, 359 d-e; faulty births hidden, V, 460c. Ophir 1991 explores this theme.

[53] *Rep.*: vision the sun-like sense, VI, 508b; philosophers distinguished from *philotheamones* «view-lovers» in that they are view-lovers regarding truth, V, 475d-e; *noêton* «intelligible» opposed to *horaton* «visible» domains, VI, 509d.

Sight carries opposite valences in the cave, whose laughing prisoners treat the freed returning prisoner as blinded. That trip outdoors destroyed his eyes. Socrates says they do not realize that vision can be compromised in opposite ways. If it blinds and blinkers people to go from less light to more, the same thing happens to those coming from more light into less.[54] What the prisoners call a deprivation is really the exposure to a plenitude of light, because the light they see is not the light that the one returning has known; because, in short, the seeing that they do can't be compared to the seeing that takes place up outside the cave in sunlight. Thus two kinds of vision confront each other in the primal episode of failed consent.

Socrates also brings together the two meanings of sight in his synopsis of how Athenians changed their minds about nudity. Seeing (sensing) made Athenians laugh at athletic nudity, until seeing (reasoning) made them stop laughing and accept the practice. But the gymnasium promises a better outcome than the cave did. First the Athenians did no more than look, and laughed at the Spartan practice they saw. Then they troubled themselves to *look*, in this other way, and they saw that it was better. Nothing changed and yet everything did. Under its own power, the public moved to understand and consent to one new custom from Sparta; why not others? This type of persuasion is available to human beings even as those humans have been constituted by existing social relations. Such persuasion contains an essential element of virtuous consent, namely an understanding that the new practice is a good one. And when the women guardians strip to exercise, the new city's people will do the same again; and the guardian class will not face the refusal to consent that is public ridicule; and the city will survive.

[54] *Rep.*: his eyes destroyed, VII, 517a; two kinds of blindness, VII, 518a-b.

Conclusion

By the time that the founders' great-grandchildren are exercising, they will have achieved the learning regarding naked women that Athenians accomplished with respect to naked men. This is a transition from the seeing that ridicules, and that denies *homonoia*, to the insight of knowledge that facilitates acceptance and moderated agreeability; away from the vision that envies to the revision of soul to thoughts of what is better.

As the terms of the narrative in Thucydides imply, the agreeability that is achieved in this process works contrary to social differentiation. What is better about nudity at the gymnasium is the image it conduces to of social equality. Such radical sameness of dress denies the conditions for *phthonos.* If erotic thoughts do follow, they too work contrary to *phthonos* and in the interests of a society whose members can all consent to government. Kamtekar argues that «civic life in the ideal city is a continuation of education, and so is good for citizens in the way that Plato says education is»;[55] surprisingly enough, leisure time at the gymnasium has proved to contribute to such education.

What follows about consent? Going to the gym might accomplish something for citizens, but this single highly contextualized act of stripping is not going to produce the *sôphrosunê* that Socrates thinks he can foresee among the city's people. Plato's readers will think of the Athenian Stranger's grumpier remark that the cities with the most pederastic love are those with the most active participation in gymnasia.[56] Nevertheless this discussion's remarkable condensation of the essential elements of political agreement does show 1) that the agreement that matters to a polity –whether regarding nudity at the gymnasium or regarding a constitution– goes beyond mere acquiescence; 2) that the public possesses a capacity for informed agreement; 3) that they attain this higher agreement by emulating what philosophers do in looking away from what their eyes

[55] Kamtekar 2004, 161.

[56] *Laws* I, 636c.

show them to the objects seen by their minds' eyes; 4) that the content of this improved understanding is a parity among citizens and overcoming of resentful envy.

More vividly than anywhere else in the *Republic*, Plato is acknowledging the challenge that political consent creates for his proposed city. How he will meet that challenge is another story. When the guardians dress and leave the gymnasium they will need to govern the mass of the citizenry so as to generate the same agreeability through their economic policies, their adjudication of domestic problems, and above all through the example they set of lives lived in dedication to higher standards of goodness. We may hope that in an embodied good city those who rule will find ways of fostering this best kind of agreement. It is no small thing if exercising together gives all citizens a glimpse of what such concord will be like, even if it is for now only a first peek, from a distance, at a harmonious life as lived in full dress.

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LA CIUDAD MÁS CERCANA[1]

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Abstract

In the Republic *and the* Laws*, Plato sketches how a just city would be. But what about the possibility of these cities in speech? According to a strong scholar tradition, these two dialogues consider it impossible for these cities to exist in the sensible world. This paper adresses this issue and takes an opposite position. It claims that Callipolis and Magnesia must not be understood as utopian projects but as theoretical models that can be achieved.*

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A pesar de que ninguno de los dos proyectos políticos de Platón reúne las características que suele tener el género utópico (cf. Trousson 1979, 19-25; Lisi 2012, 10-17) y, en especial, su carácter ficcional,[2] se ha impuesto la opinión generalizada de caracterizar a Calípolis y Magnesia

[1] Este trabajo ha sido realizado en el marco del proyecto de investigación FFI2013-45293-P, financiado por el Ministerio de Economía y Competitividad del Gobierno de España.

[2] Quizás se podrían calificar como utopías las descripciones de la Atlántida y la Atenas de comienzos del *Timeo* y del *Critias*, si es que no se acepta la concepción platónica de la historia.

como utopías,[3] aunque una y otra vez sus interlocutores principales se esfuerzan por aseverar que sus propuestas políticas son realizables. También ha sido y sigue siendo un problema clarificar cuál es la relación entre ambos diálogos. Esta disonancia se debe, en parte, al especial estilo platónico en el que el lector no encuentra, en muchas ocasiones, sino pequeñas indicaciones que deben guiarlo a desentrañar el verdadero sentido pretendido por el autor. En segundo lugar, esta dificultad se ve agravada porque el intérprete debe intentar romper el horizonte de expectativas que ha creado la exégesis de los textos a lo largo de los siglos. En el campo del pensamiento político de Platón esta cuestión es especialmente delicada, dado que los tres textos políticamente más importantes –a la *República* y las *Leyes* hay que añadir el *Político*– han tenido una influencia destacadísima en el pensamiento político contemporáneo, tanto entre los defensores del estado de derecho cuanto entre los apologistas del totalitarismo en todas sus versiones. Para el historiador de las ideas es, por tanto, primordial desentrañar ese verdadero sentido para llegar a una valoración objetiva de la significación del pensador ateniense.

Dado que la valoración de ambos diálogos desde la perspectiva de la teoría política depende en gran medida de si uno considera o no que estas descripciones de la estructura de estado han sido concebidas como realizables, he de anteponer unas reflexiones metodológicas. Es necesario distinguir entre los sentidos posibles que uno puede encontrar en un pasaje y el sentido que le otorga el autor, e. d. la *intentio auctoris*. Los sentidos posibles de un texto no son necesariamente conocidos por el autor y no son, por ello, objeto de conocimiento científico, puesto que no poseemos ningún instrumento para falsar esas interpretaciones, ni para indicar si, verdaderamente esas hipótesis se corresponden con el contenido textual. Por ello, estas interpretaciones no son objeto de ciencia, en sentido estricto, podrían serlo de reflexión filosófica o de inspiración poética.

[3] Un ejemplo paradigmático de esta actitud es el libro de C. Bobonich (2002).

La filología y la historia de las ideas son disciplinas científicas y, por ello, este tipo de especulaciones no pueden ser parte de su método. La *intentio auctoris* constituye, por el contrario, su objeto de estudio. A este campo pertenecen también las nociones de verdad y falsedad, hay interpretaciones a todas luces falsas y eso permite falsar las hipótesis. No obstante, esta expresión puede llamar a confusión, pues, en realidad, ¿cómo podemos entrever cuál es la verdadera intención del autor? En el caso concreto de Platón esta distinción es particularmente difícil, pues conscientemente él intenta ocultar el sentido de su mensaje construyendo un texto que, a la manera de una superficie congelada, nos hace deslizar, creando una barrera que dificulta la captación del significado pretendido.[4] Un aspecto al que la exégesis acude con frecuencia es la de considerar irónicos aquellos pasajes que no se adecuan a la imagen que el intérprete tiene del filósofo.[5] En este caso, el pre-conocimiento del círculo hermenéutico se convierte en una barrera infranqueable. En algunas ocasiones se convierte en una manera de no dar razón de los hechos con la finalidad de forzar los datos a favor de la interpretación propuesta. Desde hace muchos siglos el texto platónico ha sufrido este tipo de interpretaciones, sobre todo en sus mitos y en sus creencias religiosas. El problema es especialmente candente porque se trata de un pensador fundamental en la historia de las ideas y, como tal, está sometido a los prejuicios y las imágenes que inconsciente o intencionalmente se construyen de él.

Estas reflexiones parecerían conducirnos a una aporía en el sentido literal del término. Sin embargo, la construcción del texto es tal que permite al lector atento encontrar las marcas indicadoras del sentido que el autor quiere dar a sus palabras. Éstas suelen estar encubiertas, dichas al pasar

[4] Si la carta séptima es verdadera, también la dialéctica estaba construida de esa forma, pues los verdaderamente capaces deben descubrir el auténtico sentido ellos mismos a partir de pequeñas indicaciones (341e1-3).

[5] Desvirtuando, por cierto, el sentido que este término tiene en el método socrático-platónico.

y retomadas muchas veces en otros diálogos. Esto obliga a prestar especial atención hasta el mínimo detalle.[6]

Últimamente, André Laks (2012) ha publicado una contribución que vuelve a abrir la cuestión de la relación entre la *República* y las *Leyes*, más concretamente entre Calípolis, el estado descrito en la primera obra, y Magnesia, la ciudad esbozada en la segunda y que demuestra cuáles son las dificultades que debe enfrentar el intérprete. En su trabajo, Laks se reafirma en sus tesis centrales y critica mi interpretación de los textos platónicos, especialmente en lo referido a algunos textos de las *Leyes*. Su tesis se dirige fundamentalmente contra mi exégesis de la relación entre ambos diálogos, aunque en algunos aspectos nuestras posiciones coinciden.[7] En efecto, Laks niega ahora que haya habido un cambio de posición entre ambas obras en lo que atañe a un punto fundamental, la posibilidad de realización de ambas propuestas. Sostiene, de manera similar a Strauss (1964), Müller (1981) y otros, que en la misma *República* hay una crítica o, para expresarlo de manera más contundente, un rechazo de la posibilidad de realización de Calípolis. Esta misma posición se encontraría en las *Leyes*. En esto, Laks se diferencia radicalmente de mi posición, ya que en diferentes trabajos he sostenido

[6] Un ejemplo claro es, en ese sentido, la reconstrucción de la filosofía de la historia platónica que hizo Konrad Gaiser en sus diferentes publicaciones. Con precisión filológica, Gaiser logró demostrar que había una continuidad ideológica entre los distintos relatos históricos que presentaba Platón en el mito del *Político*, la descripción de la edad de Cronos en las *Leyes* y los relatos del *Timeo* y el *Critias*, así como del tercer libro de las *Leyes*. Especialmente brillante ha sido su cuidadosa interpretación del αὐτόχθονας de *Critias* 109d2 y su relación con el mito de la edad de Cronos (Gaiser 141, 1988). Creo haber demostrado la continuidad ideológica de las teorías de las diferentes catástrofes (por fuego o por agua) en las que sucesivamente se iba destruyendo el género humano para luego volver a reconstruir la civilización. Contrariamente a la interpretación de Gaiser (cf. p. ej. 1961,17), sostengo que para Platón todos los mitos relacionados con la historia describen de manera aproximada acontecimientos que han tenido lugar. No es mi intención aquí entrar en el debate acerca del valor de verdad que Platón atribuía a sus relatos históricos, sean éstos míticos o no, dado que ese tema supera la intención de este artículo. Simplemente, me limitaré a indicar que no existe ninguna indicación de que Platón no los hubiera considerado una doctrina *hipotéticamente* cierta, en la medida que para él pueden serlo los discursos que reflejan la realidad sensible. Por tanto, para afirmar que no creía en ellos debemos tener razones convincentes que sean demostrables a partir de las indicaciones del texto.

[7] Laks no aborda las críticas centrales que he hecho a su interpretación.

que Platón consideraba el mejor estado como realizable (especialmente en Lisi 2004). También indicaba que la consideración de la teoría del estado platónica no podía realizarse sobre la base de una colección de pasajes aislados, por muy importantes que estos fueren, sino que debía tener en cuenta el contexto de los diferentes diálogos que tratan la cuestión. Para no repetir los argumentos ya esgrimidos, voy a centrarme en las razones ofrecidas por Laks y a contestar sus alegaciones contra mi posición. Con esto dejo intencionalmente de lado la cuestión metodológica central que es la relacionada con la necesidad de tener una perspectiva comprehensiva del problema y, en especial, tener en cuenta la concepción de la historia de Platón.

¿Es el mejor estado realizable?

Laks afirma que hay «une critique intra-platonicienne de la thèse de la possibilité de la cité juste telle qu'elle est décrite dans la *République*» (2012, 21). Considera que, independientemente de la evidente defensa que realiza Sócrates de la posibilidad de realización de la *República*, hay en el texto indicios que permiten sostener que la concreción del modelo relativizaría de manera sustancial la posibilidad de ponerlo en práctica tal cual ha sido descrito. En una palabra, que hay dos sentidos del término δυνατός que deben distinguirse cuidadosamente: uno débil, e. d. la posibilidad de poner en práctica Calípolis de una manera aproximada y uno fuerte que es realizarla tal cual ha sido descrita. Si bien la condición de la coincidencia de conocimiento filosófico y poder político que es considerada como *conditio sine qua non* para el establecimiento del mejor régimen posible no aclara si la posibilidad de realización es en sentido fuerte o débil, Laks cree que puede ser interpretada de la segunda forma. La ciudad más justa sería en realidad irrealizable, una forma subrepticia de la utopía.[8]

[8] Laks (2012, 23) afirma en su análisis de *Rep*. IX, 502c5-7: «L'analyse de l'ensemble de l'argument met en évidence que sous l'apparente simplicité de la conclusion se dissimule, comme en structure profonde, un énoncé complexe. Une formulation brutale et paradoxale à dessein de la thèse que je désire soutenir serait que la cité platonicienne est possible dans la mesure même où elle est impossible; mais la thèse est en fait plus douce qu'elle ne paraît, si l'on précise: la cité platonicienne est logiquement possible dans la mesure même où elle est réellement impossible. *Cette formule, au reste, n'est peut-être pas une mauvaise caractérisation de l'utopie*» (itálicas de F.L.L).

Tal como he señalado al comienzo de este artículo, es evidente que la *República* no puede ser considerada una utopía, ya que no reúne los requisitos esenciales que son característicos de ese género. Es más, no describe ningún pueblo feliz viviendo en otra época o en otro lugar, sino la estructura de un estado, por tanto no es una ficción, sino una propuesta teórica. No es tan evidente que todos los que la califican de tal sean conscientes de ese hecho. Más aún, las críticas que apuntan a lo irrealizable de Calípolis lo hacen conscientes de la intención platónica de presentar el modelo como realizable. Gran parte de la crítica contemporánea considera que la *República* no ha sido pensada como un proyecto político o como un modelo político de acción, para ser más precisos.

Aunque la *República* no pueda ser considerada una utopía en cuanto al género, es evidente que la cuestión de la posibilidad de su realización no queda anulada. No carece de importancia saber si la realización de ese ideal es algo que ha tenido lugar en algún momento, tiene lugar ahora en algún sitio o lo tendrá en el futuro. En lo que sigue intentaré falsar la hipótesis de Laks acerca de los dos sentidos de la posibilidad de realización. Luego, estableceré la relación entre teoría y práctica, e. d. entre descripción y realidad. Por último, definiré en qué sentido la ciudad más justa es posible, ¿cuáles son las condiciones que deben realizarse para determinar que se trata de una realización del ideal planteado? En otro apartado consideraré estos mismos problemas en las *Leyes*.

El término δυνατός tiene, como es sabido y señala el LSJ *s. v.*, dos acepciones, una activa, en el sentido de «fuerte», «poderoso», «capaz» y otra pasiva como «posible». En ambas acepciones el adjetivo recorre toda la *República*. En su disputa con Trasímaco, en el primer libro Sócrates concluye su refutación sosteniendo que los justos se manifiestan como más sabios, mejores y más capaces de actuar que los injustos (352b5-c3). Toda la controversia gira en torno a la capacidad del justo y del injusto en todos los ámbitos, en especial en el de lograr la felicidad. El término tiene, en estos casos, un valor activo y éste es un valor que va a encontrarse en el trasfondo de todo el diálogo,[9] pues la demostración

[9] Otros usos del término en sentido activo pueden encontrarse en II, 361b2; III, 402a2, 412c12.

debe culminar en la afirmación del poder del justo superior al del injusto (cf. II, 367e1-6). En el sentido pasivo, el término está claramente utilizado en la disyuntiva que desde el principio establece Glaucón para la resolución del problema: a la manera de un buen timonel o médico debe determinar Sócrates qué es posible y qué no en uno y otro caso (II, 360e6-361a1). La cuestión de la posibilidad no se plantea sólo con respecto a las conocidas tres olas. En ellas culmina, pero a cada paso del desarrollo de la ciudad, Sócrates va planteando la posibilidad o imposibilidad de las instituciones, así sucede en el caso de los guardianes (II, 375c1-e7) y toda la crítica a la poesía en los libros segundo y tercero está orientada a la imposibilidad de sus descripciones de los dioses. El sentido pasivo también se encuentra en innumerables pasajes, en especial en los que se analizará más adelante, pero hay que tener presente que esta distinción es exterior a la lengua y que Platón juega con esa falta de definición del término griego entre «capaz» y «posible».

El libro quinto y parte del sexto están dedicados, en realidad, a discutir la posibilidad de realización de la ciudad fundada en los libros anteriores. El libro quinto comienza, precisamente, con la afirmación de la corrección de Calípolis frente al error y la incorrección de las otras formas de organización social o regímenes políticos,[10] desembocando rápidamente en el punto más controvertido del sistema propuesto, la comunidad de mujeres y niños, e. d. la disolución de la familia tradicional para el estamento de los guardianes (449c2-450c5). Sócrates es reacio a internarse en ese tema porque

[10] Ἀγαθὴν μὲν τοίνυν τὴν τοιαύτην πόλιν τε καὶ πολιτείαν καὶ ὀρθὴν καλῶ, καὶ ἄνδρα τὸν τοιοῦτον· κακὰς δὲ τὰς ἄλλας καὶ ἡμαρτημένας, εἴπερ αὕτη ὀρθή, περί τε πόλεων διοικήσεις καὶ περὶ ἰδιωτῶν ψυχῆς τρόπου κατασκευήν, ἐν τέτταρσι πονηρίας εἰδεσιν οὔσας. «Ciertamente, no sólo denomino a una ciudad semejante buena y a su régimen político lo caracterizo como correcto, sino también al hombre que posea esas características, mientras que al resto de regímenes, que existen en cuatro especies de la maldad en lo que hace a la administración de las ciudades y la complexión de la forma del alma de los individuos los llamo malos y erróneos, si éste régimen es realmente el correcto.» *Rep*. V, 449a1-5.

> despierta aún mucha más incredulidad que lo relatado anteriormente, pues no se lo creería posible, y aunque llegara a ser de manera total, tampoco creería que fuera lo mejor. Por ello me asalta una cierta duda de tocar esos temas, no sea que el relato parezca una mera ilusión.
>
> *Rep*. V, 450c6-9.[11]

En este pasaje están planteados de manera radical los dos inconvenientes de la propuesta, su posibilidad de realización y su virtud, en caso de considerársela realizable. Aparecen, además, los tres términos claves en esta discusión: δυνατά, ἄριστα y εὐχή. El primero y el último son claves para determinar si, realmente, hay una posibilidad de interpretar la intención de Platón como meramente teórica. En la cuestión de las mujeres y los hijos se concentra toda la problemática del comunismo de los guardianes, puesto que es la más radical y la que despierta más reticencias. Un punto fundamental es aquí el significado de *logos* que he traducido por «relato». *Logos* se refiere aquí no al tema de la posesión común de mujeres y niños, sino al relato teórico que describe el mejor orden político. Es claro que la noción de posibilidad está considerada en su sentido «fuerte». Sócrates no va a entrar en este tema para desarrollar una posibilidad sólo teórica, puesto que eso sería no responder al requerimiento de Glaucón, cuando determinó el tema de la demostración.

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[11] πολλὰς γὰρ ἀπιστίας ἔχει ἔτι μαλλον τῶν ἔμπροσθεν ὧν διήλθομεν. καὶ γὰρ ὡς δυνατὰ λέγεται, ἀπιστοῖτ' ἄν, καὶ εἰ ὅτι μάλιστα γένοιτο, ὡς ἄριστ ἄν εἴη ταῦτα, καὶ ταύτη ἀπιστήσεται. διὸ δὴ καὶ ὄκνος τις αὐτῶν ἅπτεσθαι, μὴ εὐχὴ δοκῇ εἶναι ὁ λόγος. Aristóteles toma como un tema principal de crítica precisamente la disolución de la familia y la imposibilidad de que eso suceda (*Pol.* II 3, 1261b16-1262a24). Con el término «familia tradicional» me quiero referir al οἶκος entendido como unidad económica y afectiva. Es verdad que la concepción de Platón puede entenderse también en el sentido de convertir al estamento dirigente en una gran familia en el sentido del reforzamiento de los lazos afectivos entre sus miembros. De todas maneras, la unidad económico-organizativa que constituía el *oikos* implicaba la posesión de una propiedad, algo que está vedado a los guardianes. En cuanto al estamento productivo, no sabemos cuáles eran las relaciones de propiedad, por lo que hablar de «disolución de la familia» en general en la *República* es inexacto. Sobre el tema cf. Helmer (2012).

A continuación, Sócrates trata de dirimir una dificultad previa que constituye la primera ola de las tres que resolverá, la asignación de las mismas tareas a los varones y las mujeres (452e4-65). Esta equiparación es necesaria para fundamentar por un lado el comunismo y, por el otro, la disolución de la familia, ya que todos deben realizar en común las mismas actividades (457b7-c2). El término δυνατός es utilizado aquí en sus dos significaciones, primero en su acepción pasiva (δυνατά, 452e5) y luego en la activa (δυνατή, 453a1) para indicar la capacidad de la naturaleza femenina para participar de las mismas actividades que los varones, en especial de la guerra. La cuestión de la posibilidad se desliza así a la de la capacidad, ya que en la diferencia entre ambos sexos radica una objeción que afecta al principio básico del proyecto de dar una tarea específica a cada uno según su naturaleza (453b2-5). Una larga demostración se dedica a establecer que no hay diferencias esenciales entre la mujer y el varón, excepto en lo que hace a la fuerza (453b6-456c10). Sócrates establece que la ley que atribuye a las mujeres no es ni imposible ni es una ilusión (Οὐκ ἄρα ἀδύνατά γε οὐδὲ εὐχαῖς ὅμοια, 456b12), sino que, por el contrario, son las costumbres actuales las que están contra la naturaleza. La insistencia en que no se trata de una ilusión vuelve a poner el acento en la realización fáctica del proyecto en uno de sus puntos fundamentales, la equiparación de la mujer al varón en las tareas de guardia. Esta regla es, por tanto, no sólo posible sino también la mejor para una ciudad (457a3-4).

Glaucón plantea a la segunda dificultad, la comunidad de mujeres e hijos, tres objeciones: la incredulidad que despierta, su posibilidad realización y el beneficio que puede aportar (d4-5). Sócrates, contrariamente, considera que la dificultad reside en si es o no es posible, pero accede a la petición de Glaucón invirtiendo el planteamiento. Primero da por supuesta la posibilidad de la comunidad de mujeres y niños y describe sus beneficios (458a1-466d5). Ésta se revela como el punto fundamental de la unidad y, por tanto, de la excelencia de la ciudad justa (cf. 464a7-8).

Sobre la base de 458a1-b7, Laks (2012, 26) sostiene que esta descripción de Sócrates es «le chiffre, par rapport à la possibilité empirique

… de la réalité propre au paradigme», ya que su realización es imposible en su identidad. Concediendo que concreción y modelo son realidades diferentes, el pasaje no da ningún apoyo textual a esta interpretación, dado que (1) el mismo Sócrates se refiere metafóricamente a esa descripción como una debilidad (ἤδη οὖν αὐτὸς μαλθακίζομαι, b1) y con términos muy críticos a la actividad de ensoñación que caracteriza como haraganería (cf. ἀργοί, a1; ἀργόν, a7; ἀργοτέραν, b1). No hay ninguna referencia a la posible disimilitud entre modelo y concreción, ya que esto no ha estado en ningún caso en discusión, sino que la cuestión es si el modelo puede llevarse a cabo o no.[12] (2) La metáfora de la ensoñación que utiliza Sócrates se refiere exclusivamente al tema de la comunidad de mujeres y niños y es hermenéuticamente incorrecto extenderla al tema de la relación modelo-concreción de la ciudad.

La cuestión de la posibilidad vuelve a ser planteada por el mismo Sócrates de una manera que no permite ninguna ambigüedad en cuanto a su significado:

> Οὐκοῦν, ἦν δ᾽ ἐγώ, ἐκεῖνο λοιπὸν διελέσθαι, εἰ ἄρα καὶ ἐν ἀνθρώποις δυνατόν, ὥσπερ ἐν ἄλλοις ζῴοις, ταύτὴν τὴν κοινωνίαν ἐγγενέσθα, καὶ ὅπῃ δυνατόν;
>
> ¿Nos resta, entonces, distinguir si entre seres humanos puede surgir esta comunidad tal como sucede entre otros animales y de qué manera es posible?
>
> *Rep*. V, 466d6-8

En efecto, la referencia a otros animales indica que la posibilidad que se está considerando es una posibilidad real en un punto considerado

[12] En ningún caso se establecen dos momentos en la argumentación dado que todo paradigma tiene una realidad superior a su concreción, tanto en el caso de Calípolis como en el de Magnesia y en ambos las condiciones de concreción son las mismas. Cf. F.L. Lisi (1998 92-98). Más adelante toco esta cuestión en detalle.

esencial en el modelo: el comunismo de mujeres y niños. La referencia pretende indicar el carácter natural de esta norma. Sócrates, no obstante, no aborda el tema, sino que inicia una larga digresión sobre la conducta que han de tener en la guerra los guardianes (466e1-471c3), que es interrumpida de nuevo con impaciencia por Glaucón que le recuerda que debe demostrar que el régimen político propuesto puede llegar a realizarse y de qué manera eso puede suceder, dejando de lado toda otra consideración sobre la excelencia de la misma (471c4-e4). Es evidente que Glaucón piensa en una concreción real y que Sócrates debe responder a ello (cf. ὡς δυνατὴ αὕτη ἡ πολιτεία γενέσθαι καὶ τίνα τρόπον ποτὲ δυνατή; c6-7 ὡς δυνατὸν καὶ ἧ δυνατόν; e4). Esto se ve especialmente reforzado por la impaciencia de Glaucón por obtener una demostración de la posibilidad *real* de concreción:

> ἐπεὶ ὅτι γε, εἰ γένοιτο, πάντ᾽ ἂν εἴη ἀγαθὰ πόλει ᾗ γένοιτο.
>
> puesto que si se diera, la ciudad tendría todos esos bienes en la medida en que se diera.

El período hipotético es, precisamente potencial, e. d. no está excluida la posibilidad de que tenga lugar, sino que, por el contrario se trata de una *posibilidad* objetiva de concreción, tal como señala Kühner (Kühner-Gerth 1904, II, 477):

> Εἰ *c. opt.* wird gebraucht, wenn die Bedingung als eine blosse Vorstellung, als etwas willkürlich Angenommenes (über Gegenwärtiges oder Zukünftiges) erscheinen soll, das *ebensogut wirklich wie nicht wirklich sein könne*: εἰ τοῦτο γένοιτο, wenn dies etwa geschehen sollte (vielleicht geschieht es, vielleicht auch nicht).

y más adelante prosigue:

> Die Folge wird ausgedrückt

> a) In der Regel durch den Optativ mit ἄν, so dass auch das Bedingte als etwas Ungewisses und Unentschiedenes, *als eine blosse Möglichkeit bezeichnet wird*.[13]

No se puede deducir de estas palabras que no haya una posibilidad de cumplimiento, eso correspondería más bien a un período irreal.[14] Es obvio que esta posibilidad es sólo potencialmente posible, pero la demostración de Sócrates debe justificar que puede darse *efectivamente*. Sócrates debe demostrar que esa posibilidad no es meramente lógica, ya que defraudaría el horizonte de expectativas del auditorio. Suponer eso, es ir más allá de lo que permite el texto y pretender conocer el interior de la psique platónica, algo que no es científico porque no puede ser falsado.[15]

Las dudas que expresa Sócrates a enfrentarse a la última ola, la más grande y más difícil de evitar (472a3-5), son replicadas por Glaucón por una nueva insistencia en que diga sin más dilaciones si el régimen político propuesto puede llegar a concretarse (εἰτεῖν πῇ δυνατὴ γίγνεσθαι αὕτη ἡ πολιτεία; b1-2).[16]

Antes de enfrentarse a la tercera ola, Sócrates realiza otra digresión que constituye uno de los puntos fuertes de la hipótesis de Laks. Glaucón insta a Sócrates a presentar sin dilaciones su argumento, pero éste recuerda el origen del diálogo: mostrar las características de la justicia y de la injusticia (δικαιοσύνην οἷόν ἐστι καὶ ἀδικίαν δεῦρο ἥκομεν; b4-5). A partir de esa comprobación, Sócrates introduce la

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[13] Itálicas en ambos casos son mías.

[14] Algo que, por cierto no se puede deducir del texto de la KG es que «'*ei*+ optatif' ne mobilise en effet pas la catégorie de 'possibilité'» (Laks 2012, 31). ¿Cómo entiende Laks el término alemán «Möglichkeit»? Laks utiliza estos párrafos de la KG como apoyo de su tesis no en este caso, sino en el de *Leg.* IX, 875c4-6.

[15] El final de la intervención de Glaucón confirma esta hipótesis: ἀλλ᾽ ὡς ἐμοῦ ὁμολογοῦντος πάντα ταῦτα ὅτι εἰή ἂν καὶ ἄλλα γε μυρία, εἰ γένοιτο ἡ πολιτεία αὕτη, μηκέτι πλείω περὶ αὐτῆς λέγε, ἀλλὰ τοῦτο αὐτο ἤδη πειρώμεθα ἡμᾶς αὐτοὺς πείθειν, ὡς δυνατὸν καὶ ᾗ δυνατὸν, τὰ δ᾽ ἄλλα χαίρειν ἐῶμεν (e1-4).

[16] Aunque no afecta a la sustancia de la cuestión, creo que es interesante indicar que aquí δυνατή puede y, creo, debería entenderse en sentido activo.

problemática del paradigma: el hombre justo no es igual a la justicia: es el que está cercanísimo de ella y el que de todos los hombres participa de ella en máximo (ἐγγύτατα αὐτῆς ἢ καὶ πλεῖστα τῶν ἄλλων ἐκείνης μετέχῃ; c1-2). La utilización de los dos superlativos tiende a señalar la casi identificación entre ambos conceptos, la idea de justicia y su encarnación en la realidad tanto como su diferencia: no se trata de la misma realidad. En el caso de la ciudad, es evidente que se ha realizado un modelo teórico (λόγω; e1) de la ciudad buena, que tiene validez aunque no pueda demostrarse que es posible fundar una ciudad tal cual. Las prevenciones de Sócrates están dirigidas a resaltar la validez del modelo teórico independientemente de su realización o no, pero no a suponer que no puede ser realizado en sus aspectos esenciales, en especial aquellos que han constituido las dos olas anteriores y en lo que constituirá su punto principal: la coincidencia de poder político y sabiduría. De hecho declara:

> Mas si, para agradarte, debo asumir la demostración de cómo en el mayor grado y en qué sentido sería absolutamente posible, concédeme de nuevo lo mismo para tal demostración.
>
> *Rep*. V, 472e6-9.[17]

Lo que debe conceder Glaucón es que el modelo teórico está más cerca de la verdad que su concreción.[18] La referencia a la realización más cercana debe entenderse, por tanto, como una indicación de las diferencias obligadas por su concreción en el mundo sensible, no a una posible negación de su posibilidad de realización:

> No me obligues, entonces, a mostrar que debe llevarse a cabo en la realidad exactamente tal cual como lo hemos descrito en nuestro discurso, pero si somos capaces de

[17] εἰ δὲ δὴ καὶ τοῦτο προθῆναι δεῖ οὗ χάριν, ἀποδεῖξαι πῇ μάλιστα καὶ κατὰ τί δυνατώτατ΄ἄν εἴη, πάλιν μοι πρὸς τὴν τοιαύτην ἀπόδειξιν τὰ αὐτὰ διομολόγησαι.

[18] En el ejemplo de la justicia, hay una referencia a ἀυτό τε δικασιοσύνην οἷόν ἐστι, que Adam en nota *ad locum* interpreta como «justice by itself».

> descubrir que una ciudad podría administrarse de la manera más cercana de lo que hemos descrito, ¿debemos decir que hemos descubierto que es posible lo que tu reclamas?
>
> *Rep*. V, 473a7-b3

Con estas palabras delimita Sócrates cuál es el sentido de sus afirmaciones anteriores que no es otro que la eventualidad de cambios que deben aplicarse necesariamente en toda concreción y que están determinados por la imperfección del mundo sensible. De ellos no puede deducirse que Calípolis sea políticamente imposible en sus rasgos esenciales, entre los que se encuentran el comunismo de los guardianes y la abolición de la familia en el estamento dirigente. Estas precauciones han sido tomadas en función de lo que sigue a continuación, e. d. apuntando a la unión de sabiduría y poder, el punto más controvertido de todos y el más difícil de demostrar. No obstante, el hecho de que el tema se aborde a partir de la evidencia de la no existencia de un régimen tal como el descrito en la actualidad, indica que se trata de introducir un cambio real y que este cambio es posible de una manera simple. Contrariamente a lo que supone Laks, el giro «a continuación» (τὸ δὲ δὴ μετὰ τοῦτο) indica una realización práctica y no una posibilidad «débil»:

> A continuación, así parece, intentemos no sólo buscar, sino también demostrar qué se hace actualmente mal en las ciudades por lo que no están gobernadas de esta manera y con qué cambio mínimo una ciudad avanzaría a esta clase de régimen político, ante todo en un aspecto, pero si no, en dos y si no es posible, en el menos números de cambios y los de intensidad más pequeña.
>
> *Rep*. V, 473b4-9.[19]

[19] Τὸ δὲ δὴ μετὰ τοῦτο, ὡς ἔοικε, τειρώμεθα ζητεῖν τε καὶ ἀποδεικνύναι τί ποτε νῦν κακῶς ἐν ταῖς πόλεσι πράττεται δι´ ὅ οὐχ οὕτως οἰκοῦνται, καὶ τίνος ἄν σμικροτάτου μεταβαλόντος ἔλθοι εἰς τοῦτον τὸν τρόπον τῆς πολιτείας πόλις, μάλιοτα μὲν ἑνός, εἰ δὲ μή, δυοῖν, εἰ δὲ μή, ὅτι ὀλιγίστων τὸν ἀριθμὸν καὶ σμικροτάτων τὴν δύναμιν.

El carácter práctico de esta frase, hace imposible pensar que la diferencia entre paradigma y copia/concreción pueda ser mayor que la que existe entre la Idea y el objeto sensible.[20] El giro τοῦτον τὸν τρόπον τῆς πολιτείας demuestra que se trata, precisamente, de una forma de organización que se corresponde con la descripción λόγῳ. La proximidad, es por tanto, muy estrecha y no puede afectar a rasgos esenciales de la constitución. Nada puede ocultar que Sócrates sigue hablando de un proyecto practicable en sentido fuerte, aunque haya prevenido sobre la diferencia entre modelo y realización. Es más, acentúa que el cambio no es ni pequeño ni fácil, pero sí posible (473c2-4).[21] La larga digresión siguiente está dedicada a considerar de manera detallada las condiciones de realización de ese ideal, es decir determinar la condición necesaria y suficiente –unión de poder y filosofía– y las características de los individuos que la han de poner en práctica, los filósofos (V, 473b4-VI, 502c7). Laks (2012, 27) traduce (¿interpreta?) la conocida frase de Sócrates

> οὐδὲ αὕτη ἡ πολιτεία μή ποτε πρότερον φυῇ τε εἰς τὸ δυνατὸν καὶ φῶς ἡλίου ἴδῃ, ἥν νῦν λόγῳ διεληλύθαμεν (473e1-2)

de la siguiente manera:

> la constitution que nous venons d'expliciter par la parole (*logoi*) n'a aucune chance non plus de se développer dans la mesure du possible (*eis to dunaton*).

y da al giro εἰς τὸ δυνατὸν un sentido restrictivo que no es necesario, ya que aquí éste indica la posibilidad de nacimiento, surgimiento o crecimiento, e. d. su nacimiento en la medida de lo posible. Su surgimiento depende de la posibilidad de esta unión, algo que incluso

[20] Con esta afirmación no quiero indicar que exista una Idea de régimen político (ἡ τῆς πολιτείας ιδέας), ya que lo que Sócrates está describiendo es simplemente un modelo teórico que deberá ser puesto en práctica.

[21] La posición enfática del δέ adversativo subraya, precisamente, la posibilidad de esa realización.

puede observarse en su propia traducción, aunque la significación del francés «se développer» se presta a la interpretación que ofrece Laks. En griego, φύω significa en su sentido intransitivo, «nacer», «surgir» (cf. LSJ *s. v.*). Además, Laks olvida en su traducción la palabra πρότερον que indica, precisamente, la condición necesaria para que se cumpla la realización de la ciudad. En otras palabras, lo que está calificando el giro es la posibilidad de surgimiento de la ciudad como lo demuestra la frase que sigue, y no limitando su desarrollo.[22]

Un largo periplo en la segunda parte del quinto libro y la primera del sexto está dedicado a establecer las diferencias entre el verdadero filósofo y los falsarios (473e6-502c8). Es importante destacar que en esta *diairesis* lo fundamental consiste en la determinación del amor a y el conocimiento de las Ideas por parte del filósofo. En la última parte, Sócrates vuelve sobre la cuestión de la posibilidad de realización de Calípolis. El pasaje, como he puesto de relieve en otro lugar (Lisi 1998, 96ss.), muestra que el gobierno de los filósofos es posible, aunque el pueblo debe ser convencido de su necesidad y la concreción dependerá del paradigma divino, del cual la forma de estado descrita en la *República* es sólo una de sus posibles formas. Decisivo es que tanto el paradigma de la *República* como todas las otras formas constitucionales dependen del conocimiento de las Ideas (VI, 501b1-7). El tema de la posibilidad finaliza con la comprobación de Sócrates:

> Νῦν δή, ὡς ἔοικεν, ουμβαίνει ἡμῖν περὶ τῆς νομοθεσίας ἄριστα μὲν εἶναι ἃ λέγομεν, εἰ γένοιτο, χαλεπὰ δέ γενέσθαι οὐ μέντοι ἀδύνατά γε.
>
> Ahora bien, en lo que hace a la legislación, así parece, ahora nos sucede que lo que hemos dicho es lo mejor, si llegara a darse, pero que es difícil que se dé, aunque no es para nada imposible.
>
> *Rep*. VI, 502c5-7

[22] Independientemente de este argumento, me pregunto si aquí εἰς τὸ δυνατόν tiene la significación petrificada del giro o si τὸ δυνατόν no debería ser entendido más bien en el sentido fuerte que he señalado al comienzo de este trabajo.

La posibilidad de concreción de Calípolis es aquí nuevamente enfatizada y no es posible determinar la existencia de un sentido fuerte y otro débil de esa realización como pretende Laks.

Por último, queda el pasaje que finaliza el libro IX (592a1-b6) y que vuelve a retomar el problema de la posibilidad, es decir si una organización semejante es practicable. Ante el perseverante escepticismo de Glaucón que sostiene que un filósofo no se ha de comprometer nunca en política, Sócrates replica:

> Diantres,…, en su ciudad al menos y mucho, no quizás en su patria, si no acaece un azar divino.
>
> *Rep*. IX, 592a7-9.[23]

La unión del motivo de la posibilidad de realización de la ciudad justa con el de la θεία τύχη no puede dejar dudas, a mi entender, de que la distinción de los dos sentidos de δυνατόν que pretende Laks es no sólo innecesaria, sino completamente errónea.[24] Existe otra razón que considero aún más contundente que todas las indicadas anteriormente. Dada la estrecha analogía que establece Platón entre individuo y sociedad, la imposibilidad de concretar el paradigma descrito en la *República* implicaría también la imposibilidad de la existencia de un filósofo, lo que es negado de manera clara y contundente por Sócrates. Si se supusiera que es imposible también la concreción de un hombre justo, caería en una contradicción todo el diálogo y sus tesis, algo que no creo que nadie pueda suponer correcto. Además, hay que tener en cuenta, para terminar de despejar todas las dudas en este asunto, que Sócrates responde a todas las exigencias que le ha puesto Glaucón, o sea demostrar que es posible la realización de la ciudad y la manera en que ésta se llevaría a cabo (VII, 540e5-541a7).

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[23] Νὴ τὸν κύνα, ...ἔν γε τῇ ἑαυτοῦ πόλει καὶ μάλα, οὐ μέντοι ἴσως ἔν γε τῇ πατρίδι, ἐὰν μὴ θεία τις συμβῇ τύχη.

[24] He dado ya otros argumentos para esta interpretación del pasaje en el trabajo anteriormente mencionado de 1998, 96ss.

En resumen, la *República* describe un modelo teórico posible de aplicación real que es una copia de los principios de virtud y bondad aplicados a la actividad humana, más concretamente a una *polis* griega. La diferencia entre modelo y aplicación concreta sufre, necesariamente, modificaciones producto de su adaptación a la realidad sensible, pero debe conservar los aspectos fundamentales: separación de la sociedad en dos estamentos: guardianes y productores, división de los guardianes en dos clases: ejecutores de las indicaciones de los filósofos y filósofos propiamente dichos, comunismo de este estamento y participación de las mujeres en las actividades de los varones. Los filósofos se encuentran por encima de la ley, mientras que los guardianes inferiores están bajo su imperio. Este esquema es un reflejo del alma humana y del necesario predominio del intelecto frente a los otros dos tipos de alma, el alma volitiva y la concuspiscible. Hay una serie de aspectos que no pueden realizarse de la misma forma que en el modelo teórico que se resume en sus puntos esenciales al comienzo del libro octavo (543a1-6): mujeres y niños comunes, educación igual para todos, actividades iguales en guerra y paz, gobernantes aquellos que se hayan destacado como los mejores en la guerra y en la paz. Un ejemplo de las posibles concreciones de estos gobiernos filosóficos podemos encontrarlo en el *Timeo* y el *Critias*.

Gobierno de dioses y hombres en las Leyes

Las *Leyes* siguen el mismo esquema y como modelo tienen las mismas limitaciones que la *República*: también deben sufrir adaptaciones y existen diferencias entre modelo y concreción.[25] Sobre este particular ya he expuesto mi interpretación en otra ocasión (Lisi 1998, 101s.). En lo que sigue me limitaré a responder las objeciones de Laks. Entre todos los pasajes posible, el investigador francés se enumera cuatro: IV, 711c5-

[25] Para citar solo un ejemplo que clarifica qué es lo que probablemente entendiera Platón en los pasajes antes enunciados, véase *Leg*. V, 745e7-746d2, un texto no considerado por Laks.

712a7; V, 739b8-c4; IX, 853 c4-7 y IX, 875b1-d2.[26] De éstos analiza 3 y deja de lado el del quinto libro.

IX, 875b1-d2: el hombre providencial

Laks concentra su análisis en un pasaje que se encuentra en un contexto más amplio. Para él, el lugar indica que es imposible que un ser humano pueda ejercer el gobierno filosófico, porque éste corresponde sólo a dioses o hijos de dioses. Todo ser humano se desviará ineluctablemente del recto ejercicio del poder. La diferencia con mi posición consiste en que considero que el gobierno filosófico no está excluido absolutamente. En el trabajo de 2004 llamaba la atención sobre el hecho de que Platón utiliza un período hipotético potencial que no excluye la posibilidad real de realización de la apódosis. Laks intenta refutar esta interpretación basándose en el pasaje de la gramática de Kühner que he considerado más arriba. No creo necesario insistir en este aspecto, que ya he tratado. Me limitaré a ofrecer otros argumentos que pueden apoyar mi interpretación. El pasaje en el que se encuentra la frase en discusión comienza en 874e7 a propósito de una digresión en el tratamiento de las leyes penales por traumatismos. El texto presenta los siguientes pasos:

1) Los seres humanos necesitan leyes porque en caso contrario no se diferenciarían de las bestias más salvajes (874e8-875a1).

2) La naturaleza de ningún hombre crece hasta el punto de ser capaz de conocer lo conveniente para la organización política de los seres humanos y, conociéndolo poder y querer hacer lo mejor (a1-4).

3) Esto implicaría saber que el interés común tiene prioridad sobre el interés particular, porque lo primero une, lo segundo disgrega la ciudad (a5-b1).

Hasta aquí lo que precede al párrafo en cuestión. El huésped de Atenas aporta una segunda razón: En el caso de que alguien tuviera la

[26] El interesado en tener una visión más amplia de los pasajes importantes para este tema puede consultar F.L. Lisi (2004).

capacidad para adquirir esta convicción y dominar el arte, si después tomara el poder absoluto no respetaría esos principios, porque la naturaleza humana lo empujaría a dar preeminencia a su interés propio y cometer injusticia (b1-c3). En la frase siguiente, además del período hipotético potencial, hay indicaciones de que esta posibilidad no puede ser excluida. En primer lugar, el sintagma θείᾳ μοίρᾳ indica la intervención de la providencia divina, tal como sucedía al final del noveno libro de la *República* (cf. *supra*). En segundo lugar, todo el pasaje está construido sobre la base de la doble naturaleza humana: divina y animal. En 875b7, la naturaleza mortal (ἡ θνητὴ θύσις) hace referencia a los géneros de almas mortales que se imponen sobre la naturaleza divina, el intelecto, tal como lo afirman las líneas de 875c6-d2. A esto hay que añadir que la primera parte del pasaje indica que la educación por sí sola no basta, es necesario tener también una naturaleza providencial, en la que el dominio del principio divino sea absoluto.

Laks pone el acento en la última frase: νῦν δὲ οὐ γάρ ἐστιν οὐδαμοῦ οὐδαμῶς, ἀλλ΄ ἤ κατὰ βραχύ «pero ahora no existe en absoluto en ningún lado, a excepción de en un pequeño número»; d2-3). En ella, Laks destaca dos aspectos, el adverbio νῦν y el el sintagma κατὰ βραχύ. En el primer caso, Laks da al adverbio un valor no temporal, puesto que sostiene que para él el significado temporal («los hombres actuales») debe entenderse en el sentido absoluto de «los hombres en realidad»), es decir los seres humanos están excluidos del gobierno perfecto. No creo, honestamente, que esta interpretación sea correcta, aunque es posible, puesto que se puede interpretar νῦν δέ en el sentido de «en realidad», o sea «pues en realidad no existe en absoluto en ningún lugar». Lo que sigue y la unión con el concepto de providencia indican, por el contrario, que hay que entenderlo de manera temporal.

Aquí debo introducir un cambio a mis interpretaciones anteriores que de manera radical excluían la posibilidad de la concreción de la ciudad justa en la actualidad (cf. p. ej. 1998, 2004, 17, etc.), basándome en mi interpretación de la filosofía de la historia de Platón y en la discontinuidad temporal que implica una discontinuidad ontológica en los diversos períodos históricos. En el trabajo de 2004, en concreto, sostenía que la

frase excluye expresamente la realización del gobierno filosófico en esta época histórica. Una reconsideración del problema, me lleva a la conclusión de que es una sobre-interpretación del valor del adverbio, que está referido sobre todo al momento presente: ahora en el sentido de «en este momento». El otro elemento conflictivo en la frase está constituido por el sintagma κατὰ βραχύ que en todo el corpus aparece sólo 9 veces.[27] En todos esos pasajes tiene el significado de brevedad o escasez (poco).[28] En esta ocasión el problema es a qué se refiere, ya que la frase puede estar referida a la escasez de intelecto que es lo que precede o la debilidad de la presencia del intelecto. Otra posibilidad es pensar que sólo unos pocos tienen esa capacidad, algo que sería una alusión a la Academia. En una palabra, la realización de ese gobierno absoluto del intelecto no está excluida y no está claro de que no sea posible actualmente, la posibilidad queda abierta.

IV, 711c5-712a7: la conversión del tirano

El segundo pasaje analizado por Laks aborda el problema desde la alternativa contraria mencionada en la *República*. Ahora no se trata de que un filósofo tome el poder, sino de que un gobernante, en este caso un tirano, se vuelque a la filosofía. En el pasaje anterior (709d4-711c4), en un claro paralelismo con el pasaje central de la *República*, se considera de qué manera se podría convertir más rápidamente un régimen político en el mejor posible. Laks, aun aceptando que en este pasaje está abierta la posibilidad real de la existencia de un gobierno filosófico (2012, 35), pretende relativizar la expresa mención del Ateniense, aduciendo que hay indicios en el lugar precedente porque en ellos aparecen los términos εὔξασθαι (709d2) y εὐχήν (d6). El pasaje es el siguiente:

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[27] Además de este pasaje, aparece en *Soph.* 240c4; *Prot.* 329b3, 338a2; *Gorg.* 449b8; *Hipp. Mai.* 304a6; *Rep.* II, 369d5; *Tim.* 27c2; *Leg.* XII, 968b4.

[28] *Paullulum* traducen Ast (1824) y Schneider (1877).

> ΑΘ. Οὐκοῦν ὅ γε πρὸς ἕκαστόν τι τῶν εἰρημένων ἔχων τὴν τέχνην κἄν εὔξασθαί που δύναιτο ὀρθῶς, τί παρὸν αὐτῷ διὰ τύχης, τῆς τέχνης ἄν μόνον ἐπιδέοι; ΚΛ. Πάνυ μὲν οὖν. ΑΘ. Οἵ τε ἄλλοι γε δὴ πάντες οἱ νυνδὴ ῥηθέντες, κελευόμενοι τὴν αὑτῶν εὐχὴν εἰπεῖν, εἴποιεν ἄν. ἦ γάρ; ΚΛ. Τί μήν;
>
> At.: Por tanto, ¿el que poseyera el arte para cada una de las cosas mencionadas no sería también capaz de pedir correctamente a los dioses, qué condiciones deben dársele para necesitar además sólo de su arte? Cl.: Sin duda. At.: Y todos los otros recién mencionados, si se les pidiera que dijeran el contenido de su plegaria, lo harían, ¿o no? Cl.: Efectivamente.
>
> *Leyes* IV, 709d1-7

Como puede observarse, el contexto indica todo lo contrario a lo que supone Laks, se trata más bien del ruego que un filósofo con dominio de la ciencia política puede hacer a los dioses para que se cumplan sus deseos. La cuestión de la realización no es en absoluto debatida, se trata de las condiciones ideales para llevar a cabo el proyecto y la afirmación posterior de que esto es sólo posible con el apoyo de los dirigentes (711c6-d4) apunta, precisamente, en el sentido contrario. Otro argumento que ofrece Laks son los términos μῦθός τις y κεχρησμῳδήσθω (712a4). Sin embargo, contrariamente a lo que sostiene Laks ambos términos tienen un profundo significado religioso y realzan, más que rebajan, la posibilidad de una ciudad justa. Por último, la referencia a Néstor es, tal como lo muestra el pasaje correspondiente, una reafirmación de la posibilidad real de concreción de la mejor ciudad (711e8-712a2), como lo hace manifiesto esta vez el presente (φύεται).

IX, 853c4-7: *la legislación humana*

Al comienzo del libro noveno, el Ateniense declara:

> ἐπειδὴ δὲ οὐ, καθάπερ οἱ παλαιοὶ νομοθέται θεῶν παισὶν νομοθετούμενοι τοῖς ἥρωσιν, ὡς ὁ νῦν λόγος, αὐτοί τ᾽ ἐκ θεῶν ὄντες ἄλλοις τε ἐκ τοιούτων γεγονόσιν ἐνομοθέτουν, ἀλλ᾽ ἄνθρωποί τε καὶ ἀνθρώπων σπέρμασιν νομοθετοῦμεν τὰ νῦν...
>
> Mas dado que no legislamos, como legislaban los antiguos legisladores, que lo hacían para los héroes, hijos de dioses, como ahora se relata, y, siendo ellos mismos progenie de dioses, daban leyes para otros nacidos de los mismos, sino que ahora lo hacemos como hombres para simiente de hombres.

Pasaré por alto los cambios respecto del texto griego introducidos por Laks en su traducción, para pasar a puntos más importantes. En mi artículo de 2004 (27) sostenía:

> À l'époque ancienne, il suffisait d'éduquer les citoyens et il était inutile d'avoir recours aux menaces ou aux châtiments pour faire respecter les lois. Le changement d'époque, de nature et de croyances des hommes entraîne ainsi le changement des lois…Aujourd'hui, les circonstances, les hommes et les croyances ont changé, ce qui oblige à changer aussi les lois. La tâche du législateur est de nouveau déterminée ici par la nature des membres de la communauté.

Laks señala que aquí paso de una interpretación local a una genérica. He releído mi artículo y no encuentro dónde defiendo yo una interpretación local, sólo la he considerado en el análisis del pasaje del libro quinto 740a1-2 y he dado las razones para ello. Ésta es la lectura adecuada de mi trabajo y es imposible equivocarse. No obstante, aunque

en ese artículo he interpretado el τὰ νῦν de este pasaje como una referencia general al carácter de la humanidad, también podría entenderse de manera local, puesto que se está refiriendo a las leyes para Magnesia, acompañado de dos personajes que no son filósofos, sino personas con experiencia y de recto carácter.

¿Divinos, héroes, semidioses?

Laks me critica que la paráfrasis que he realizado pasa subrepticiamente de los héroes de antaño a los hombres de antaño, mientras que Platón opone, precisamente a los héroes a los hombres de ahora. Una lectura del *Timeo* y el *Critias* le hubiera indicado, quizás, que la referencia es a las ciudades anteriores al cataclismo y que Platón establece una continuidad histórica entre ambas Atenas. La diferencia entre héroes y hombres no es la que pretende Laks, sino que existe una continuidad entre lo divino y lo humano como lo demuestra el hecho de que todas las familias nobles en Grecia remontaban sus orígenes a un héroe ancestral y, muchas veces, este héroe era el origen de una entera ciudad (véase el caso de Cécrops). Por tanto, la diferencia que establece Platón se refiere a momentos históricos o situaciones históricas concretas. Por otro lado, «divino» significa «gobierno absoluto del intelecto», algo que no es posible alcanzar en ese momento para la población de Magnesia. La posibilidad de un gobierno filosófico queda abierta incluso en este proyecto, tal como lo demuestra la Junta Nocturna. La diferencia entre gobierno/legislación divina y gobierno/legislación humana se refiere, precisamente a la diferencia entre el gobierno filosófico y la solución que se propone en las *Leyes*. La idea de que el régimen propuesto para la colonia cretense no es un gobierno auténticamente filosófico, aunque basado en principios filosóficos recorre todo el diálogo a través de la diferencia entre legislación para dioses y legislación para hombres. Tal como lo muestra el *Timeo* el ser humano es un compuesto de un elemento divino y elementos mortales que generan dolor y placer y a esta diferencia entre el intelecto y las almas mortales deben referirse las distinciones entre la legislación para dioses o para seres humanos (cf. *Leyes* V, 732e3-7 y los pasajes arriba analizados, así como Lisi 2004). Existe un pasaje

que muestra con claridad el error que comete Laks al pretender una oposición insuperable entre el ámbito de los héroes y el humano actual. En el undécimo libro (934c2-6), el huésped de Atenas sostiene que hay que decir las penas de los robos y los delitos violentos, «en la medida en que los dioses y los hijos de dioses lo dejen legislar» (ὅπως ἄν ἡμῖν παρείκωσιν θεοὶ καὶ θεῶν παῖδες νομοθετεῖν). Schöpsdau (2011, IX2, 513) se decanta por una alusión a los habitantes del estado ideal mencionado en 739a-b con una explicación muy plausible. Personalmente, creo que se trata de una alusión a los filósofos de la Academia. En mi artículo de 2004 ofrecí razones para suponer que el devenir filósofo consistía en una divinización o, si se quiere, heroización. Tal como expliqué allí, las referencias al carácter divino de los filósofos y las autoridades supremas son múltiples en ambos diálogos. En la *República*, los filósofos pertenecen al género áureo que, como se sabe, es el género de los héroes. Cuando mueren en batalla (V, 468e4-469b3) se les rinden los honores correspondientes y son considerados héroes, lo mismo que los filósofos gobernantes. En las *Leyes* los auditores son divinos y superiores en virtud al resto de los gobernantes (XII, 945b9-c2). Los ritos funerarios (947b3-e4) indican que son considerados héroes que pasan a ser bienaventurados (μακάριον e1) tras su muerte. Existe un pasaje del séptimo libro que afirma de manera clara esta posibilidad (818b9-c3) y que he tratado en mi trabajo de 2004. Laks lo trata en una nota apoyándose en el argumento de autoridad de las traducciones de Diès, Schöpsdau y Saunders para preferir esas versiones a las mías, pero sin aportar razones de peso y sin confutar la que he ofrecido yo. Están hablando de las materias que deben enseñarse. La parte en discusión es la siguiente:

> Δοκῶ μέν, ἅς μή τις πράξας μηδὲ αὖ μαθὼν τὸ παράπαν οὐκ ἄν ποτε γένοιτο ἀνθρώποις θεὸς οὐδὲ δαίμων οὐδὲ ἥρως οἷος δυνατὸς ἀνθρώπων ἐπιμέλειαν σὺν σπουδῇ ποιεῖσθαι.
>
> Creo, por cierto, que aquellas [materias] que si alguien no hubiera practicado ni tampoco hubiera aprendido podría

> jamás convertirse en un dios para los hombres ni en un héroe tal capaz de cuidar de los hombres con seriedad.
>
> *Leyes* VII, 818b9-c3

La explicación que ofrece Schöpsdau (1998-2012, II, 604s.) de su comprensión de la frase es artificial, puesto que quiere poner en relación τις πράξας con θεός y μηδὲ αὖ μαθών con οὐδὲ δαίμων οὐδὲ ἥρως, suponiendo unos hipérbatos que no son necesarios. England dice sobre este pasaje: «The answer is hard for us to understand, though apparently Cleinias did not find it so. The Ath. seems to say that if a superhuman being is to stand in any effectively beneficial relation to *men*, there are certain intellectual necessities which he must not only μαθεῖν to some extent, but πρᾶξαι.» Es evidente, creo, que England interpreta gramaticalmente como yo la frase y, aunque recurrir a un argumento de autoridad no es precisamente muy científico, para no extenderme en cuestiones gramaticales,[29] cito también la traducción que ofrece Ficino:

> Illas arbitror, quas qui non discit ullo modo nec experitur, nunquam hominibus Deus fit nec daemon nec heros, ut curam hominum studiose habere possit.

La continuación del pasaje confirma esta interpretación: «muy lejos estaría un hombre de llegar a ser divino, si no conociera ni el uno, ni el dos, ni el tres, ni en general, los números pares e impares, etc.» (c3-5).[30] Que la diferencia entre dios y hombre no es tan tajante como sucede en el pensamiento cercano oriental o judeo-cristiano lo muestran pasajes como el del *Soph*. 216a5-c1: Sócrates califica al huésped de Elea de dios. Teodoro lo corrige y le indica que si no un dios, es divino y que como tales considera a todos los filósofos.

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[29] Por ejemplo que μηδὲ αὖ obliga a unir los dos participios en una frase, que τις debe ser necesariamente el sujeto oracional y los otros nominativos los atributos, etc.

[30] πολλοῦ δ΄ ἄν δεήσειεν ἄνθρωπός γε θεῖος γενέσθαι μήτε ἕν μήτε δύο μήτε τρία μήθ΄ ὅλως ἄρτια καὶ περιττὰ δυνάμενος γιγνώσκειν, κτλ.

Conclusión

Platón ha sido el primer constructivista del que tengamos noticias. Su teoría política predica una peligrosa visión del tirano bueno o del filósofo tirano, tal como expresa en las *Leyes* (739a) y como describe en el *Político* el gobierno del verdadero político/filósofo. Los intentos como los realizados por Strauss, Laks, Bobonich, Müller y otros de obviar esa faceta platónica a través de una interpretación de sus textos políticos, en especial la *República*, como una mera disquisición teórica sin finalidad práctica no pueden afrontar el testimonio de los textos sin recurrir a argucias que no se corresponden ni con el sentido de las obras ni con el contexto histórico. Ahora bien, lo que visto desde una perspectiva contemporánea puede aparecer como una visión totalitaria de la política, no debe impedir comprender aquello que de valioso tienen las reflexiones platónicas, sobre todo porque han sido hechas con enorme valentía y porque contienen muchos elementos que luego han fructificado en valores centrales de la concepción occidental. Esto no implica justificarlo todo ni rechazarlo, sino leer con atención y reflexionar acerca de su verdadero significado y su proyección.

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PLATO'S UNEASY FOUNDING: ON REPUTATION IN THE *LAWS*

ANDREAS AVGOUSTI

Abstract

In Greek political theoretical practice, according to Rousseau and Arendt, the founder of a constitution leaves once he has legislated. The politeia of Plato's Laws *violates this familiar trope. This observation –hitherto unnoticed in the secondary literature– suggests that scholars have not paid sufficient attention to Magnesia's founding. Herein I establish the role of reputation in the founding, thus touching upon a concept that is central to Plato's Athens yet radically understudied in Platonic studies. I begin by outlining the parameters of founding: the conceptual commitment that humankind lives not in the age of Cronus, but in the age of Zeus. I then evince that in this age reputation is both instrumental to, and constitutive of, the founding. The instrumental role is shown via the presence of Magnesia's founder, Cleinias of Cnossos, in the frame of the dialogue. The constitutive role is evidenced in the legislation for the incoming Dorian colonists. I conclude by proposing some virtues of Plato's account as motivated by my reading.*

* * *

In Plato's *Laws*, the Athenian Stranger contends that, when it comes to founding constitutions (*politeiai*) «no one has yet given [to this good

start (*to ge kalōs arxasthai*)] the praise it deserves» (VI, 754a. Cf. VI, 775e).[1] It turns out that this good start contravenes a familiar trope in political thought. Rousseau approvingly writes that, «When Lycurgus gave the laws to his homeland, he began by abdicating the throne. It was the custom of most Greek cities to entrust the establishment of their laws to foreigners.»[2] Arendt contrasts the lawgiver to the citizens, stating that, «for the Greeks…the right to *politeuesthai*, to engage in the numerous activities which eventually went on in the *polis*, was entirely restricted to citizens».[3] In Plato's *Laws*, however, the founder does not leave; on the contrary, Cleinias of Cnossos joins a prestigious institution of the *politeia* and becomes a citizen of Magnesia. In failing to attend to this manifest incongruity and in its casualness with which it approaches the good start that Magnesia demands, influential secondary literature vindicates the Athenian's complaint.[4]

Herein I focus on a particular aspect of the founding (*oikeisēs*) of the political order (*politeia*), to wit, the role of reputation. Despite the fact that reputation is a feature of Plato's work and context, scholars have scarcely addressed the place of reputation in Plato's thought. I begin with a brief account of the parameters of founding, that is, the conceptual commitment in Plato's political thought that we are in «the age of Zeus» and not in «the age of Cronus».[5] I go on to show that in the age of Zeus reputation is both instrumental to, and constitutive of, the founding. The instrumental role of reputation is shown via the presence of Magnesia's founder in the frame of the dialogue. The constitutive role of reputation is

[1] Quotes from the *Laws* appear in text in parentheses denoting Book and paragraph numbers; unless otherwise stated they are from Plato 2004.

[2] Rousseau 2011, 181.

[3] Arendt 1958, 194.

[4] For example, Balot 2006, 223: Magnesia is a city that can be «founded on consent». While absence of evidence is not evidence of absence, important work on Plato's political thought that treat the *Laws* does not seem interested in the problem of founding: see Bobonich 2002; Laks 2005; Schofield 2006.

[5] The coinage is taken from *Statesman* 272b.

evidenced in the legislation directed at the incoming Dorian colonists.[6] I conclude by revisiting the incongruity between what we read in Rousseau's chapter on the legislator in the *Social Contract* and what we read in Plato's *Laws*, and propose some virtues inherent in the latter account.

The Parameters of Founding: the Age of Zeus

Prior to discussing founding proper, we must inquire about the general presuppositions that pertain to the common circumstances of humankind. In other words, what self-understanding of the human situation do Platonic foundings presuppose? A schematic answer to this question will pave the way for an account of the role of reputation.

Three old men populate the frame of the *Laws*: an Athenian who remains nameless throughout, the Spartan Megillus, and the Cretan Cleinias from Cnossos. They are in Crete, on a pilgrimage to the shrine of Zeus (I, 625a-b). Once Cleinias reveals that he has been charged with the founding of a colony of Cnossos, the Athenian claims the authority of a «fiction (*muthō*)» (IV, 713a) or account in which «there is a lot of truth (*hō logos, alētheia chrōmenos*)» (IV, 713e) to say that «there existed, in the age of Cronus, a form of government and administration which was a great success, and which served as a blueprint for the best run of our present-day states (*tis archē te kai oikēsis gegonenai epi Kronou ma' eudaimōn, hēs memēma echousa estin hētis tōn nun arista oikeitai*)» (IV, 713b). During that age, people «were provided with everything in abundance and without any effort on their part» (IV, 713c). This was possible only because of what the god knew (*gignōskōn*), namely, that «human nature (*anthrōpeia phusis*) is never able to take complete control of all human affairs without being filled with arrogance and injustice» (IV, 713c). Hence Cronus «appointed kings and rulers for our states; they were not men, but beings of a superior and more divine order –spirits

[6] My treatment of the *Laws* does not exhaust what the dialogue has to say about the role of reputation in foundings; of course, I do not mean to suggest that only in the *Laws* may we find such evidence in Plato's political thought.

(*daimonas*)» (IV, 713c-d). From such rule resulted «peace, respect for others, good laws, justice in full measure, and a state of happiness and harmony among the races of the world» (IV, 713e). This fiction appears in the *Statesman* in somewhat different terms. Therein we read that humankind in the age of Cronus were earthborn, under the guardianship of daemons, and were made «ageless and deathless». In the age of Zeus, however, men are born of men, under the guardianship of men, men age, and men die.[7] Says the Stranger to Young Socrates: «This is the story, Socrates, of the life of men under the government of Kronos [sic.]. Our present life [is]– said to be under the government of Zeus (‘*ton dē bion, ō Sōkrates, akoueis men ton tōn epi Kronou: ton de d’hon logos epi Dios einai*)».[8] Taken together, these accounts divulge the self-understanding presupposed by Platonic foundings. We may reformulate this as follows: *politeiai* are human creations and therefore tethered to the kind of being that the human is; a principal characteristic of the human being is its mortality.

According to the Athenian Stranger, the moral of the story is that

> where the ruler of a state is not a god but a mortal, people have no respite from toil and misfortune. The lesson is that we should make every effort to imitate the life men are said to have led under Cronus…in obedience to what little spark of immortality lies in us (*mimeisthai dein hēmas oieitai pasē mēchanē ton epi tou Kronou legomenon bion, kai hoson en hēmin athanasias enesti*).
>
> *Laws* IV, 713e (see IV, 713b quoted above).[9]

Here is the relationship between the age of Cronus and the age of Zeus: it is one of mimicry. The «spark of immortality» (IV, 713e) humans

[7] *Statesman* 273e.

[8] *Statesman* 272b.

[9] The age of Zeus is «imitating and following» the age of Cronus. *Statesman* 273e-274a.

carry connects the present to the age of Cronus. In short, the normative proposal is that Platonic foundings ought to be godlike.

Still, it is unclear what it is to mimic the age of Cronus in the age of Zeus. For example, it cannot make sense to say that an age that needs political constitutions mimics an age that had none. I take my cue from Lane who, writing about the *Statesman*, argues that we should understand imitation as a «second-order imitation»: the imitation is in the decision of what to do in the age of Zeus, just like Cronus decided what to do with the universe.[10] It is the «structural demand for autonomy [that] is the key motif of the age of Zeus…their autonomy is to be patterned in the specific form of 'imitation' of the cosmos.»[11] Focusing on the founding of *politeiai*, I take Lane's account forward to posit that reputation is both instrumental to, and constitutive of, a proper founding in the age of Zeus.[12]

Reputation as Instrumental: Cleinias the Founder-Citizen

That the Athenian addresses the founder, Cleinias, in the second person, puts the *Laws* at the beginning of a tradition of political theoretical texts on foundings that choose this mode of address, the most famous of which is Machiavelli's *Prince*.[13] I claim that Cleinias's reticence to divulge the task of founding results from his hesitant attitude towards the undertaking; an appeal to his reputation is instrumental in overcoming such an attitude. It follows from this that a view of the *Laws* where either

[10] Lane 1998, 109. It is important that «such second-order imitation can allow for substantial divergence in the actions of imitator and imitated». Lane 1998, 109.

[11] Lane 1998, 108-9.

[12] The reader should bear in mind that what follows is governed by the «basic truth…that no political theory, liberal or other, can determine by itself its own application. The conditions in which the theory or any given interpretation of it makes sense to intelligent people are determined by an opaque aggregation of many actions and forces». Williams 2005, 28. One might add that this highlights the importance of the parameters of founding.

[13] For an exposition and extension of this point, see Williams 2005, 57-58. Machiavelli's *Prince* is a go-to text for a so-called «modern» take on reputation. He writes, *inter alia*, that «in all his doings a prince must endeavour to win the reputation (*fama*) of being a great man of outstanding ability». Machiavelli 1999, 72.

Cleinias is coupled with Megillus under the heading of «evaluative audience» or which fails to distinguish between the two is unsatisfactory.[14] On my reading, Cleinias is a privileged interlocutor because the founding of Magnesia passes through him.

While the Cnossian is present from the beginning of the dialogue, Plato hides Cleinias' unique situation until the end of Book III. This is something to be explained. After all, Cleinias need not have been present from the start, for it often occurs in Plato's philosophical dramas that the main interlocutor(s) make a delayed entrance (e.g. the sophist Protagoras and the geometer Theaetetus in the dialogues that bear their names). Nor is this a case of dramatic irony, i.e. one where the author reveals to the audience something unbeknownst to the interlocutors.[15] What necessitates Cleinias' presence in the dialogue from the start?

The opening gambit of the *Laws* may provide us with a clue. This first question, posed by the Athenian, alludes to the parameters of founding: «Tell me, gentlemen, to whom do you give the credit for establishing your codes of law? Is it a god, or a man?» (I, 624a). Cleinias responds –probably with hesitation– that it is a god.[16] As the pivot of the Magnesian enterprise, the Athenian perturbs Cleinias from the very beginning, putting

[14] For an example of the former, see Morgan 2013; for an example of the latter, see Zuckert 2004. I accept that Cleinias and Megillus are part of the same evaluative audience only insofar as they are Dorians. This, however, is insufficient to explain their respective roles in the *Laws*.

[15] For a discussion of these issues, see Griswold 2002. I agree with Schofield that the audience of the *Laws* is broadly construed: «Plato wanted two things above all of the discourse he was to develop in the *Laws*: first, that it should reflect and embody a sense of a transcendent moral framework for political and social existence; second, that it should be capable of being persuasive –because *inter alia* generally intelligible– to a population at large, not to just an intellectual elite.» Schofield 2003, 13. Cf. Yunis 1996, 236. For the multiple audiences of the *Laws*, see Rowe 2010, 32 *sq*.

[16] Cleinias's answer is: «A god, sir, a god – and that's the honest truth (*theos, ô xene, theos, hôs ge to dikaiotaton eipein*).» *Laws* I, 624a. Pangle's translation, unlike Saunders', readily betrays the hesitation in the Cretan's words: «A god, stranger, a god – to say what is at any rate the most just thing.»

him in a dilemma.[17] Cleinias knows that his answer secures the highest normative authority for the laws of his city, Cnossos. Had he answered «man» he would have foregone this advantage. It would, however, have made Cleinias' future task of founding Magnesia easier to embark upon. After all, he is all too aware he is not a god: if Cleinias is sincere about god being the lawgiver of Crete and its cities, then when founding Magnesia he should follow *those* divinely-informed laws. He would not begin anew in collusion with a pair of non-Cretans, but only transpose the laws of Minos onto Magnesia. When the task of founding becomes common knowledge and the account of the *politeia* has been completed, Cleinias knows that to translate their *logos* into *ergon* is to rethink what he came into the dialogue believing about the Dorian constitution of his city of origin.[18]

There is another bite to Cleinias' situation: his words and actions put him on the verge of committing impiety. By saying that a god was the founder of the Cretan constitution, it follows that the founding of Magnesia will be less-than-godly. And this while Cleinias is on a pilgrimage to the cave of Zeus, mimicking Minos who journeyed every nine years to receive instruction from Zeus (I, 630c).[19] Cleinias has no such recourse to a lawgiver god. Even though, strictly speaking, both Minos and Cleinias are in the age of Zeus, the gap in circumstances between Cleinias and the founder of Cnossos is unbridgeable. The suggestion is, therefore, that laws are needed that will allow future Magnesians to respond as Cleinias does to the first question, to wit, that Magnesia was founded by a god.

«Let us therefore summon God to attend the foundation of the state (*tēs poleōs kataskeuēn*)», the Athenian prays (IV, 712b); in the age of Zeus, this can only be understood metaphorically. Cleinias must have the

[17] Contrary to Zuckert, therefore, I do not think that the Athenian saves his interlocutors' blushes. The Athenian's demand that Cleinias become a citizen of Magnesia is compelling evidence to this effect (VI, 753a). Zuckert 2004, 379.

[18] For these beliefs, see I, 625c-626b.

[19] *Minos* 319c; scholars do not agree whether Plato is the author of this dialogue.

courage of his conviction that they «stick to the path on which…God himself is guiding us» (XII, 968b) even if he has had no rapport with the god. To explain why «it is no accident that the laws of the Cretans have such a high reputation (*eudokimoi*) in the entire Greek world» (I, 631b), the Athenian divides the benefits of the laws into two classes: human and divine, the «former depend[ing] on the latter» (I, 631b-632a). Human laws should be grounded in, and look towards, the divine.[20] Hence, to steep Magnesia in theology and religion is to psychologically nudge Cleinias into wholeheartedly proceeding with the founding of the new city. Perhaps if Cleinias sees that the Magnesians will in fact attribute their founding to a god, he can proceed with the task of founding.

At the beginning the expectation is that each interlocutor will have preferences that match their heritage: as Dorians, the Spartan and the Cretan will overlap, whereas the Athenian will stand out. This is evidenced in the discussion of the symposia. Both Dorians resist the Athenian's recommendation that drinking parties are useful for a city on patriotic grounds: the Stranger is from a city that allows symposia, whereas they are from cities that bar them altogether. For them, the Spartan and Cretan institution of the mess hall (*sussition*) is sufficient as a school of virtue.[21] Contrary to the Dorian purge of pleasure from the *politeia*, however, Magnesia will have city-regulated symposia combined with choruses in which men as old as the interlocutors will be expected to participate (II, 670a). The argument for the symposia relies on human nature, specifically, «that human beings are so imperfect that they cannot be controlled through persuasion alone: they must also be trained in the proper use of their desires».[22] This is consistent with what Cronus knows about human beings (IV, 713c).

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[20] «[T]he *Laws* itself aims at articulating a certain tension, one which mirrors the radical and irreducible polarity between the human and the divine.» Laks 2005, 267.

[21] To the shock of Megillus and Cleinias and contrary to Dorian practice, both women and men are to participate in Magnesia's mess halls (see VI, 781a-d).

[22] Murray 2013, 111.

As such, both Dorians share a suspicion towards the Athenian. To mitigate this suspicion, Plato deploys the language of friendship and guest-friendship (*philia* and *xenia*) to inscribe affection or goodwill (*eunoia*) from each Dorian towards Athens. Megillus' family represent Athenian interests in Sparta («they are *proxenoi*», I, 642b) and, by listening to Spartans blame and praise Athens, he has «acquired a whole-hearted affection for her, so that to this day, I very much enjoy the sound of your accent» (I, 642c). Cleinias's affection for Athens is decidedly religious and related to the past survival of Athens: the «divinely inspired» Epimenides –an *oikeios* to his family– «obeyed the command of the oracle to go to Athens, where he performed certain sacrifices which the god had ordered» and told the Athenians that it would take the Persian invasion a decade to manifest, and that the invasion would fail. «That was when my ancestor formed ties of [guest-]friendship (*exenōthēsan*) with you Athenians, and ever since then my forebears and I have held you in affection» (I, 642e-643a). The Athenian later extols the seer Epimenides and his practical (*ergō*) achievement (III, 677d-e).

The prolonged absence of the task of founding Magnesia allows an airing and subsequent leaving aside of reputational assumptions that might otherwise obstruct the project of founding a city that is made up of laws both local and foreign (III, 702c). That Books I through III have in part an instrumental character, is shown when the Athenian urges Cleinias to «cast your mind back to the beginning of our discussion and watch what I'm up to», not long after we discover about Cnossos' plans to found Magnesia (IV, 705d). As Meyer notes, referring to discussions of other *politeiai* in Book III: «Deliberations in the original legislative moment [i.e. what the three interlocutors are engaged in], since they concern the relative merits of different sets of norms, are in effect exercises in comparative politics. Such comparisons feature in every legislative moment described or enacted in the text of the *Laws*.»[23] It is by imitating legislators of the past that legislators of the present do well. Once obstructive reputation assumptions about the motives of the Athenian have been left

[23] Meyer 2006, 384.

aside, Cleinias can oblige the Athenian's demand for a «test (*elegkhos*)» for «what would be the ideal way of administering a state, and the best principles the individual can observe in running his own life (*pôs pot' an polis arista oikoiē, kai idia pōs an tis beltista ton hautou bion diagagoi*)» (III, 702a-b). Cleinias may comfortably divulge his secret about the task of founding he had known all along: «I won't keep you in the dark about my position (*ou gar apokrupsomai sphō to nun emoi sumbainon*)» (III, 702c).

At the tail end of the dialogue it becomes clear that Cleinias must do justice to his heritage if Magnesia is to manifest. The Athenian explicitly address Cleinias' pivotal role. Via an appeal to Cleinias' future legacy among the yet-to-be Magnesians, he exhorts the Cretan to proceed with the founding. He calls upon Cleinias to «establish the state of the Magnesians…and if you're successful you'll win enormous fame (*kleos arē megiston*); at any rate you'll never lose a reputation for courage (*andreiotatos einai dokein*) that will dwarf all your successors» (XII, 969a-b).[24] We know that Cleinias is susceptible to such an appeal because it was he who first, and from the very beginning, showed concern about a legislator whose high reputation is justified: «We Cretans would say [about Rhadamanthus] that he won this reputation [for justice] because of the scrupulously fair way in which he settled the judicial problems of his day.» The Athenian was quick on the uptake: «A distinguished reputation (*kleos*) indeed, and one particularly appropriate for a son of Zeus» (I, 625a). If the *politeia* is to manifest, then it is Cleinias' reputation among its future denizens to which the Athenian ought to appeal. We may conclude therefore that the textual evidence resists a retreat to the dogmatic position that «the desire for fame cannot be the right Platonic reason for doing anything».[25] The reward of fame and reputation is apposite to the age of Zeus, for it is very much a reward that mortals can give.

[24] Pangle also notices that the Athenian appeals to the founder Cleinias' fame. Pangle 1980, 416-417.

[25] Wilburn 2013, 95 n.60.

By appealing to Cleinias' reputation, the Athenian's exhortation drives a wedge between Cnossos and Magnesia. For the anomaly –which the secondary literature ignores– is that Magnesia, while a colony of Cnossos, will self-consciously resist imitating the principles of its mother. «Cleinias of Cnossos» (I, 629c) will be the first to make this step, opting for a potential city rather than an extant one. Whether Cleinias can (or will want to) take solace in the fact that Magnesia, as a Cretan city and a colony of Cnossos, will partake in the «high reputation (*eudokimoi*) in the entire Greek world» of Cretan laws (I, 631b) depends on how far he thinks Magnesia deviates from these laws.[26] The end of the *Laws* leaves us wondering whether Cleinias will go ahead with the founding. Thus the dialogue closes as it had opened, namely, with a dilemma for Cleinias, a dilemma that evidences the precariousness of foundings in the age of Zeus.[27]

If Arendt is to be believed, the precondition of founding is that the founder(s) must never be assimilated: «for the Greeks…the lawmaker was like the builder of the city wall, someone who had to do and finish his work before political activity could begin…[he] could be called from abroad and commissioned without having to be a citizen, whereas the right to *politeuesthai*, to engage in the numerous activities which eventually went on in the *polis*, was entirely restricted to citizens».[28] The Athenian

[26] The quote about «high reputation» is what the Athenian thinks Cleinias ought to have said about the Cretan laws so as to avoid the implication –which Cleinias wrongly draws– that the Athenian's criticism has «reduce[d] our Cretan legislator to the status of a failure.» *Laws* I, 630d.

[27] Since the age of Zeus is the age of autonomy it coheres with what is said by the Speaker who relates the message of Lachesis in the Myth of Er, to wit, that «the responsibility lies with the one who makes the choice; the god has none (*aitia helomenou: theos anaitios*).» *Rep.* X, 617e. The language of *aitia* (cause, responsibility) and the question of its locus is found in the Athenian's salvo with which the *Laws* opens: «Tell me, gentlemen, to whom do you give the credit for establishing your codes of law? It is a god, or a man *(theos ē tis anthrōpōn humin, ō xenoi, eilēphe tēn aitian tēs tōn nomōn diatheseōs)*?» *Laws* I, 624a. As in the *Republic*, the three Fates make their appearance towards the end of the *Laws* at XII, 960c-d.

[28] Arendt 1958, 194. Saxonhouse contrasts (ancient) foundings to (modern) constitutions altogether; referring to Arendt's *On Revolution*, Saxonhouse points out that the model of founding therein is wholly unlike that of foundings we read about in Greek tragedies. Saxonhouse 2009, 45-46.

insists that Cleinias be made a citizen of this colony (*kai auton se politēn einai tautēs tēs apoikias*) (VI, 753a). Cleinias is not only a founder of Magnesia, but also a future citizen who will participate in its institutions as a Guardian of the Laws. Cleinias' knee-jerk reaction is to seek help from the Stranger and Megillus. Unfortunately, the response he receives from the Athenian is not encouraging: «Athens is haughty…and Sparta also is haughty, and both are far distant: but for you this course is in all respects proper» (VI, 753a, Bury translation).[29] The Athenian raises the issue in the context of the «special duty» the citizens of Cnossos have towards Magnesia. This justifies why «It's absolutely vital to give your best attention to choosing, first of all, Guardians of the Laws (*nomophulakas*)» (VI, 752d-e). There will be thirty-seven of these, nineteen of whom will be drawn from the incoming colonists and eighteen from Cnossos including Cleinias. Whereas Arendt's claim would identify Cleinias' task as an act of foreign policy on behalf of his home city, the text attests otherwise. By making Cleinias a citizen of Magnesia, Plato shows us a salient characteristic of foundings in the age of Zeus: that foundings presume a prior founding, that is, the pre-existence of another city from which the founder hails. Put differently, Cleinias is in a quandary which Minos, Lycurgus, and Solon, never encountered.[30] If this *politeia* is to manifest, its ambivalent founder will have to become a Magnesian citizen and assume an active role in its institutions. The Athenian must therefore exhort Cleinias to seek a good reputation among the future Magnesians.

[29] In discussing this passage, Lane, 2010 focuses on the Athenian's rider to the claim that Cleinias in addition to seventeen of the Guardians of the Laws will be Cnossians: «either by persuading you or compelling you, with a measured amount of force.» *Laws* VI, 753a (Pangle trans.).

[30] Occurrences that may make the founding easier, such as a young tyrant who assists the legislator and/or a stroke of luck (IV, 709e *sq*), are exceptions that prove the rule in the age of Zeus.

The Pursuit of Reputation as Constitutive of the Founding: Colonists in the Laws

Reputation is not only instrumental to the founding; it is constitutive of it too. The interaction in which the foreigners of the frame engage is analogous to the initial interactions among the incoming colonists. In getting the city started, Cleinias and the motley crew of colonists are similarly placed with respect to the positive and negative preconceptions they bring in their train.[31] The colonists will be Greek foreigners «of Dorian stock».[32] The Athenian is serious about addressing their situation: «we should assume our colonists have arrived and are standing before us» (IV, 715e). These foundings are, in part, the result of necessity: «Such migrations occur because of the pressures of land-shortage…sometimes a given section of the community may be obliged to go off and settle elsewhere because it is harassed by civil war (*stasesin biazomenon*), and on one occasion a whole state took to its heels after being overcome by an attack it could not resist» (IV, 708b). More specifically and relevantly, Magnesia is made up of people who bring to the city the reputation of their city of origin. The Athenian recognizes «that at the start they won't readily accept any [of the laws] at all» (VI, 752c). Therefore, unlike the *Republic*'s constitution, the *politeia* of the *Laws* confronts the question of what happens when you cannot begin with the young.[33]

In fact, we are explicitly and elegantly told that they lack unity. «So it won't be at all easy for the Cretan states to found their colony. The emigrants, you see, haven't the unity of a swarm of bees: they are not a single people from a single territory settling down to form a colony with

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[31] The colonists «are prone to cling blindly to the laws and institutions of their original home». Barker 1960, 365.

[32] Morrow 1993, 62; cf. 11 and 59. See Meyer 2006, 384; Gill 2003, 45; and Pangle 1980, 422 *et passim*.

[33] The «quickest and easiest way» for Kallipolis to be founded, Socrates avers and Glaucon repeats, is to «send everyone in the city who is over ten years old into the country», *Rep.* VII, 540e-541a. From the perspective of the *Laws* it becomes obvious that this claim solved for the problem of acculturation.

mutual goodwill between themselves and those they have left behind» (IV, 708b). The Athenian describes the task using an aqueous metaphor: «it's as though we have a number of streams from several sources, some from springs, some from mountain torrents, all flowing down to unite in one lake. We have to apply ourselves to seeing that the water, as it mingles, is as pure as possible, partly by draining some of it off, partly by diverting it into different channels» (V, 736a-b).[34] If the lake is to be preserved, it needs to be managed.[35] The juxtaposition of the metaphors is revealing: the unstable, malleable, life-constituting medium that is water is more befitting to the arriving colonists than a metaphor which shows many individuals acting for the sake of the species. The legislators have their work cut out for them if «the laws in force [are to] impose the greatest possible unity on the state (*kata dunamin hoitines nomoi mian hoti malista polin apergazontai*)» (V, 739d).

How do these colonists transition to a state of unity? The injunction to the incoming colonists to appear as they are levels the playing field, as it were: «the soundest and most important rule is this: if you mean to be perfect, you should seek to live in good repute only if you are really good in the first place, but not otherwise (*to men gar orthotaton kai megiston, onta agathon alēthōs houtō ton eudoxon bion thēreuein, chōris de mēdamōs, ton ge teleon andra esomenon*)» (XII, 950c).[36] The operational principle behind this is that «There can be no greater benefit for a state than that the citizens should be well-known to one another» (V, 738e). The functioning of Magnesian laws depends upon this. «Whether the figure you cut in the eyes of others is good or bad, you should never underestimate its importance» (XII, 950b).[37]

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[34] For the claim that we should not be serious about the varied origins of the colonizers, see Brunt 1993, 253n.33.

[35] This aqueous metaphor befits the two related traits of human nature: «pleasure and pain, you see, flow like two springs released by nature.» *Laws* I, 636d.

[36] The injunction is mentioned in the context of Magnesia's reputation; ergo, it applies to individuals and to cities alike.

[37] Saunders writes «that efficient educational legislation will not be possible unless it is firmly based on the characters, beliefs, prejudices and practices of the colonists.» Saunders 1986, 208.

The pursuit of reputation motivates obedience to these laws. As each citizen struggles to be recognized as the most obedient servant of the laws and values of Magnesia, he will emerge from the shadow of the reputation of his former city and make his character known to his fellows. The best Magnesian man is a man of virtue, which is to say that he is indeed virtuous and is acknowledged by others to be such. The legislator couches this in epinician language familiar to his audience from the poetry of Xenophanes and Pindar:

> In dealings with the state and one's fellow-citizens, the best man (*aristos*) by far is the one who, rather than win a prize at Olympia or in any of the other contests in war and peace, would prefer to beat everyone by his reputation for serving the laws of his country (*doxē hupēresias tōn oikoi nomōn*) – a reputation for having devoted a lifetime of service to them with more distinction than anyone else.
>
> *Laws* V, 729d.[38]

Therefore, a good reputation is earned by fulfilling the twin ethical injunctions: to obey the laws and to appear as you are.

Reputation is apposite because it is already of concern to the many: it provides a ready path to virtue in the age of Zeus. The pursuit of a good reputation is grounded in this nature that «involves above all, pleasures, pains and desires…That is why we should praise (*epainein*) the noblest life – not only because it enjoys a fine and glorious reputation (*mē monon hoti tō schēmati kratei pros eudoxian*) but because…it excels in providing what we all seek: a predominance of pleasure over pain throughout all our lives» (V, 732e-733a). The noblest life deserves praise for two reasons: because of the reputation it earns among others and

[38] For the argument that the *Laws* is littered with the epinician language and themes of poets like Pindar and Xenophanes, see Morgan 2013. Independently of my argument herein, Wilburn observes that «there is significant positive emphasis throughout the preludes and laws, and in the Athenian's characterization of the lawgiver's aims throughout the dialogue, on the love of victory and good reputation». Wilburn 2013, 91.

because it gives its bearer a predominance of pleasure over pain throughout his life. Pleasures and pains «correspond to the most extensive part of a state, the common people (*dēmos te kai plēthos poleōs estin*)» (III, 689b). Since a good reputation must always and necessarily depend on others, whereas the experience of pleasure and pain need not, it is clear why the ideal for any citizen must be the former.

By urging the pursuit of reputation, the legislator establishes interdependence among the citizens: he demands both that they render judgments on others and that they not discount the judgments others make of them. Hence the universal proposal that «every citizen of every state should make a particular effort to show that he is straightforward and genuine (*haplous de kai alēthēs aei*), not shifty, and try to avoid being hoodwinked by anyone who is» (V, 738e). The Magnesian desires a good reputation, that is, he desires to be seen as virtuous in the eyes of the other citizens. If the city is to last they must become a company of friends (see III, 693b-c; V, 743c; VIII, 837a). The legislator must therefore design an environment in which reputation can be pursued: «At every stage the lawgiver should supervise his people, and confer suitable marks of honor or disgrace…he must use the laws themselves as instruments for the proper distribution of praise and blame» (I, 631e-632a).[39] The incoming colonists are thus reassured that in Magnesia they will have the opportunity to attain a good reputation.

It is likely that the tendency to self-honor will be especially acute in the first generation of colonists. Lacking corporal unity, the experience of pleasure and pain will probably be more salient in their judgments, making prospective unity tenuous.[40] Magnesia is a new settlement; these citizens begin by mutual strangers and must transition from this to being friends. This takes place when each citizen pursues a good reputation because

[39] I discuss the institutional process by which this happens in Avgousti 2015, 111-134.

[40] I propose a schema that describes how a Dorian becomes a Magnesian in Avgousti 2015, 78-89.

this is what the best men seek, and via the promotion of intrastate competition among thusly motivated citizens. As Cohen remarks, «social relations are essentially evaluative and competitive…a politics of reputation».[41] Hence the Athenian proposes that a life of victory over oneself and over others (see I, 626c-e) is measured by the extent to which one obeys the city's laws. These two are connected in the sense that a victory over oneself involves not only suppressing illicit pleasures and withstanding pains, but also overcoming the «excessive love of ourselves (*sphodra heautou philian*) [that is…] the cause of each and every crime we commit» (V, 731e). To love oneself excessively is to engage in a «false mode of self-honor», to loosen the bonds of friendship.[42] It is spiritedness (*thumos*) that adjoins the city to the individual and the individual to the city; therein lies the possibility of disconnect both because one may overreach in the attempt to have the best reputation and because, having attained it, he may find himself wanting to overreach the gods.[43] In sum, with respect to the public (*koinon* or *dēmosion*) realm, the age of Cronus is to immortality as the age of Zeus is to the pursuit of reputation. Since immortality is no longer available to human beings, they must try in their terminal lifespan to earn a name for themselves; their name, like their descendants, has the potential to transgress their mortal condition.

Hence, with respect to the private (*idion*) realm, the age of Cronus is to immortality as the age of Zeus is to marriage, procreation, and the family. Recall that in the age of Cronus «it was no part of man's natural endowment to beget children by intercourse»; men were earthborn.[44] And in the *Symposium*, Socrates reports Diotima to have said that it is

[41] Cohen 1995, 62-63. Cohen is writing about Aristotle's discussion of anger in *Rhetoric*, II.2, 1378a32-1380a4.

[42] Friedländer 1969, 429.

[43] By making the *politeia* thumetic, Plato invites the familiar problems associated with social emotions such as envy and anger. For a defense of Magnesia's thumetic nature see Avgousti 2015, 102-111.

[44] *Statesman* 271a; cf. the attention to the «natural (*zôogenes*) bond, human ties» at *Statesman* 309c.

by procreation that humankind becomes immortal.[45] The mechanism by which this happens is humankind's love for immortality: «it's immortality they [men] are in love with (*tou gar athanatou erōsin*)».[46] As Pangle notes of Magnesia, it is a «*thumotic eros* which underlies marriage and the family».[47]

Marriage is generative of families, and individual is understood as being part of a family. It is the family (*genos*) that is the claim of each individual to immortality. «It is the family, which, in the narrowest sense possesses this fame and carries on the name», writes Jaeger.[48] Political office depends on a good family name, for «if your candidates are to deserve promotion to positions of power, their characters and family background must have been adequately tested, right from their childhood until the moment of their election» (VI, 751c). Therefore, for example, in the nominations for the office of Guardian of the Laws, the name of each nominee comes with «the candidate's father, tribe and deme» (VI, 753c). Similarly, Magnesia's law on suicide highlights the importance of one's name in the city: those who commit suicide are buried on the city's borders, apart from the rest, in unmarked graves (IX, 873b-c). The permanent absence of a marked grave is a blemish upon the perpetrator's family.

When it comes to marriage, the legislator recommends that «we should seek to contract the alliance that will benefit the state, not the one that we personally find most alluring» (VI, 773b). Hence the law on adultery: «After the period of child-bearing, the chaste man or woman should be highly respected (*panta eudokimos*); *the promiscuous* should be held in the opposite kinds of «repute» (though *dis*repute would be a better word) (*ho de tounantion enantiōs timasthō, mallon de atimazesthō*)»

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[45] «This is the way that every mortal thing is maintained in existence *(touto gar tō tropō pan to thnēton sōzetai)*». *Symposium* 208a.

[46] *Symposium* 208e.

[47] Pangle 1980, 472; here, and elsewhere in this paper, emphasis is in the original.

[48] Jaeger 1986, 243. Cf. Schofield 2006, 320. The attention lavished upon the prelude to the marriage laws cannot be understood without acknowledging that marriage itself is a religious duty.

(VI, 784e). A good reputation is an incentive to be chaste, whereas a bad reputation is an incentive to avoid promiscuity. Insofar as chastity and promiscuity provoke opposite kinds of gossip, they are matters of societal concern.[49] The threat to one's reputation acts, we might say, as an enforcement mechanism. What the law on adultery instructs the Magnesian is that the pursuit of a good reputation is achieved through a marriage wherein the respective halves remain faithful to one another. By logical necessity, the provisional law on adultery looks back to the marriage law (IV, 721b-d). As a union between two persons it is an example and a symbol of the union of the citizens. Its existence and progeny secure the future (stability) of the *politeia*. As part of the founding project, monogamy in marriage is reflective of the monogamy in allegiance to the city. This brings us back to Cleinias the Cnossian, for it is precisely the issue he has to face. As the first dissenter from Cnossos, Cleinias presages the inevitable tension between Magnesia and its mother. We can expect, the Athenian says, that «any child is going to fall out with his parents sooner or later» (VI, 754b).[50]

Conclusion

My reading shows the magnitude of the founding task at hand: «however you organize a society (*en pasē kataskeuē politikē*), it looks as if there will always be trouble and risk» (V, 736b). This is unsurprising given the fragility and fiendishness of foundings in the age of Zeus. It is one thing to acknowledge that autonomy demands second-order imitation; it is another to enact it.

It would be hard to deny that the conceptual apparatus Plato deploys inspires Rousseau's chapter «On the Legislator (*Législateur*)» in the

[49] As Hunter notes of Athens, «gossip penetrated into the privacy of the oikos [sic]…Gossip thus represents a point of articulation of family and community, oikos [*sic*] and polis [*sic*]». Hunter 1993, 116

[50] Citing VI, 751c-d; 752b-c and 754a-d, Saunders observes «the constant presentation of the problems of transition as *educational*». Saunders 1986, 206.

Social Contract.[51] There are two points of agreement. One, that «Gods would be needed to give men laws» (before he goes on to cite Plato's *Statesman* in the very next sentence).[52] And two, that the task of founding is gargantuan: «He who dares to undertake the establishment of a people should feel that he is, so to speak, in a position to change human nature».[53] This reminds us of the aqueous metaphor used to describe the lack of unity among the colonists. Rousseau is emphatic that «The legislator is in every respect an extraordinary man (*un homme extraordinaire*) in the state.»[54] Rousseau's legislator –a man with a «great soul (*la grande âme du législateur*)»– has «recourse to an authority…which can compel without violence and persuade without convincing…[i.e.] divine authority (*l'autorité divine*)».[55] This sets up the political theoretical claim that «he who has command over men must not have command over laws, he who has command over the laws must no longer have any authority over men.»[56] According to Rousseau, political theory became political practice in «most Greek cities» whose «custom [was]…to entrust the establishment of their laws to foreigners», he avers, citing Lycurgus' Sparta.[57] Rousseau's claim is at once descriptive and normative: «He who drafts the laws, therefore, does not or should not have any legislative right.»[58]

On the evidence of Plato's *Laws*, to say that legislators of today mimic legislators of old is to say that legislators remain present once the founding has been completed. Rousseau helps us identify the problem

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[51] For an elaboration of what Rousseau learned from the age of Cronus-age of Zeus binary, see Williams 2007, 118-121.

[52] Rousseau 2011, 180-181.

[53] Rousseau 2011, 181.

[54] Rousseau 2011, 181.

[55] Rousseau 2011, 182-3.

[56] Rousseau 2011, 181.

[57] Rousseau 2011, 181.

[58] Rousseau 2011, 182. This gives birth to the paradox that «in the work of legislation [we find] two things that seem incompatible: an undertaking that transcends human capacities and, to execute it, an authority that is nil». Rousseau 2011, 182. Plato's *Laws* avoid this paradox.

that this creates, to wit, that the authority of the laws is permanently conflated with the authority of the ever-present legislators. Reputation poses a related issue: a reputation-bearer can outlive his reputation. In short, by becoming a citizen, the founder risks undermining what he has created. Cleinias must lead by example and, as Guardian of the Laws, not undo his creation.

We must now ask: what are the virtues of Plato's account? The obvious one is that the *Laws* do not fall prey to the language of exceptionality. Cleinias is a flawed man, hardly one with «a great soul». It is easier to imagine a real-life Cleinias than it is to imagine Rousseau's legislator. *Inter alia* Cleinias hesitates, angers, and is particularly attached to the traditions of Cnossos. If psychological realism is a measure of the political theory of foundings, then Plato's *Laws* trump what Rousseau has to say in the *Social Contract*.

Not only is there no exceptional individual at the moment of founding, there is no single individual either.[59] This multiplicity of founders also recommends Plato's account. When the Legislator is voiced, he is voiced by a Stranger (with whom he is not identical) and subject to the approval of the other two interlocutors. Writing about the collaborative enterprise of the *Laws*, Morrow notes that, «Plato's choice of an Athenian Stranger to be the interlocutor with the two Dorians indicates clearly his intention to confront the Dorian way with the traditions of his native city.»[60] We may agree, but we must add that this is done for the sake of constructing something altogether new. The fact of the Athenian's strangerness cannot absolve the necessity for a separate legislating voice. Insofar as the Athenian also allows greater changes in the law during the first decade of Magnesia's existence (see VI, 752c), he gestures towards future

[59] The extraordinary man may be the «dictator (*turranos*)» whom the Legislator (*nomothetēs*) requests to cooperate in Magnesia's founding (*Laws* IV, 709e *sq*). Note, however, that such a founding is still one of multiple founders; and if the founding never relies on one man, then it is arguable that the demand for extraordinariness is dampened.

[60] Morrow 1993, 74.

founders.[61] And, more banally, the multiplicity of founders is also highlighted by the fact that Cleinias is one of ten Cnossians who are assigned the task of legislating for the colony of Magnesia (III, 702c).

Lastly, the perspective of reputation helps us see another implication. In his discussion of political participation in Plato's city, Wallach writes that «Magnesia directly involves the *demos* in the authoritative exercise of political power to a greater degree than any twentieth century democracy.»[62] Indeed, if Magnesia is a constitution that subjects both its founder-citizens and its denizens to the collective reputational judgment of the city, then it is hardly surprising that Bodin characterized this *politeia* as «the most democratic ever».[63] By making reputation instrumental to and constitutive of the founding, Plato points the way to a form of political power that is sourced in the people.

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[61] Saunders 1972 and 1986 argues for provisionality; he is followed by Bobonich 2002, 394 *sq*; Cohen 1993, 314; and Pradeau 2002, 154 *et passim*. Pradeau is correct to emphasize the perfectibility of the legislating task. Both Stalley and Klosko disagree with the general point about provisionality; see Stalley 1983, 82 and Klosko 2006, 250-251.

[62] Wallach 2001, 380n.91. I take it that the point applies to twenty-first century democracies too.

[63] Bodin 1992, 103.

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THE TRIPARTITION OF THE CITY IN PLATO'S *LAWS*

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Abstract

In this paper, I would like to show how in the Laws*, one finds a similar parallelism between the parts of the soul and those of the city as in the* Republic. *To appetite (epithumía), whose objects are pain and pleasure that must be mastered by the intellect with the help of spirit, correspond the ordinary citizens, or the people (dêmos); to spirit (thumós), characterized by the courage that must first resist pain and pleasure, corresponds the magistracy of the Country Wardens (agronómoi); while to intellect (noûs) or good judgment (phrónesis) corresponds the supreme magistracy of the Watch Committee (nukterinòs súllogos). Moreover as in the* Republic*, this tripartition implies a bipartition, for the people as such is distinguished from two magistracies, the Country Wardens and the Watch Committee, the latter indicating a governing body. This parallelism is less evident in the* Laws *than in the* Republic*, for in the* Laws *all citizens must join an army, the structures of which are described in Book VI (755b-756b); what is more, courage is defined as the domination on pleasures and pains (*Laws *I, 644b-d).*

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In this paper,[1] I would like to show how in the *Laws*, one finds a similar parallelism between the parts of the soul and those of the city as in the *Republic*.[2] To appetite (*epithumía*), whose objects are pain and pleasure that must be mastered by the intellect with the help of spirit, correspond the ordinary citizens, or the people (*dêmos*); to spirit (*thumós*), characterized by the courage that must first resist pain and pleasure, corresponds the magistracy of the Country Wardens (*agronómoi*); while to intellect (*noûs*) or good judgment (*phrónesis*) corresponds the supreme magistracy of the Watch Committee (*nukterinòs súllogos*). Moreover as in the *Republic*, this tripartition implies a bipartition, for the people as such is distinguished from two magistracies, the Country Wardens and the Watch Committee, the latter indicating a governing body. This parallelism is less evident in the *Laws* than in the *Republic*, for in the *Laws* all citizens must join an army, the structures of which are described in Book VI (755b-756b); what is more, courage is defined as the domination on pleasures and pains (*Laws* I, 644b-d).[3]

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[1] This paper, which deals with the organization of the city in the *Laws*, is the second branch of an investigation on the parallelism between the parts of the soul and those of the city in the *Republic* and the *Laws*. The first branch, deals with the tripartition of the soul in the *Laws* and is entitled «*Soul and state in Plato's* Laws». It will be published in Brennan T., Brittain C. and Barney R. (eds.). *Plato's Theory of the Tripartite Soul* (forthcoming).

[2] In disagreement with Bobonich 2002. On the basis of this disagreement, see my «From *Republic* to *Laws*: A discussion of Christopher Bobonich, *Plato's Utopia recast*», *OSAPh* 26, 2004, 337-362, and my «Ethics and Politics in Plato's *Laws*», *OSAPh* 28, 2005, 93-121.

[3] I have used the following system of transliteration. Greek letters are written in Roman letters according to the following system: eta = *e*; omega = *o*; zeta = *z*; theta = *th*; xi = *x*; phi = *ph*; khi = *kh*; psi = *ps*. Iota subscript is written after the letter (for example *ei*, but if is an alpha (which in this case only is a long vowel) with a subscript iota = *ai*); rough breathings are written as *h*, and smooth breathings are not noted. All accents are noted.

The ordinary citizen, equivalent to the producers in the Republic

There is a passage in the third Book of the *Laws*, where appetite (*epithumía*) as a part of the soul is explicitly associated with the people (*dêmos*), or the multitude (*plêthos*) of citizens:

> A.: So what kind of ignorance (*amathía*) would deserve the title «crass» (*megístę*)? See if you agree with my description. I suggest this kind.
>
> C.: What?
>
> A.: The kind involved when a man thinks something is fine and good, but loathes it instead of liking it, and conversely when he likes and welcomes what he believes is wicked and unjust. I maintain that this disaccord between his feelings of pleasure and pain and his rational judgment constitutes the very lowest depth of ignorance. It is also the most «crass», in that it affects the most extensive element in the soul (*toû plḗthous ... tês psukhês*) –the element that experiences pleasure and pain (*tò gàr lupoúmenon kaì hędómenon*), which corresponds to the most extensive part of a state, the common people (*dêmos te kaì plêthos póleos*).[4]
>
> *Laws* III, 689a-b.[5]

The whole question turns on defining what a citizen is in the *Laws*. Generally speaking, a citizen is responsible for a lot, but he does not own it, for this lot is not transmissible. He has no salaried occupation, nor

[4] Note the play on the word *plêthos*, which refers first to the soul, and then to the city.

[5] Translations are from Plato, *Complete Works*. J.M. Cooper and D.S. Hutchinson (eds.), Indianapolis, Hackett, 1997, with modifications. The translation of the *Laws* is by Trevor Saunders. The interlocutors are A = the Athenian Visitor, C = Clinias, the Cretan and M = Megillos, the Lacedaemonian.

does he engage in commerce.[6] He occupies himself exclusively with political affairs, and participates in common meals and religious festivals, which take place daily. All citizens (even women, under certain conditions) must bear arms to defend the city; this is a major difference from the *Republic*, where the military function was reserved for the separate group of the guardians. As we shall see, however, there exists within the city of the *Laws* an elite group that takes the place of the guardians of the *Republic*.

The names for designating the citizen in the *Laws* are multiple: *astós*, *polítes* and *epikhórios*. Whereas the term *polítes* seems to be self-explanatory to designate the citizen, the term *astós* may mean a city-dweller, and the term *epikhórios* a compatriot. Nevertheless, in order to know what defines the citizen as opposed to the resident citizen (*métoikos*), to the slave (*doúlos*), and to the foreigner (*xénos*), one must first ask oneself: who is a citizen? As I have already recalled, full citizenship seems to be reserved only for the administrators of the lot, and is not accorded to merchants or artisans. The following lines have often been interpreted as a definition of citizenship: «A.: Let's assume we have the convenient number of five thousand and forty farmers and protectors of their holdings, and let the land with its houses be divided up into the same number of parts, so that a man and his holding always go together» (V, 737e). On this interpretation, there are only 5040 citizens, defined as those who exploit their lot and defend it as soldiers.

Yet multiple indications show that this interpretation, in its simplicity, is untenable. Here is a list of these indications: women are called citizens (VII, 814c); Plato ordains that children, both boys and girls, shall be registered at birth (VI, 785a-b); when he evokes compulsory education, Plato insists on the fact that all boys and all girls from the age of six must exercise in parallel (VII, 804c-e); these boys and girls will carry out their military service from the age of twenty (VI, 785c), and will therefore be

[6] «No private person shall be allowed to possess any gold or silver, but coinage for day-to-day dealings», (*Laws* V, 742a). Trade is reserved to foreigners: *Laws* VIII, 849b-d.

able to take part in elections (VI, 753b; VII, 805a-c); from the age of thirty, the men can become magistrates. Yet most men can only inherit a lot at their father's death, and the possessor of a domain may leave behind only one heir. Moreover, population control can take place through two mechanisms: sending citizens in excess number to colonies, and even, at the limit, the possibility of naturalizing foreigners (V, 740c-741a). In short, despite the fact that Plato does not make a clear pronouncement on the subject, everything indicates that citizenship is to be accorded not only to the 5040 possessors of a lot, but also to their spouses and their legitimate children of both sexes: that is, according to the estimation already mentioned above, about 30,000 persons.

*The Country Wardens (***agrónomoi***), equivalent to the guardians in the* **Republic**

One of the major differences between the *Laws* and the *Republic* comes from the fact that in the *Laws*, all the citizens, men and even women, must fight in the army, which is directed and trained by specific magistracies (VI, 755b-756b). Here, therefore, the military function is no longer reserved to a small, specialized group. However, a meticulous study of all the magistracies reveals the existence of a limited group, which, separated from the totality of the citizens as full-time magistrates,[7] seems to constitute a reserve of specialists appointed to tasks of surveillance of the territory. From this group are drawn the members of the supreme authority, the Watch Committee, which, as we shall see, is equivalent to the corps of philosopher-kings in the *Republic*.

The importance of courage

In the first Book of the *Laws*, in the course of the argument designed to show that courage, defined as resistance to pain, must not be

[7] On this point, my position is quite distant from that of Saunders, for whom this second group is that of the Guardians of the laws (*nomophúlakes*).

considered as the only virtue worthy of being sought by the city, we find a passage in which Megillus gives the following praise of courage, the virtue pursued in priority by Lacedaemonia and Crete:

> M.: Well, I might try to add a fourth: the endurance of pain. This is a very conspicuous feature of Spartan life. You find it in our boxing matches, and also in our «raids», which invariably lead to a severe whipping. There is also the «Secret Service (*krupteía*)»,[8] as it is called, which involves a great deal of hard work, and is a splendid exercise in endurance. In winter, its members go barefoot and sleep without bedclothes. They dispense with orderlies and look after themselves, ranging night and day over the whole country. Next, in the «Naked Games», men display fantastic endurance, contending as they do with the full heat of summer. There are a great many other practices of the same kind, but if you produced a detailed list it would go on pretty well forever.
>
> A.: You've put it all very well, my Spartan friend. But what is to be our definition of courage? Are we to define it simply in terms of a fight against fears and pains only, or do we include desires and pleasures that cajole and seduce us so effectively? They melt the heart like wax –even the hearts of those who lofty believe themselves superior to such influences.
>
> M.: Yes, I think so –the fight is against all these feelings.
>
> *Laws* I, 633b-c

Through the intermediary of courage, the Athenian associates the exercise of the part of the soul known as spirit primarily with the «krypteia», a Spartan institution mentioned by Megillos and intended to train young

[8] On Sparta and its institutions, see Lévy 2003, 63-66 on *krupteía*.

people's souls to resist pain. In the *Laws*, where courage is defined as resistance not only to pain but also to pleasure, the way of life associated with the «krypteia» is led by the *agronómoi*, who thus correspond to the guardians of the *Republic*. This correspondence is based on the following points. 1) The qualifications that serve to designate the *agronómoi*; 2) their way of life; and 3) the trials to which they seem to be subject, and their age upon their entry into function and their retirement.

How many Country Wardens are there?

To understand the function and the role of the *agronómoi*, a term which I translate as «Country Wardens»,[9] we must recall the division of the territory set forth in Book V before being taken up once again in Book VI. It emerges from this passage that the colony is conceived as a succession of concentric circles, the smallest one being constituted by the acropolis, the city or town center, and the largest by the entire territory. Plato is perfectly aware that this view is that of a geometer and does not correspond to reality; thus, he quickly corrects it. The town will be as close as possible to the center, and the equality of the sectors of the countryside –like that of the lots– is based on the value of the land. However, we must keep this division into twelve concentric circles in mind to understand what follows.

To administer such a territory, Plato envisages the creation of three magistracies charged respectively with the countryside (*khóra* or *agrós*), the city (*pólis*) or the town (*ástu*) and with the marketplace (*agorá*) of the town: these are the «Country Wardens» (*agronómoi*), the «Town Wardens» (*astunómoi*), and the «Wardens of the market place» (*agoranómoi*).

As far as the Country Wardens are concerned, the first difficulty that arises is that of their number. Each of the twelve tribes that divide up the

[9] What follows is inspired by my paper, «Les *agronómoi* dans les *Lois* de Platon et leur possible lien avec le *nukterinòs súllogos*». In Scolnicov and Brisson 2003, 221-226.

territory supplies (*parekhétō*) five members. The mode of designation of these five members is not specified, a point to which we shall return. These five members then choose twelve young men (aged between 25 and 30) to assist them.[10] Two interpretations with regard to the number of Country Wardens have been proposed. Some commentators have understood that each of the 5 members designated by their own tribe choose 12 young men. That would make a total of $(5 \times 12) \times 12 = 720$ young men.[11] In this perspective, we have to do with a genuine «military service», considering that there are only 5040 lots.[12] Because of the difficulties inherent to this interpretation, other commentators have understood that it is the group of five members which, as such, choose the 12 members. This would result in $(5 + 12) \times 12 = 204$. According to this interpretation, which I retain, the corps of the *agronómoi* consists in 204 citizens.[13]

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[10] An allusion to this choice may already be found in Book II, 666e.

[11] This interpretation is held by G. Stallbaum (1860), E. B. England (1921), A. H. Chase (1933), É. des Places (1951), M. Davis (1965), N. F. Jones (1990), F. Lisi (1999). Only one passage tends in this direction: 760b6-c1: *toútois d' éstō kataléxasthai tēs hautôn phylḗs hekástoi dṓdeka tôn pénte ek tôn néōn*. The passages that oppose this interpretation are cited at footnote 13.

[12] Davis 1960 accepts this interpretation, basing himself on a calculation that takes into account the number of families and their children. Yet several objections can be advanced against this interpretation. Obviously many families will have more than the minimal number (XI, 930c-d) of two children (one boy and one girl). It is not certain that women can be part of the groups of «Country Wardens», as is implied by the use of the masculine at VI, 763c. In any case, they cannot be part of it if they are pregnant. But they must marry between the age of 16 and 20; see VI, 785b, VIII, 833d.

[13] This interpretation is held by Morrow 1993 and Piérart 1974. The passages in its favor are: 760e3 *toús pénte tôn dṓdeka epimeletás*; 761e3 *metà tôn dṓdeka toùs heptakaídeka*; 762e9-10 *epeidàn ... kataleg̃sin hoi dṓdeka, sunelthóntes metà tôn pénte*. How, then, can we interpret 760b6-c1 (*toútois d' éstō kataléxasthai tēs hautôn phulḗs hekástoi dṓdeka tôn pénte ek tôn neon*) in order to avoid an objection? Morrow 1993 (186n.81) thus understands *hekástoi tôn pénte* as meaning «each of the fives». As to me, I understand the passage in the same way. Piérart 1974 notes that a correction is indicated in the margin of the manuscripts A and O: *dodekátoi* for *dṓdeka tôn*. But this correction prohibits us from taking into account the following *pénte*. Des Places 1951 as to him, relates this *pénte* to *ek tôn néōn*, translating «having entered among the *neoi* for five years». Unfortunately, there is nothing to support this kind of translation. It is thus preferable to translate as follows: «let it be up to them, for each of the groups of five, to choose among the young men of their own tribe twelve individuals, who are no less than twenty-five years old and no more than thirty».

These magistrates, whose mission is to guard (*phrourá*) the territory, are quite naturally qualified as «Guardians» (*phrouroí*). The five designated magistrates are called «Commanders of the guard» (*phroúrarkhoi*), while those they recruit are called «young ones» (*neoí*), «those who are in the strength of age» (*hebóntes*) and «crypts» (*kruptoí*).

This last term, which refers to a Lacedaemonian institution supposed to date back to Lycurgus, has not failed to inspire a number of commentaries. A scholium to the passage that has just been cited provides specifications on the subject.[14] The way of life of the *agronómoi*, except for the helot hunt, is not without analogy with that of the crypts, as mentioned in the passage cited previously. Supervised by the Guardians of the laws, it is austere and rough. The Country Wardens can neither have meals nor spend the night outside. He who does so without orders or need would incur blame and see his name exposed on the marketplace: any passer-by could strike him with impunity. A commander who commits such a fault or tolerates this kind of misbehavior would undergo an even more severe penalty, and would be banished from all responsibilities concerning youth. The importance accorded to good reputation seems to indicate, once again, the will to constitute an elite corps. As in the case of the crypts, moreover, the Country Wardens must do without servants, using local labor only for public works. The analogy stops there: rough way of life, and military concerns. Plato did not wish to carry out a point-by-point transposition of an institution that it is not certain that he knew well. He seems to have limited himself to retaining for the Country Wardens only the educational character of the Spartan *krypteia*.

[14] I quote the scholium. «A young man was sent out of the city, with the task of not being seen for a given period of time. He was therefore obliged to live by crossing the mountains, only sleeping with one eye open so as not to be caught, without recourse to servants, and carrying no provisions. This was also another form of training for war, for each young man was sent out naked, and ordered to spend an entire year wandering at large in the mountains, and to feed himself by theft and other such expedients, in such a way as to invisible to all. This is why it was called '*krupteía*' (the verb *krupteía* comes from the verb *krupteîn*, 'to hide'), since those who were seen somewhere were punished severely». This testimony does not contradict a passage from the *Life of Lycurgus* (XXVIII, 3-4).

The functions of the Country Wardens

The seventeen Country Wardens, who form one of the twelve constituted groups, live in the villages (*kōmai*) that are located at the center of each of the twelve sections of the countryside. Sanctuaries occupy the center of each village, and fortified installations are foreseen for the Country Wardens at the site of the highest one.

During the two years that their charge lasts, the Country Wardens never stop moving in a circle from village to village over the territory, heading toward the right, that is, toward the east in the first year, and toward the left, that is, toward the west, during the second year. They will thus come to know the various parts of the territory at various seasons. Each group of guardians takes charge in turn of a section of the rural territory, which he supervises during one month before moving on to another section, and so on (*Laws* VI, 760c-e). The functions of the Country Wardens are twofold: the defense and development of the territory, and the maintenance of order.

They must fortify the territory and protect it against the neighbors' incursions by digging trenches, raising embankments and erecting fortified works. To develop the territory and embellish it, they must occupy themselves with road building and works concerning water supply and distribution (*Laws* VI, 760d-761d). The Country Wardens are also charged with police functions, ensuring that order reigns in the countryside (*Laws* VI, 764b). Another area in which the Country Wardens have important functions is that of the administration of justice, (*Laws* VI, 761d-e; VIII, 843d, 846a-b; IX, 881c) Trials conducted by the Country Wardens deal primarily with the «laws concerning agricultural affairs», which together regulate all relations among the citizens living in the countryside. The City Wardens are responsible for the laws concerning affairs of trade, and the Wardens of the Marketplace for laws concerning commercial affairs. The Country Wardens are themselves subject to the laws. The conciliators by whom they are liable to be judged may request their assistance. Another task consists in the surveillance of economic activities and current affairs, those concerning farmers, but also the

tradesmen established in the villages (*Laws* VIII, 848d-850a), and the collection of taxes (*Laws* IX, 855c).

The study I have devoted to this magistracy has led me to discern strong links between the Country Wardens (*agronómoi*) and the members of the Watch Committee (*nukterinòs súllogos*), with regard to the following two points: their recruitment, and the way they accede to the supreme magistracy.

Their recruitment

The silence surrounding the choice of the Commanders of the Guard in each tribe and the type of recruitment by cooptation of the young Country Wardens by the Commanders of the Guard constitutes an important distinctive feature, which makes one think of the Watch Committee. Neither the Commanders of the Guard nor the members of the Watch Committee are elected. They are designated, the former by their tribe and the latter by law. In both cases, recruitment seems to remain at the discretion of the Country Wardens and the members of the Watch Committee. It should be noted, moreover, that in the former case we have to do with young men between 25 and 30 years old, whereas in the latter case we have to do with young men who are between 30 and 40. We can therefore ask ourselves whether these are not the same individuals, creating, in a context of cooptation, an elite apt to enter later on into the highest magistracies, and above all to become members of the Watch Committee. Indeed, we note that the young Country Wardens will have a concrete and complete knowledge of the rural territory they have developed, and that they will have accomplished military, police and judicial tasks. Yet have they been chosen to be part of this elite?

How they get access to the Watch Committee

This, it seems to me, is indicated by a difficult passage in which the Athenian criticizes the lack of education from which the young people of Lacedaemonia and Crete suffer, left to their own devices like young colts wandering about a field:

> A.: You organize your state as though it were a military camp rather than a society of people who have settled in towns, and you keep your young fellows together like a herd of colts at grass. Not a man among you takes his own colt and drags him, furiously protesting, away from the rest of the herd; you never put him in the hands of a private groom, and train him by combing him down and stroking him. You entirely fail to lavish proper care on an education that will turn him out not merely a good soldier but a capable administrator of a state and its town. Such a man is, as we said early on, a better fighter than those of Tyrtaeus, precisely because he does not value courage as the principal element in virtue: he consistently relegates to fourth place wherever he finds it, whether in the individual of the state.
>
> *Laws* II, 666d-667a

Here, the Athenian provides certain surprising items of information. 1) He mentions the fact that some elderly citizens will each have to choose a young man, as if he were choosing a wild horse for training, that is, in a civic context, to educate it. 2) Each of these young people will receive an individualized education from master to disciple. 3) This education aims at making the young person not only a good soldier, but also a man capable of administering a city and a town. We now find ourselves in the context of the choice by each member of the Vigilance Committee of a young man who will take over from him.

As has been indicated above, this choice will be made in the course of an educational process, and this educational process, at the outset, will have as its context one of the choruses instituted by the legislator. A city that aspires to virtue must ensure its general education by instituting three choruses, each of which gathers together one age group and pursues a common goal: education toward virtue by means of mimetic practices. These choruses provide the occasion for the citizens to imitate or represent estimable lives or modes of conduct, to dance and to sing the praise of

virtue. By participating in the choruses, the citizens acquire an immediate, collective experience of virtue. Music and dance, as long as they are appropriately chosen by the governors and are subject to strict legislation, educate the movements the citizens carry out or contemplate, as well as the sounds they hear or produce, by infusing them with rhythm and harmony.[15]

The chorus of the Muses, that of the children,[16] will be the first to perform in public, to sing how, according to the gods, the most pleasant life is the best life (II, 664c). The chorus of those who are under 30 years old, which will be the second to perform, will call Apollo to witness and beg him to inspire a persuasive force in the songs of the younger ones (*ibid*). Finally, the chorus of Dionysus, made up of men between 30 and 60 years old, will sing in its turn. Those who are older than 60 years old will content themselves with telling myths, in agreement with the songs of the others. The goal of these three choruses is to persuade everyone, from the earliest age, to practice virtue in its totality. Virtue is initially equivalent to the mastery over pleasures and pains that is preached by the law. This will also be the role of the preamble that precedes the law, whose goal is to enchant the citizen's soul in order to render it more docile to the law, without even thinking about it. This enchantment must not stop short of anything, not even lies (II, 663d-e), as long as this lie serves to avoid the use of force to bring the citizens to behave themselves better.[17]

With the chorus of Dionysus, we encounter an idea expressed by a passage on the trials to which the guardians must be submitted to determine whether they can accede to the rank of philosopher-kings in the *Republic* (III, 413c5-e1). Whereas the first two choruses dealt with general education, the chorus of Dionysus plays the role of a test for

[15] See Bertrand 1999, 396-405.

[16] An age group that includes children between the ages of seven and fourteen.

[17] See Bertrand 1999, 386-396.

acceding to higher education, and must consequently be associated with the Watch Committee.

The chorus of Dionysus is, moreover, distinguished from the others by two important features. It is reserved to men between the ages of 30 to 60 (II, 665a-b), it consumes wine to the point of drunkenness (II, 665d-e) and it does not perform before the assembled city (II, 667b). This consumption of wine is justified by several reasons: it acts as a remedy against the desiccation of old age (II, 666b-c), it renders the soul of the young more malleable (II, 671b-c), and it seems to constitute a test of admissibility into the Watch Committee:

> A.: And didn't we say that when this happens the souls of the drinkers get hot and, like iron in a fire, grow younger and softer, so that anyone who has the ability and skill to mold and educate them, finds them as easy to handle as when they were young? The man to do the molding is the same one as before –the good lawgiver. When our drinker grows cheerful and confident and unduly shameless and unwilling to speak and keep quiet, to drink and sing, at the proper times, the lawgiver's job will be to lay down drinking laws that will be able to make this fellow willing to mend his ways; and to do battle with this disgraceful over-confidence as soon as it appears, they will be able to send into the arena, with the blessing of justice, this divine and splendid fear we have called «modesty» and «shame».[18]
>
> C.: Exactly.
>
> A.: The cool-headed and sober should guard and co-operate with these laws by taking command of those who are not sober; fighting the enemy without cool-headed leaders is actually less dangerous than fighting drink without such

[18] See 646e *sq*.

> help as this. If a man cannot show a willing spirit and obey the commanders and the officials of Dionysus (who are upwards of sixty years of age), the dishonor he incurs must equal or even exceed that incurred by the man who disobeys the officials of the god of war.
>
> C.: Precisely.
>
> *Laws* II, 671b-e

In these private banquets, reserved to those who are between the ages of 30 and 60, the leaders of the banquet will be more than 60 years old. The Watch College is made up of people who are 50 or older, and it is evoked here by the expression *nomophúlakas* (those who guard the laws), as we can deduce from this allusion to the Watch College in Book I: «His [the lawgiver's] survey completed, the author of the legal code will appoint guardians (*phúlakas*), some of whom will have rational grounds for their actions (the older members), while others rely on «true opinion (the younger), so that all these regulations may be welded into a rational whole (*noûs*), demonstrably inspired by consideration of justice (*dikaiosúnei*) and self-restraint (*sophrosúnei*), not of wealth and ambition» (I, 632c). Each of the elderly members must choose an assistant who is to be between 30 and 40; note that the Country Wardens are chosen when they are between 25 and 30. Moreover, the goal of the chorus of Dionysus is to control the courage of those who take part in the banquet, not in war, but when they are faced by pleasure and pain. It is in fact their relation to «this divine and splendid fear we have called 'modesty' and 'shame' » that is verified. We thus encounter once again the new conception of *thumós* that is developed in the *Laws*,[19] which implies courage (*andreía*) as a virtue, defined as intended to ensure self-restraint (*sophrosúnei*).

From this perspective, we once again encounter ideas already expressed in another form in the *Republic*, where power is ultimately in

[19] As explained in my paper to be published, see footnote 1.

the control of the philosophers, chosen from among a group of young men who must assist them and make sure their decisions are applied. In the *Republic*, the philosophers appeal directly to the Forms and especially to the Good, whereas in the *Laws* the members of the Watch Committee have the harmonious course of the universe as their model for the good working order of the city. This does not imply a renunciation of the Forms on which the universe depends, but the level of the *Laws* is not that of philosophers as in the *Republic*'s metaphysics, but that of the citizen and politics; presumably because the speculations bearing upon the Forms explicitly would remain incomprehensible to the majority of citizens. If this hypothesis is correct, we must concede that just as in the case of the *Republic*, the exercise of power in the *Laws* remains deeply alien to what it was in the Athenian democracy. It loses the visibility contributed by the Assembly and the Council; and above all, it is no longer based on deliberative or judicial discourse, situated on the side of the likely, but on knowledge, which claims to reach the truth.

The Watch Committee, equivalent to the philosophers in the **Republic**

The Watch Committee[20] constitutes the ultimate governmental authority evoked by the Athenian: «And that means, Clinias and Megillus, that we now have to consider whether we are going to add yet another law (*katà nómon*) to the code we've already expounded, to the effect that the Watch Committee (*nukterinòn súllogon*) consisting of magistrates (*tôn arkhontôn*), duly primed by the course of studies (*paideías*) we've described, shall be constituted the protector (*hos phulakèn*) of the safety of the state (*khárin soterías tês poleôs*). Or is there some alternative course for us to take?» (*Laws* XII, 968a-b). With regard to the establishment of the Watch Committee, several questions arise: one

[20] What follows is inspired by my article, «Le Collège de veille (*nukterinòs súllogos*)», *Plato's Laws and its historical significance*. Selected papers of the Ist International Congress on Ancient thought [Salamanca, 1998]. Academia Verlag, Sankt Augustin, 2000, 161-177.

concerns the meaning of its name, the second its composition, and the third its goal.

I have translated the noun *súllogos* by «Committee», insofar as the etymology of the two terms coincides, and in order to avoid translating by «Assembly» or «Council», two terms which designate other authorities in the city of the *Laws*.

In two places in the *Laws*, this authority is called *nukterinòs súllogos*. In Book X, we find the following expression: «the meeting place of those who meet at night (*tôn núktor sullegoménon*)». The adjective *nukterinòs* is hard to interpret. At 951d, we learn that the assembly must «meet daily from dawn until the sun is well up in the sky (*mékhriper àn hélios anáskhei*)». It is very difficult to know whether the last part of this phrase indicates duration or a point in time, thus being redundant with regard to «before dawn (*ap'órthrou*)». The term *órthron* designates the end of the night, or the point when the sun is about to rise. This is the time when, at the beginning of the *Protagoras* (310a8), Socrates arrives at the door of Callias' house, where the sophists are already in action, and when, in the *Crito* (43a4), Crito arrives at the gate of the prison where Socrates is being detained. It is also the moment when, according to the *Laws* (VII, 808d1), children must go to school. Why at this time? Because it is the time «when people are least beset by other business, public or private» (*Laws* XII, 961b6). If we replace this remark within a broader context, that of Athens, when meetings took place outside working hours, and that of the *Laws*, where sleep is to be reduced to a minimum, we must remove from the epithet *nukterinòs* the negative and sinister connotation which it automatically bears. Nevertheless, the expression «the committee (*ho súllogos*) that muses on legislation (*tôn perì nómous epopteúonton*)» (951d) is also found once. These two qualifications of the committee have induced me to opt for the expression «Watch Committee».

We do not know where the Watch Committee is physically located. Yet we do know its name: it is called the «Reason Reformatory», (*sophronistérion*), (*Laws* X, 908a-909a) which is one of the city's three prisons. This prison is reserved for atheists deemed to be recoverable.

Its composition

In the last Book of the *Laws*, Plato gives two versions of the composition of this Committee: one at 951d-e, and the other at 961a-c, where we find two explicit references to the former passage. Nevertheless, some divergences remain between the two passages.

In the first passage, we read the following:

> This Committee, which should consist partly of young men and partly of old, must have a strict rule to meet daily from dawn until the sun is well up in the sky. Its membership is to be: (1) those priests who have won high distinction, (2) the ten guardians of the laws who are currently the most senior, (3) the minister of education for the time being, together with his predecessors in office. No member should attend alone: each is to bring a young man of his own choice, aged between thirty and forty.
>
> *Laws* XII, 951d-e

According to this first passage, the Committee must be composed of the following members: 1) those priests who have received the highest distinctions; 2) the ten oldest Guardians of the laws; 3) the acting Minister or Head of education and his predecessors; 4) an equal number of young men aged between thirty and forty.

The formulation differs in the second passage:

> We said that we ought to have in the city a Committee with the following range of membership. The ten Guardians of the Laws who are currently the eldest were to convene together with all persons who had won awards of the distinction and the travelers who had gone abroad to see if they could discover any special method of keeping a legal code intact. When these Observers got back safe and sound, they were to be accepted as suitable associates of

> the Committee, provided they had first passed the scrutiny of its members. In addition each member had to bring a young man of at least thirty years of age, but only after selecting him as particularly well qualified by natural abilities and education; on these terms the young man was to be introduced to the other members of the Committee, and if they approved of him, he was to join them; if not, they were not to breathe a word to anyone about the fact that he was considered, least of all to the rejected candidate himself. The Committee was to meet before dawn, when people are least beset by other business, public or private.
>
> *Laws* XII, 961a-c

According to this second passage, the Committee must be made up of the following members: 1) the ten oldest Guardians of the laws; 2) all those who have received the greatest distinctions; 3) observers who have traveled overseas, have returned safe and sound, and who, after examination, have been judged worthy of being members of the Committee; 4) an equal number of young men of at least thirty years of age. Let us examine each of the groups mentioned in these two texts, beginning with those that are common to both.

- *The ten oldest Guardians of the laws*

What about the Guardians of the laws (*nomophúlakes*)? Taking the attributions of the Athenian archons as his model, Plato carried out an adaptation inspired by a moral perspective in this field, as a function of the demands of his political philosophy. He increased their number, augmented their power and reformed their mode of election, in order to make them more worthy of fulfilling their mission. In addition to other, less important functions, their task is threefold: to safeguard the laws, to supervise property registers, and to hear those who are accused of not being registered in them as they should be. The Guardians of the laws, moreover, have a legislative function intended to complete and to correct

the legislation adopted by the primitive legislators. This legislative activity is of considerable importance.

If the ten oldest among them, who must be close to the age of 70, considered as the age limit for fulfilling this function, are required to participate in the Watch Committee, it is certainly because of their supervisory role with regard to the laws. Through their intermediary, the Watch Committee remains anchored within political reality at the highest level: that of the safeguarding, that is, the supervision, of the laws and of the constitution.

- *The Head of education and his predecessors*

The Head of overall education (*ho tês paideías epimeletés*) also belongs to the corps of Guardians of the laws. This may explain why there is uncertainty about him between the two passages on the constitution of the Watch Committee. To this serving magistrate we must add the Heads of overall education who have left office.

The fact that the current Head of education and those who have left office belong to the Watch Committee is easily comprehensible in view of the importance of education in the city of the *Laws*, but also because of his key role in that supreme authority, where, as we shall see, the reign of virtue cannot be conceived outside of the context of acquired and transmitted knowledge.

- *Those who have received the highest distinctions*

In the second version concerning the composition of the Watch Committee, we read that «all persons who had won awards of distinction (*hoi taristeîa eilephotes*)» (961a) can belong to the Committee, whereas in the first version, this privilege is reserved to «those priests (*tôn hieréon*) who had won high distinctions» (951d). This specification can be explained without too much difficulty if we limit the group of those who have obtained the highest distinctions to the Scrutineers.

In a passage from the *Laws* (XI, 921e-922a), we learn that the highest distinctions may be granted to two categories of citizens: those who scrupulously respect the laws, and brave warriors. As far as the second category is concerned, we have to do with a prize for valor (*cf*. XII, 943b-c), often mentioned in the texts relative to Athenian institutions. One text evokes the first category (*Laws* V, 730d), which involves moral considerations and seems to allude to the office of the Scrutineers (*Euthunoî*). The function of these Scrutineers is twofold, and is exercised on a political level and on a religious level.

On the political level, their job is to check all the magistrates. The verification procedure for magistrates includes three stages. 1) Magistrates are judged, individually or in groups, by the Scrutineers, who act on their own initiative. 2) A magistrate who questions his sentence may appeal to a tribunal of elected judges. 3) If he is acquitted as a result of this appeal, he can turn against the Scrutineers. On the other hand, if he is found guilty he will be executed in case of a death sentence, and if he must pay a fine he must pay double.

On the religious level, Plato makes them priests of Apollo and the Sun.

1) Upon their election, they are devoted to Apollo and to the Sun as first fruits. The goal of this devotion of their function is to increase their authority under the banner of the divine (*Laws* XII, 946b-c).

2) They are the only ones to wear the crown of laurel, and all are priests of Apollo and the Sun (*Laws* XII, 947a).

3) They reside in the sanctuary of Apollo and the Sun, where they have been elected, in order to carry out their functions there (*Laws* XII, 945e, 946c-d).

4) Every year, the first among the three elected officials is considered as the «high priest» (*archiereús*), eponymous of the city (*Laws* XII, 947a-b). It may be thought that it is these high priests who are designated by the expression «all persons who had won awards of distinction».

5) The posthumous honors they are granted are equivalent to a heroicization (*Laws* XII, 946e-947e). However, even the Scrutineers are subject to control, and may be liable to condemnation.

Their double role, on both the religious and the civic level, makes the Scrutineers veritable magistrate-priests of the kind that existed in Greece. Given this characteristic, and in view of the nature of the Committee, I believe we must understand only the Scrutineers by «all persons who had won awards of distinction». We can therefore understand why they are part of the Watch Committee. Finally, they have a function that is both civic and religious, and they are to represent the elite of citizen virtues.

- *The Observers*

With the exception of military expeditions, trips abroad are subject to severe restrictions. All travel is forbidden to those who are under forty. The others may do so only in an official capacity, as heralds, ambassadors or Observers. The Observers (*theoroi*), who are mentioned at *Laws* XII, 951c-952d, must be between fifty and sixty, enjoy a good reputation and have won fame at war. Once he has received the authorization from the Guardians of the laws, the Observer travels overseas to observe the customs and institutions of other nations for as many years as he chooses. Once back in his homeland, he immediately presents himself to the Committee to make his report concerning what he has learned on the subject of laws, teaching or education. If the Committee considers that he has returned better than when he left, he has the right to great praise, both when alive and after his death. If he returns spoiled, he is forbidden, on pain of death, to meet with anyone, young or old.

The Observers are conceived as in close connection with the Watch Committee. The admission of the Observers into the Committee, explicitly affirmed in the second passage, seems to me to be implicit in the first one, without this supposition giving rise to a contradiction in the texts. It is, however, completely natural for the Observers to be integrated within the Watch Committee. Whereas the Guardians of the Laws and the

Scrutineers supervise the evolution and application of the laws of the city, the Observers contribute an external viewpoint intended to improve them by comparison.

- *The Young Ones*

Each of these members, who will be over fifty, will bring with him a young man who is to be between thirty and forty. According to the first text, it is enough for him to be presented by a member; according to the second, he must undergo an examination. Assimilated to the eyes and ears, these young people, «chosen for their natural gifts and the acuteness of their mental vision, live as it were at the summit and survey the whole state. They store up in their memory (*taîs mnémais*) all the sensations (*tàs aisthéseis*) they receive while on guard, and act as reporters (*exaggélous*) for their elder colleagues of everything that takes place in the city» (964e-965a).

To sum up, we find four groups in the Committee: 1) The ten oldest Guardians of the laws, to whom we must add the current Head of education and his colleagues who have left office, who must all be attached to this same authority; 2) those Scrutineers who have received the highest distinctions; 3) those Observers who have been judged worthy; and 4) the young men presented by the preceding group. The presence of these four groups corresponds perfectly to the functions Plato assigns to the Committee.

The Watch Committee, which includes citizens whose minimum age is thirty, is rooted in reality, since all its members have roles in civil society, a role of supervision and control of the laws, and magistrates who apply them. However, this rootedness must not make us forget that the essential functions of the Watch Committee do not pertain exclusively to politics.

Its function[21]

Three passages in the *Laws* evoke the function of the Watch Committee. The first one is found in Book X (908a-909a), where Plato mentions the «Reason Reformatory», where the members of the Committee visit the atheists, those who are inspired by a lack of intelligence (*anoía*) without evil, who are detained there, to admonish them and save their souls. This first function pertains to theology, although, as we shall see, it is theology considered from a quite particular perspective.

In the second passage (*Laws* XII, 951e-952b), the activity of the members of the Committee during their meeting is described in the following terms:

> The discussion at their meetings must always center round their own city, the problems of legislation, and any other important point relevant to such topics that they may discover from external sources. They must be particularly concerned with those studies which promised, if pursued, to further their researches by throwing light on legislative problems that would otherwise remain difficult and obscure.
>
> *Laws* XII, 951e-952a

This second function pertains to legislation, and implies a surveillance of the established laws that also takes foreign legislation into consideration.

The third passage (*Laws* XII, 961a-968e), which is most important from the viewpoint both of length and from that of range of its views, is that constituted by the last pages of the twelfth Book of the *Laws*. This passage, which is very difficult because it is poorly structured, nevertheless remains essential, because it associates ethics, politics, and theology.

[21] On this point, I disagree completely with Bobonich 2002, who deprives the Watch Committee of all its political functions.

The Watch Committee as an instrument for safeguarding the laws of the city

The passage begins with three images that have a common theme, that of salvation or safeguarding (*Laws* XII, 961c). The recurring image of the anchor implicitly associates the city with a ship provided with a crew. The argument continues with the following two images: that of the head in an animal such as man, and that of a ship's crew (*Laws* XII, 961d). The image of the animal implies a comparison between the city and a human body, which will be evoked later on (964b-e); the ordinary citizens form the city's trunk, while the Committee represents its head, the young men correspond to sight and hearing, and the old men play the role of the intelligence. In order for this spatial arrangement to be operative, an initial distinction must be established between the ordinary citizens and an authority, each of whose members considers himself as superior in the field of virtue (*aretêi pantôn diaphérein oíetai*). In this context, we can read this surprising passage, which develops the aforementioned images:

> Obviously the state itself corresponds to the trunk (*kútous*), and the junior guardians (*toùs mèn néous*), chosen for their natural gifts and the acuteness of their mental vision, live as it were at the summit and survey the whole state; they store up in their memory (*taîs mnémais*) all the sensations (*tàs aisthéseis*) they receive while on guard, and act as reporters (*exaggélous*) for their elder colleagues of everything that takes place in the state; and the old men (*toùs gérontas*) –we could compare them to the intellect (*noûs*), for their high wisdom in so many vital questions (*phroneín*)– take advantage of the assistance and advice of their juniors (*huperétais khroménous metà sumboulías*) in debating policy, so that the joint efforts of both ranks effectively ensure the safety (*soizein ontos*) of the entire state (*tèn pólin hólen*).
>
> *Laws* XII, 964e-965a

This image is related to a third one, associated like the first with a maritime context, that of a ship's crew (*Laws* XII, 961e). The interest of this new image is to distinguish the salvation of the city from that of its members. This idea of salvation triggers that of a military expedition led by the *strategos* with a view to victory, and that of medicine, where the doctor wishes to ensure the salvation of the body (*Laws* XII, 961e-962a).

Virtue as the unique goal of the city and therefore of the laws that organize it

Once the necessity of the instrument of safeguarding has been admitted, it is necessary to consider the conditions under which this safeguarding can be ensured. This can occur only if the goal of the city is well defined, with the principles that must preside over its constitution, and the means that will best ensure its efficacy (*Laws* XII, 962b-c). Unlike other cities, of which a quick and brief inventory is proposed here (962d-e), the city of the Magnesians (962e) must have only one single goal (*heìs skopós*), which is the totality of virtue (*pâsa areté*). This objective is not easy to achieve, for we have seen that there are four types of virtues (963a-964a), which must be reduced to unity under the aegis of the intellect (964a). This is what Jean-François Pradeau expresses in his comments: «As in that dialogue [the *Republic*], the aim ascribed to political thought and the planning of the city's constitution and government is to enable all the citizens to gain access to virtue in its entirety. And, in the *Laws,* as in all Plato's dialogues, this is only possible in a city governed by intelligence».[22] The relation established between virtue and intelligence derives from the equivalence between virtue and knowledge.

This equivalence is established as a result of the following deduction. «Virtue» (*areté*) is excellence in one's proper function, whether the subject of this function is an inanimate or a living being. In any case, virtue qualifies

[22] Pradeau 2002, 138.

not only excellence of character or conduct, but also and above all the perfection of an activity. If we limit our enquiry to living beings, the essential question becomes: what can the criterion of virtue be, and how can it be acquired? To this essential question, Plato always gives the same answer: although natural dispositions must be taken into account, it is the possession of knowledge that gives virtue its status. Whatever the activity under consideration may be, excellence is always based on previous knowledge. At this point, however, a new question arises: how can we escape the multiplicity of opinions on excellence, and above all, how can the multiple modes in which excellence manifests itself be reduced to unity? The answer is as follows: «So it's due to organization (*táxei*) that the excellence of each thing is something which is organized (*tetagménon*) and has order (*kekosménon*)» (*Gorgias* 506d). Yet it still must be determined in what this order consists, and this in a general sense, for the city cannot be dissociated either from mankind, who is its essential element, or from the universe in which it is inserted.

The divine as principle of order

If we define nature (*phúsis*) as the totality of a thing's process of growth, from birth to maturity, the question of the development of this process becomes the following: does reality result from chance (*túkhe*) or from art (*tékhne*), as is implied by the poets and, according to Plato, taught by the sophists? Alternatively, is it due to a divine intention that manifests itself in the work of the demiurge, as explained in the *Timaeus*, or in the function of the world soul, as explained in Book X of the *Laws*, by means of arguments (*lógoi*) and in the context of a demonstration (*epídeixis*)?

This argument assumes the appearance of a physico-theological proof of divine order within nature (*Laws* X, 897b-899b). Starting out from the hypothesis that the soul is at the origin of all motions, the proof maintains that the celestial bodies are necessarily endowed with a soul. Yet if one considers the motion of the celestial bodies, one realizes that they are akin to the simplicity of the intellect (*noûs*), for it is a circular motion in

one and the same place. The world soul is therefore also endowed with an intellect, which must be assimilated to the divine. An identification between nature (*phúsis*) and principle (*arkhé*) is thus carried out. Yet this principle must no longer be sought at the level of the sensible, which results from the elements (fire, air, water and earth) for the present state of things cannot have come about from its initial state without the principle of ordered motion known as the soul. The soul must therefore be considered as the ultimate principle, veritable nature, and primary reality that explains the origin, development and present state of the universe, mankind, and society. We may suppose that this argument constituted the obligatory background of the discussions between recoverable atheists and the members of the Watch Committee at the Reason Reformatory.

Two questions are thus solved at the same time: that of the conflict between nature (*phúsis*) and convention or law (*nómos*), and that of the diversity of opinions concerning convention or law. The former question was raised by the sophists, who opposed convention, a result of art, to nature, which resulted from chance (*Protagoras* 337c-338b; *Gorgias* 482e-484c and *Laws* III, 690a-d). Such a distinction between the natural and the conventional inevitably leads to an obvious contradiction. Man, as a physical organism endowed with certain characteristics, could never have existed without the aid of nature; as such, he is now subject to instincts, needs, or passions. On the other hand, everything that owes its existence to mankind alone exists only by convention or law. Hence the threat of a conflict between two distinct tendencies. Yet this threat can be avoided if the soul, assimilated to the divinity (*theós*), is considered as the source both of nature and law. Another threat is avoided *ipso facto*: the one constituted by the conflict between diverse laws and customs.

By anchoring the laws within theology (966c-d), and more precisely within astronomy (966d-968b), Plato bases law upon nature.

Teaching and education as ultimate instruments

However, in order to be able to teach others, one must have acquired knowledge. Hence the need for the members of the Watch Committee to acquire a certain amount of knowledge: «No one who is unable to acquire these insights and rise above the level of the ordinary virtues will ever be good enough to govern an entire state, but only to assist government carried out by others» (XII, 968a). This is why, after mentioning the composition of the Committee, Plato continues:

> First of all, of course, we shall have to compile a list of candidates qualified for the office of guardian by age, intellectual attainments, moral character and way of life. Then there's the question of what they have to learn. It is difficult to find out this for oneself, and it is not easy either to discover somebody else who has already done so and learn from him. Quite apart from that, it will be a waste of time to produce written regulations about the order in which the various subjects should be tackled and how long should be spent on each, because even the students, until they have thoroughly absorbed a subject, won't realize why it comes at just that point in the curriculum. So although it would be a mistake to treat all these details as inviolable secrets (*apórr<u>e</u>ta*), it would be fair to say that they ought not to be divulged before hand (*aprórr<u>e</u>thenta*), because advance disclosure (*prorr<u>e</u>thénta*) throws no light at all on the questions we're discussing.
>
> *Laws* XII, 968c-e

Unfortunately, the text of the *Laws* breaks off a few lines later, without any specification having been given on the subjects to be learned, the moment to undertake them, or the duration of their learning.

Whereas we have no specification concerning the last two themes, the author of the *Epinomis* seems to have dedicated himself to carrying out the first task. And it seems that the program that can be discerned in the *Epinomis* corresponds roughly to the one found in Book VII of the *Republic*.

Subject	***Republic* VII**	***Epinomis***
arithmetic	521b-526c	990c-d
geometry	526c-528a	990d
stereometry	528a-530c	990d-e
harmonics	530c-531c	991a-b
astronomy	527c-528a	991b-c
dialectic	531c-535a	991c

We can thus understand why the *Epinomis* concludes as follows:

> In private we say and in public we enact into law that the highest offices must be bestowed upon those individuals who have mastered these studies in the right way, with much labor, and have arrived at the fullness of old age. The others must obey them and speak in praise of all gods and goddesses. Now that we have come to know this wisdom well enough and have tested it, we are all bound, most rightly, to use the Watch Committee to pursue it.
>
> *Epinomis* 992d.

It is thus completely natural that in Book III of his *Lives of the eminent philosophers* (§ 60-61), Diogenes Laertius points out that the first subtitle given to the *Epinomis* was *Ho nukterinós súllogos*.

The *Laws* are then more than a legislative treatise, even more than a work of political philosophy, for they appear as the realization of the

project of Plato's work, which seeks to account for the whole of reality: individual, city and universe. This discourse (*lógos*) in which the law (*nómos*) consists finds its origin in the intellect that represents what is most akin to the divine (*theós*) in mankind. In the *Laws*, the Watch Committee is assimilated to the intellect of the city. We can therefore understand why it can be qualified, in the last remaining lines of the *Laws*, as a divine Committee (*theîos súllogos*) (969b). Through this Committee, the city becomes aware that it is an integral part of a universe that is not left to chance. Through the order it reflects, this universe provides the city with the model it must follow if it wants to achieve virtue, a virtue that therefore coincides with the contemplation of the order in the universe. In view of what has been said, it is hard not to find in the Watch Committee an equivalent of the philosopher-kings of the *Republic*, using the Country Wardens to lead the people according to the laws.

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PLATO VERSUS PROTAGORAS: THE *STATESMAN*, THE *THEAETETUS*, AND THE *SOPHIST*

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Abstract

The Statesman *is nowadays generally read either on its own, or with* Republic *and* Laws. *But more attention needs to be given to the fact that it is designed as part of a trilogy, alongside* Theaetetus *and* Sophist. *Reinstating the dialogue in this context gives a fuller perspective on its purposes. The* Statesman *(1) identifies existing so-called «statesmen», for whom the Protagoras of* Theaetetus *is chief apologist, as the greatest exemplars of sophistry as defined in* Sophist: *mere «imitators» and dealers in falsehood; (2) offers the Platonic alternative to the Protagorean vision of human life and organization sketched in the first part of* Theaetetus*; and (3), in common with* Sophist, *illustrates –after the apparent failures of* Theaetetus– *both what knowledge is and how it can be acquired. Finally, and controversially, the* Statesman *emerges, along with* Theaetetus *and* Sophist, *as part of one and the same project as the* Republic.

* * *

The *Statesman* has in the modern period typically been read either on its own, or in company (more usually, as contrasting) with the *Republic* and the *Laws*. This is a strange state of affairs, given that the dialogue is marked as the third in a trilogy,[1] of which the *Theaetetus* and the *Sophist* form the first two parts – both themselves often read in separation from the *Statesman* (and indeed from each other). This is partly because the *Statesman* tends to be of relatively little interest to the sort of philosophical readers for whom, if they have any interest in Plato at all, the reading of the *Theaetetus* and the *Sophist* is practically *de rigueur*; partly also because of the habit of modern readers[2] of lifting particular passages or arguments out of their original context. Both the *Theaetetus* and the *Sophist* contain ideas that appear to resonate loudly with modern philosophical concerns, and the fact that Plato is saying such things comes to matter more than (and so to drown out) the question *how* he came to be saying them. While the treatment of falsehood in the *Sophist* –following the unsuccessful treatment of the same topic in the *Theaetetus*– grows out of an extended series of attempts to give an account of the true sophist, it can easily be separated from its context, and regularly is; few modern readers are interested in the subject of the sophist, and even fewer in the

[1] Or an (unfinished) quartet, if we suppose that the beginning of the *Sophist* announces a *Philosopher* to go with the *Sophist* and the *Statesman*; I shall have nothing directly to say in the present paper about the issues involved here. That *Theaetetus* and *Sophist* were designed to be read together is suggested by the fact that *Theaetetus* ends with Socrates saying to those with him «let's meet again tomorrow», while the *Sophist* begins with one of them saying «So here we are again, as agreed yesterday»; the present paper will help confirm that suggestion –which no one, to my knowledge, has seriously questioned, even though few have made much of it beyond noticing a partial overlap in subject-matter (especially on false belief). That *Sophist* and *Statesman* form a pair is a foregone conclusion, insofar as the latter is in effect announced at the outset of the former, and explicitly refers several times back to it– or at any rate, to *a* conversation about the sophist, which may as well be the one supposedly recorded in our *Sophist*. There is some uncertainty as to whether *Sophist* and *Statesman* were actually composed in close succession to the *Theaetetus* (see further below), but clearly sequels to a work do not have to follow it immediately in time to qualify as sequels.

[2] Like their ancient predecessors, and for similar reasons.

methods being employed to hunt him down, or the twists and turns in their application.[3] The *Statesman*, for its part, may well seem to contain little beyond a further application of the same methods to a different subject, though admittedly one of rather more obvious importance than the sophist (i.e., the statesman).

The purpose of the present paper is to consider the consequences, and display the benefits, of reading the *Statesman* in the way it was –in my view– patently designed to be read, as the third dialogue in a series of three.[4] I shall argue firstly that the *Statesman* identifies all existing (so-called) «statesmen» as mere «imitators» and dealers in falsehood: they are «the greatest sophists among sophists», as defined in the *Sophist*, and the Protagoras of the *Theaetetus* is their chief theoretician. I shall argue, secondly, that the *Statesman* is designed, among other things, to present the Platonic alternative to the Protagorean vision of human life and organization sketched in the first and longest part of *Theaetetus*. Thirdly, I shall propose that Plato intends the *Statesman*, along with the *Sophist* to illustrate the sort of «account» that needs to be added to true belief in order to constitute knowledge, so rescuing the third account of knowledge in the *Theaetetus* from its apparent failure. Finally, and most controversially, I shall argue that the *Statesman* should properly be regarded, along with the *Theaetetus* and the *Sophist*, as an integral part of a single project that includes the *Republic* itself.

[3] Similarly with the *Theaetetus*: certain moments in the dialogue (for example the self-refutation argument used against Protagoras, or the failure of the attempt to find the sort of account that would turn true belief into knowledge) are privileged, and in a way quite reasonably, over attempting to trace the course of the argument of the dialogue as a whole.

[4] This is not to suggest that individual dialogues ought not or cannot be read in isolation. Indeed it will usually be sensible, even a requirement, that we should try to read any apparently self-standing dialogue on its own before reading it in the light of others; to do otherwise would be as it were to ignore the author's instructions as implied by his writing it *as* self-standing. But in the rare cases where dialogues are clearly marked as forming a series, it seems equally sensible, even required, also to read them as a series.

The statesman as sophist

One of the most striking claims made in the *Statesman* is that existing so-called *politikoi*, i.e., so-called exponents of the expertise of running a city, are no better than sophists, indeed that they are the greatest sophists of all:

> So then we must also remove [from the list of true claimants to the title of *politikos*] those who participate in all these constitutions, except for the one based on knowledge, as being, not *politikoi*, but experts in faction; we must say that, as presiding over insubstantial images, on the largest scale, they are themselves of the same sort, and that as the greatest imitators and magicians they turn out to be the greatest sophists among sophists.
>
> *Statesman* 303b8-c5

It is possible to play down this claim, as John Cooper does:

> In fact, a central thesis of the [Eleatic] visitor [the main speaker in the *Statesman*] is that no current city is ruled by ... expert statesmen at all. And since no actual person ruling in a city possesses this knowledge, the best current government could (paradoxically) only be that directed by an imitator –a «sophist», one who as *Sophist* has explained is aware that he does not know the right thing to do, but makes it appear to others that he does; such a government would have good laws and would enforce them, under this «sophist's» direction, but the knowledge of statesmanship itself would only be weakly reflected in these laws and in the «sophist's» behavior– it would not actually reside anywhere in the community.[5]

[5] Cooper, introducing the translation of the *Statesman* (as it happens, my own) in Cooper 1997.

There is, however, a major difficulty with this. Why, exactly, is this «sophist» supposed to come up with «*good* laws»? The last move that the Visitor makes in the *Sophist* before he offers the final account of the sophist is to separate off a type who, Theaetetus agrees, is to be categorized as an expert in demagoguery rather than statesmanship, differing from the sophist only insofar as he addresses numbers of people rather than one or a few in private. Now if *this* pseudo-*politikos* is supposed to come up with good imitations of the laws that the real *politikos* would design, then we should have to suppose that his close cousin the sophist will in the Visitor's view manage quite respectably too, despite his lack of knowledge; and any such conclusion would plainly run counter to the spirit of the whole context, insofar as progress towards the final account of the sophist has only been possible thanks to the demonstration of the possibility of false belief. *Falsehood* is what sophists specialize in, according to the Visitor, and their cousins the demagogues too.

Admittedly, not all so-called political experts are demagogues. But all, presumably, have to be able to talk to people in numbers, if not *en masse*; and if the Visitor really does intend to distinguish between demagogues (i.e., democratic politicians) and others, we need to ask (a) where these others will get their superiority from, and (b) why the *Statesman* describes «those who participate in all these constitutions [except the knowledge-based one]» as sophists, not just the democrats/demagogues among them. Cooper could appeal to *Statesman* 302e10-12, which describes the sort of one-man rule that sticks to the laws as best, providing that it is «yoked in good written rules (*grammata*), which we call laws». The sophist-monarch in this case will not himself be making up the rules, just sticking to the ones he has inherited (and pretending that he knows they are good?), as opposed to the tyrant, who pays no attention to established law; aristocracy and oligarchy, and two sorts of democracy, are distinguished on the same basis. The criteria being applied here, i.e., whether a constitution is *ennomos*, abides by its laws, or is *paranomos*, have been introduced in a controversial passage a couple of pages back, which includes a sentence that Cooper and many others have taken as

directly asserting that established laws are (generally speaking?) imitations of the truth: *oukoun mimêmata en an hekastôn tauta an eiê tês alêtheias, ta para tôn eidotôn eis dunamin einai gegrammena* (300c1-3). Cooper translates this as «Well, wouldn't those laws –written with the advice of people who know so far as is possible– be imitations of the truth on each subject?» «Those laws», on Cooper's interpretation, will apparently be the ones just referred to in 300b1-4, as ones «that have been established on the basis of much experiment, with some advisers or other having given advice on each subject in an attractive way, and having persuaded the majority to pass them». In this case, the answer to my question (a) above will presumably be that successful imitations of the truth have been arrived on the basis of a mixture of prior experiment, attractive-seeming advice, and an ability to get things past the relevant majority. One has a right to wonder, however, how such a combination could result even in a «weak reflection» (to adapt Cooper's phrase) of the best. Moreover, in the very same context the Visitor gives a rather different slant to «imitation»: imitating the best is not a matter of getting as close as possible to it (and after all, it remains unknown to everyone except the true, knowledgeable *politikos*), but rather of not pretending to a knowledge one doesn't have, and so not changing the laws as if one had it (300e11-301a4); any attempt to change the laws, as if one knows better than them when in fact one is ignorant will be bad imitation (300d9-e2). The only place in the context where the Visitor is concerned with direct imitation of the truth is when he says that trying to do better than the established laws on the basis of knowledge will «no longer be imitation but that is most truly what it sets out to be» (*ei d'entechnoi, touto ouk estin eti mimêma all'auto to alêthestaton ekeino*, 300e1-2).

This is consistent with a rather different interpretation of the sentence at 300c5-7 from the one offered by Cooper. As I have argued elsewhere,[6] this sentence does not look back[7] to c1-3, but rather represents a general

[6] See especially Rowe 2001.

[7] Despite the *tauta*: we might have expected *tade*, but there are examples enough in Plato of *houtos* looking forward.

statement, thus: «Well, imitations of the truth of each and every thing would be these, wouldn't they – the things issuing from those who know which have been written down so far as they can be?»[8] These imitations of the truth – the direct imitations referred to in 300e – naturally enough are, or would be, produced by those who know; and they are «imitations» simply because, as the Visitor has previously argued at length, the insights of the truly wise person can only be captured in writing roughly and in outline (hence «written down so far as they can be»). Every other sort of so-called *politikos*, being ignorant, is limited either to pretending to knowledge («bad imitation») or to imitating a feature of the true imitator, i.e., only changing things on the basis of knowledge («good imitation», which since the imitators in this case have no knowledge will mean no change at all).

This, I propose, is the answer to question (b) above, namely why the *Statesman* describes «those who participate in *all* these constitutions [except the knowledge-based one]», as sophists, not just the democrats/demagogues who might be thought to be singled out as the direct counterpart of the sophist proper at the end of the *Sophist*. *All* are sophists because all equally lack knowledge, yet all still occupy the place that should properly be occupied by the truly expert, knowledgeable *politikos*. The distinction between «good» and «bad» imitation, i.e., in terms of *ennomia* and *paranomia*, is not relevant in this new context, which focuses exclusively on the presence or absence of knowledge; nor is the distinction between «better» and «worse» forms of rule (by one, by few, or by many), insofar as better and worse were to be judged by how easy or difficult a regime would be to live under. When it comes to the only criterion that matters, *all* existing *politikoi* are to be judged lacking: one either knows or does not know how a city is to be run, and they don't. But they all behave as if they did.

[8] This is the translation of the sentence actually adopted in my translation in Cooper 1997; the editor adds his own alternative (as cited above) in a footnote.

Cooper claims that the sophist-politician in this context «is aware that he does not know the right thing to do, but makes it appear to others that he does», giving the *Sophist* as the authority for this. But actually the *Sophist* only claims of the sophist that he «strongly suspects and fears that the very things he's presented himself to everybody else as knowing he actually doesn't know» (268a2-4). This must be intended to fall short of «awareness», because if the sophist were to be aware of his ignorance, then according to what the Visitor has said at 229c he would actually lack «the most important and troublesome form of ignorance, ... equal in weight to all its other parts together», i.e., «not knowing something but thinking one does»,[9] and so would turn out even, perhaps, as «wise» as Socrates (by the standard he sets in the *Apology*). The point of the phrasing in *Sophist* 268a2-4 is to steer a middle course between plain simple-mindedness and true awareness: the sophist is not a naive simpleton; rather he actually sets out to deceive people, even while being ignorant of the things he is trying to deceive them about.

In short, the sophist-politician of the *Statesman* is by no means the benign individual Cooper makes him. In fact he is the very opposite of benign, if we take the description of him as a sophist seriously –and given the repeated and explicit connection of the *Statesman* with the *Sophist*, we have no reason not to take it seriously. He is the wolf that is compared with the Socratic (guard-)dog at *Sophist* 230b-231b; nor does it matter whether he is an *ennomos* ruler– a monarch, an aristocrat or a «good» democrat – or a *paranomos* one. Of course these sophist-politicians do not quite meet the terms of the *Sophist*'s final account of the sophist, in that they do not operate as the sophist does on a one-to-one basis, but the *Sophist* confirms that this is the only difference between them.[10] Even monarchs and the right kind of aristocrats or democrats, even when the

[9] *Sophist* 229c1-5.

[10] I.e., by making the division by audience (*plêthê* or individuals) at the very last moment.

laws they stick to are «good»,[11] are according to *Statesman* 303b-c not to be trusted any more than wolves. That may be surprising. But after all the same passage makes them, as much it does their *paranomoi* counterparts, «experts in faction», *stasiastikoi*, rather than in statesmanship (303c2) –a description they earn, presumably, by virtue of the fact that the only difference between them is whether they are ruled by one ignorant person, a few ignorant people, or many of them. Nor, in general, should it be too surprising to find Plato treating anyone that speaks about subjects on which they are ignorant as if they know about them as representing a threat– especially if that subject is the most important of all, namely about how we should live our lives. This, I suggest, is why he has the Visitor call any politicians other than the true one not just sophists, but «the *greatest* sophists among sophists».

Two visions of statesmanship: Plato and Protagoras

In short, the Visitor's (and Plato's) judgment on any actual *politikoi* is uncompromisingly negative. Compared with the true expert in statesmanship, they come nowhere. As this implies, knowledge about how to run a polis is not an impossible dream. The condition of its realization is that the star-gazers and babblers be given their head, not forcibly prevented from looking for truth, as they would be in the extreme law-governed city imagined in the *Statesman* (297d-299e); a city clearly marked out as a dystopia, in which life would become totally unlivable (299e8-10). The whole context is redolent of Socrates – the Socrates who in the *Gorgias* roundly declared himself the only true statesman alive,[12] on the basis that no one else either recognized the proper goal of

[11] It is not, I take it, being implied that these monarchies, aristocracies and democracies will *necessarily* have good laws (once again it would be a mystery where these would come from). The Visitor is simply adding the condition that they will be easier to live under *if* they have good laws; not to have added it would have obscured his main point, about the difference between good and bad imitation. («Living under a monarchy that sticks to existing legislation is easier than living under a tyranny.» Objection: what if the existing legislation was tyrannical?)

[12] *Gorgias* 521d-e.

politikê, or worked for it: namely, the betterment of the citizens' souls, and so of their lives.

This is the view of statesmanship that is resoundingly endorsed in the *Statesman*, which thereby constitutes the perfect foil to the Protagorean position contested in the first and longest part of the *Theaetetus*. Looked at from the perspective of the *Statesman*, Protagoras becomes the spokesman for existing politicians of all shapes and sizes, and provides the theoretical foundation for their practice. As Socrates has him say at *Theaetetus* 167a7-d2:

> Nobody ever made anyone with false beliefs about anything go on to have true ones; for it's impossible for anyone to believe either things that are not, or things that go against what he is currently experiencing, which is in every case true. What I think *can* be done is to make someone who has a soul in unsound condition, and believes things akin to that condition, come to believe different and sound things with a soul in correspondingly sound condition –things, that is, appearances, that some people, out of inexperience, call true, whereas I myself don't call them in any way truer than the others, but simply better ... I claim ... that wise and good public speakers are those that make sound things seem to cities to be just in place of unsound ones. Because whatever sorts of things seem to each city to be just and fine, these I claim are so for that city, for so long as it thinks them so; but the wise person in each case makes sound things be for and seem to the citizens instead of things that are unsound. The same argument applies to the sophist too: it is his ability to educate his pupils in this way that makes him both wise and worth a great deal of money to those he has educated.

In that other dialogue, *Protagoras*, where Plato gives Protagoras a voice, he is presented as claiming to be both a sophist and a teacher of

political expertise.[13] Here in the *Theaetetus* Protagoras is made to spell out the basis of his own expertise, namely the claim to be able to substitute «sound» (*chrêsta*) thoughts in people in place of «unsound» ones (*ponêra*). So here is a self-confessed sophist[14] directly and explicitly making a claim to wisdom, in the context of a theory (his own) which will allow different cities to have differing views about what is truly just and fine. It seems he will by his own account be able to operate in any city, whatever the regime in power.

To this the Socrates of the *Theaetetus* already offers an answer: it may be claimed that

> whatever a city decides on and lays down as just *is*, incontrovertibly, just for the city that has laid it down as such, and for as long as she continues to do so; but no one ... will be brave enough to go on to make the same claim in relation to what is *good*, and brazenly insist that whatever a city lays down as beneficial for herself, because it thinks it so, is actually beneficial for as long as she so lays it down. Someone might of course talk as if it were like that, and use the name «beneficial», but that, I imagine, would be just to make fun of what we're saying ... In fact whatever a city calls it, it is surely what *is* beneficial that she is aiming at when she makes her laws, and she makes every one as beneficial for herself as she can, within the limits of her thinking and of what that allows her to achieve.
>
> *Theaetetus* 177d1-e7

[13] «What I teach is sound deliberation, both in domestic matters –how best to manage one's household, and in public affairs– how to realize one's maximum potential for success in political debate and action.» «Am I following what you are saying?» I [Socrates] asked. «You appear to be talking about *politikê technê*, and to be promising to make men good citizens.» «This is exactly what I claim, Socrates.» *Protagoras* 318e-319a.

[14] Though the confession is, of course, imposed on him by Plato, in both *Protagoras* and *Theaetetus*.

This is the goal cities set themselves, Socrates and Theodorus agree, and it is a goal that they will often miss. The Visitor in the *Sophist* then characterizes sophistry in a way that has particular application to the author of a work entitled *Truth* that claims to reveal the truth about absolutely everything (namely, that things are, or are not, as they appear to each person to be). The sophist, the Visitor says, is not only able to speak against on any subject whatever, he can actually *make* anything you care to name (*Sophist* 233e-234a): a description that he does not explain any further, but which fits well enough –at least from a Platonic, realist perspective– with a Protagorean approach to things that allows anyone and everyone's perceptions of anything and everything to be true: this will mean, after all, that everything is just as Protagoras (or anyone else) sees it as being; it will have come into being in the way it is as a result of Protagoras' seeing it. The Visitor is of course in the process of offering an account of sophistry as a whole, not just of one version of it, but insofar as he claims that the sophist as a whole kind deals in falsehoods, it is fair enough for him to use the Protagorean approach as the template, and as providing the theoretical basis for, sophistry in general.

That this is what he is doing is, I suggest, confirmed by the fact that Protagoras has been specifically named in the discussion that motivates the *Sophist* passage just discussed (233e-234a): he is one of the experts in antilogic[15] who have written everything anyone needs to be said in order to contradict the experts in any field – including, significantly, «laws, and everything to do with running a city» (233d1-2). The question then is how these experts manage to do what they do, and the answer is that they do it by *making* everything, i.e., by producing homonymous verbal images, *eidôla*, of «the things that are» which dupe gullible young audiences into thinking «that true things are being said, and indeed that the person saying them is the wisest of all about all things» (234c6-7). Sophistic/Protagorean antilogic rests, then, according to the Visitor, on

[15] Theaetetus: «That looks like a reference to Protagoras' writings about wrestling and other sorts of expertise.» Visitor: «Marvellous! Protagoras', yes, and plenty of others' writings too» (232d10-e2).

what might be called the creation of alternative worlds – which on Protagoras' view (or at least the Protagorean view as interpreted in the *Theaetetus*) somehow exist happily side by side. But, says the Visitor, it is all a conjuring trick.

The argument of the *Theaetetus* has refuted Protagoras' «measure» theory, at least to Socrates' satisfaction: human beings are *not* each «a measure of the things that they are, that they are, [or] of the things that are not, that they are not» (Socrates citing Protagoras at 152a);[16] nor is knowledge to be identified with perception, however «perception» has to be construed in order to make the «measure» thesis come out right. But what then *is* knowledge, if not perception? Socrates fails to find an answer that will stand up: there is one that looks more promising than others, namely that knowledge is true belief plus an account, but none of the ways of understanding «account» that present themselves will work. Along the way, he has also failed to find his way out of a series of puzzles about false belief – the sorts of puzzles that a sophist like Protagoras might have used to support his thesis that actually all beliefs are *true*. Thus as the *Theaetetus* ends Socrates may have the upper hand, but Protagoras is still standing, his thesis heavily damaged but not yet defeated; that is, if there is no workable rival account of knowledge on the table, nor any explanation of how belief can be false. Cue the *Sophist*, which introduces a new and more authoritative philosophical voice in the shape of the Eleatic Visitor. The question put at the beginning of the dialogue to the newcomer –whether sophist, political expert and philosopher are all one kind, or two, or three– can be seen as arising directly from the previous day's discussion (i.e., the *Theaetetus*):[17] if Protagoras is right,

[16] The treatment of falsehood in the *Sophist* can itself sometimes sound as if it is directly responding to the Protagorean maxim (as, e.g., at 263b: «... in which case [the true statement] says the things that are not as if they are», b10).

[17] Socrates approaches the question by an independent route, bearing in mind that the Visitor did not hear the previous discussion; but Theodorus and Theaetetus, who did, have coincidentally been putting the same question to him (217b5-7). Dramatic proprieties are thus neatly preserved: the new discussion is at the same time separated from the *Theaetetus* (necessarily, from the Visitor's perspective) and connected with it (from Socrates', Theodorus', Theaetetus', and ours).

then the only expert is himself, the sophist; he has truth and wisdom sewn up, in the political as in every other sphere. The Visitor responds by offering, in succession, what to all appearance are intended as successful accounts of both sophist and *politikos*: the sophist/Protagoras is put in his place, as are those supposed *politikoi* for whom the sophist provides a theoretical front. And in giving those accounts, the Visitor illustrates the sort of account that (I propose) Socrates was looking for to add to true belief in the third, apparently failed, account of knowledge at the end of the *Theaetetus*. The essential ingredient that was missing turns out to be the method of collection and division, which also enables the Visitor to resolve the problem of false belief.[18] The outcome is a pair of demonstrations, in the *Sophist* and then in the *Statesman*, of the philosopher in action, progressing towards knowledge (even if we have no fully developed account of him, of the sort we seemed to be promised), as he successfully describes first the sophist, then the true expert in statesmanship in contrast to his imitator, the sophist-politician.

What is not made explicit is the precise relationship between the philosopher and the true, knowledgeable *politikos*. But it seems hardly likely that real political expertise can come from anywhere but philosophy. Or, more precisely, from research and inquiry: the sort of inquiry that is envisaged as meriting the death penalty in that sketch of a completely law-bound constitution which caricatures the destructive best that cities can do in the absence of knowledge.[19] In this respect the *Statesman* constitutes a definitive restatement of the case against Protagoras. There are such things as knowledge and wisdom, and they amount to a whole world more than any capacity the sophist claims for himself, whether to make «better» and «healthier» things to appear to an audience, or to speak against anyone on any subject. In particular, the *Statesman* wrests

[18] In my view the method of collection and division has been radically misread and underestimated; it involves much, much more than collection into genera and division into species. See the introduction to Rowe forthcoming.

[19] No better, in fact, than the democratic Athens of 399 –a *paranomos* constitution by the *Statesman*'s standards– managed in the case of Socrates (to which the *Statesman*'s caricature unmistakably alludes).

back from him wisdom about the city. He does no more than support the *status quo*, in whatever form it may take, when actually the *status quo* is already no more than a multiple replication of his own conjurer's art. The dialogue also, in its closing pages, reinstates education, rhetoric, judging and generalship as independent areas of knowledge, under the guidance of true, philosophical statesmanship.

The *Statesman* and the *Republic*

I have argued elsewhere[20] that the first part of the *Theaetetus* –and by implication the other parts of the trilogy, *Sophist* and *Statesman*, too– may have been in part a response to a new version of Protagoreanism that was making its presence felt within the Socratic circle itself; that is, among that large group of people, of widely differing persuasions, who had known and associated with Socrates. The new Protagoreanism, if there was indeed such a thing, would have been the product of the Socratic Aristippus of Cyrene,[21] with his family and friends. This is not the place to restate my arguments for a thesis which, though relevant to the present topic, is not essential for it. It might nonetheless help explain why, having already devoted one whole dialogue to the long dead Protagoras,[22] Plato should not only return to him but have Socrates engage with him in hand-to-hand combat over more than thirty Stephanus pages.

Perhaps it needs no special explanation; after all, the subjects discussed in those pages are ones that would presumably have occupied Plato at any time and in any context. Nevertheless, and even admitting that my thesis of a Protagoras *redivivus*[23] is thoroughly speculative,

[20] See Rowe 2015.

[21] If Aristippus' name is not mentioned, that is consistent with Plato's practice of omitting to name those of whom he particularly disapproves (others are Antisthenes, and the atomists Democritus and Leucippus) – with the exception, in Aristippus' case, of when he wants to insult him personally: see *Phaedo* 59c. The fragments of Aristippus are newly translated into English in Boys-Stones and Rowe 2013.

[22] His death is placed *circa* 420, two decades before Socrates' and not long before Plato was born.

[23] Cf. *Theaetetus* 171d, where Socrates imagines Protagoras poking his head above ground to rebuke him.

I propose now to extend the thesis, and to float the idea that the project *Theaetetus-Sophist-Statesman*(*-Philosopher*?) was designed to guard a flank left thoroughly exposed by the *Republic*. The *Republic* offered a vision of a city guided to happiness by philosophers, on the basis of knowledge. But what if –so I imagine Aristippus to be asking again, *more Protagoreo*– knowledge, as Plato conceives it, is a mere mirage? It is part of Plato's own pitch, after all, that the sort of knowledge he thinks is required will be hard to find, has not yet been found by anyone, and (so I would add) perhaps never will be. What if all that is ultimately available to us, even on the most important subjects, is our individual, or shared, beliefs? The trilogy *Theaetetus-Sophist-Statesman* gives Plato's answer.

The *Theaetetus*, as David Sedley notes, is in some ways difficult to place:

> The *Theaetetus* … is the first dialogue in a trilogy whose other members are the *Sophist* and *Statesman*. No one need doubt that the latter two belong to Plato's late period. The stylistic evidence is quite clear on this. And that fact has sometimes encouraged the impression that the *Theaetetus*, being part of the same trilogy, is itself more closely linked to Plato's late work than to his middle period. Yet the stylometric tests concur in locating it substantially earlier than the *Sophist* and *Statesman*, as part of a group whose other members are the *Republic*, *Phaedrus*, and *Parmenides* – that is, on the usual tripartite division of his work, towards the end of Plato's middle period.[24]

When a dialogue is said to belong to Plato's «late» period, part of what is intended is likely to be that it lacks reference to «middle-period» metaphysics, which may loosely be defined as form-theory as criticized in the *Parmenides*; and that is not infrequently held to be true of the *Sophist* and *Statesman*. If it *is* true of them, then my proposal to connect

[24] Sedley 2004, 2-3.

them and the *Theaetetus* with the *Republic* will immediately be in trouble. That the *Theaetetus* too is typically regarded as innocent of middle period forms is less of a problem, insofar as one widely accepted view says that the *Theaetetus* deliberately excludes such forms in order to demonstrate that an account of knowledge is impossible without them.[25] But if by the time Plato came to complete the trilogy (if we suppose *Sophist* and *Statesman* to have been composed significantly later),[26] he had changed his metaphysical position, it would certainly make it hard to contend that the three works were designed, all together, to complement and support the *Republic*, to which middle-period forms, so-called, are fundamental.

My chief response to this apparent difficulty is to say that any conclusion to the effect that there are no *Republic*-style forms in *Sophist*, *Statesman* or *Theaetetus* derives from a misunderstanding of forms in the *Republic*: there are plenty of forms, *eidê* or *ideai* (terms that are used interchangeably with *genos*, «kind») in the *Sophist* and the *Statesman*, some too in the *Theaetetus*, and in my view we have no reason to interpret them any differently from their counterparts in the *Republic*.[27] True, the *Theaetetus* contains no reference to what Platonists

[25] On the basis for this view (associated primarily with Cornford), or the lack of one, see below.

[26] There is at least one significant discontinuity between *Theaetetus* and *Sophist*: the former is presented as having been written down by one of the participants in the framing dialogue, Euclides; the *Sophist* is no longer reported dialogue – and what Euclides was supposedly reporting was a conversation between Socrates and Theaetetus, a description that no longer applies to the conversation in the *Sophist*.

[27] Other considerations: (1) part of the motivation for separating *Theaetetus* from *Republic* derives from the presence of *Parmenides* among the middle dialogues, along with its fundamental criticisms of the hypothesis of forms. But the *Timaeus* has generally been regarded, and with some justice, as operating with a similar version of form-theory to that criticized in the *Parmenides*; and the *Timaeus* is now, after some controversy, firmly located by the overwhelming majority among the late dialogues. Thus even if (such) forms were totally absent from *Theaetetus-Sophist-Statesman*, which I claim they are not, that would not constitute grounds for refusing a close connection between these three dialogues and the *Republic*. (2) *Theaetetus* is by common consent late-middle, while *Sophist* and *Statesman* generally appear first and second in the list of late dialogues; a sequence *Republic-Theaetetus-Sophist-Statesman* looks, from this point of view, hardly outlandish.

have through the centuries regarded as a key moment in the *Republic*, when Socrates appears to propose, in Book IV, that knowledge is exclusively of forms, belief of particulars; but it is my contention that the *Republic* itself, both within the relevant passage and outside it, demonstrates that Plato never intended any such restriction, at least to the objects of belief (and indeed that it is unclear even that the *objects* of knowledge and belief are what are at issue in the passage in the first place).[28] These are admittedly contentious claims, but it seems to me that the textual basis for separating off the metaphysics of *Theaetetus-Sophist-Statesman* from that of the *Republic* is at the very least considerably slimmer than is usually assumed, and insufficient to block the *rapprochement* that I propose between them.

Is there any basis for such a *rapprochement* apart from the speculations offered above (i.e., to the effect that the trilogy is designed to protect the *Republic*'s flank from Protagoreanism, whether original or revived)? I think there is. I refer especially to the end of the *Statesman*, from 304c on, where the Visitor turns –albeit briefly– to a discussion of the role of the statesman, and his directing wisdom. The statesman, he says, will not himself do the teaching or the public speaking; he will not command the military personally, or function as judge, for

> What is really kingship must not itself perform practical tasks, but control those with the capacity to perform them, because it knows when it is the right time to begin and set in motion the most important things in cities, and when it is the wrong time; and the others must do what has been prescribed for them … For this reason, then, the sorts of expertise we have just examined control neither each other nor themselves, but each is concerned with some individual practical activity of its own, and in accordance with the individual nature of the activities in question has

[28] See Rowe 2007, ch.6, and the introduction to Rowe forthcoming.

> appropriately acquired a name that is individual to it … Whereas the one that controls all of these, and the laws, and cares for every aspect of things in the city, weaving everything together in the most correct way – this, embracing its capacity with the appellation belonging to the whole [i.e., *politikê*, as deriving from *polis*], we would, it seems, most appropriately call statesmanship.
>
> *Statesman* 305d1-e6

A constitution governed by statesmanship like this has just been compared to a god among men (it is to be separated off from other so-called constitutions *hoion theos ex anthrôpôn*: 303b4-5). The description is of the perfect application of reason to the city in all its details: the divine counterpart, as it were, of the sort of application of human reason to «things in the city» exemplified in the treatment of gender, and of the conduct of war, in *Republic* V, or indeed in the whole project for the design of the City Beautiful, Callipolis.

The situation facing the imagined perfect exponent of *politikê* in the *Statesman* is, however, quite different from that of the legislators in charge of city-building in the *Republic*. The legislators of the *Republic* are evidently envisaged as taking in all and sundry; the organization of the city into three classes is partly designed in order to keep the third, lowest and most numerous class under control. In the city of the *Statesman*, by contrast, anyone found to be unteachable, and

> unable to share in a disposition that is courageous and moderate, and whatever else belongs to the sphere of virtue, but are thrust forcibly away by an evil nature into godlessness, excess and injustice, it throws out by killing them, sending them into exile, and punishing them with the most extreme forms of dishonor … And again those who wallow in great ignorance and baseness it brings under the yoke of the class of slaves.
>
> *Statesman* 308e9-309a6

The result of this policy – that of «what we have decided is by nature truly the art of statesmanship» (308d1-2) – is a citizen body composed of people who are *chrêstoi* by nature, and educable in the virtues. But the Visitor says that there are always to be two types among these, which he labels «courageous», *andreioi*, and «moderate», *sôphrones*: the first naturally spirited, quick, sharp, adventurous, prone to action, warlike; the second the opposite of all these things. The statesman's task is to weave these two opposing sets of qualities together, both by inculcating the right beliefs in individual souls and by interbreeding between the two groups.

If we compare this with the organization of Callipolis, we find that the third class of the *Republic*, that of the producers, corresponding to the appetitive part of the soul, has actually been excluded either from the city or from citizenship altogether here in the *Statesman*, while the philosopher-rulers, educated to rule within the city, have given way to an ideal statesman who is no more than the construct of an argument (that is, the argument that leads to the final account of the statesman). What remains, in effect, is the second class of the *Republic*, that of the soldiers, *epikouroi* or «auxiliaries» to the rulers; but with the difference that the *Republic* is concerned only with the need to combine the two «natures», labeled respectively as «spirited» and «philosophical», in the same person, i.e., the *epikouros*: «… our guards», Socrates says, «must have both these natures» (*Rep.* III, 410e5-6), the spirited and the *sôphrôn* (410a9), and in the course of Books II-IV the need for a combination of the two is a recurring theme.[29] In the hierarchy of the *Republic*, there will eventually be no room for a separate *sôphrôn* type as in the *Statesman*, moderate, gentle, quiet, considered, although in the context of Book III he is probably for the time being, at least by implication, the best available candidate for

[29] See II, 375b-d (*andreia* and *praotês*), III, 399a-c, IV, 416d-e (*andreia* and *sôphrosunê*); see also, e.g., VII, 536a. But III, 410a-411e remains the main passage for comparison with the closing pages of the *Statesman*; interestingly, it also begins by referring, like the *Statesman* passage, to the need to get rid of the incurably bad.

ruling;[30] only in Book V will he be replaced by the fully-fledged *philosophos*, the philosopher-ruler corresponding to the true *politikos* of the *Statesman*.

In short, if we allow for differences of context and of starting-point, the structure of the best city of the *Statesman* is recognizably similar to that of Callipolis.

This is an interesting outcome, not least because the *Timaeus* –now almost universally regarded as late, whether predating or post-dating *Sophist* and *Statesman*– offers us what looks for all the world like a new version of Callipolis, shorn of its philosopher-rulers, and dominated by guards with souls that possess «a nature that is simultaneously spirited and outstandingly philosophical, in order that they can be appropriately gentle and harsh [to friends and enemies]» (18a4-7). In other words, the *Timaeus* too, like the *Statesman*, seems to take us back to Book III of the *Republic*, before Socrates makes his stunning, extraordinary claim about the need for philosophical rule. But the city of the *Timaeus* –ancient Athens, the conqueror of Atlantis– was no less governed by wisdom than Callipolis or the city of the *Statesman*; in its case, a wisdom that stemmed directly from the gods.[31]

This is not to suggest that what is being described in the three cases is actually the same constitution. The presence of philosopher-rulers in the *Republic* and their absence from *Statesman*[32] and *Timaeus*, not to mention the different treatment of the productive class in the *Statesman*, make any such claim excessive. What can reasonably be said is that in all three cases the same basic elements are present: most fundamentally, the rule of knowledge and wisdom (however this may be expressed); a stress on

[30] Socrates asks at 412b-c which of the guards – all of them exhibiting the appropriate mix of courage and *sôphrosunê* – will rule the city; to which the first answer is those who are wise (*phronimoi*) and capable (*dunatoi*) when it comes to guarding the city, and show care for it (412c13-14).

[31] See (e.g.) *Timaeus* 24c-d.

[32] Whose perfect statesman represents the impossible paradigm, by contrast with which the philosopher-rulers are the possible exemplars (if at the very limit of «the posible»).

the need to meld together the more excitable and aggressive with the quieter, more considered elements in individual souls and in society at large; and some sort of solution for those with a purely productive or service role. All three are versions of the same solution – or, to put it in the language used by the Visitor in the *Statesman*, all «chase after the traces of the truest constitution» (301d8-e4).[33] *Statesman*, *Timaeus*, *Republic*: all represent different angles on the same political vision. The philosopher-rulers of the *Republic* loom large in the modern view of Plato. For him, however, they are no more than one theoretically possible answer to the question how a city might ever become the knowledge-based institution it needs to be; an answer, moreover, that is in large part determined by the particular analogy, between city and individual, that dominates the argument of the *Republic*. The *Statesman*, by contrast, along with *Theaetetus* and *Sophist*, focuses on the principle underlying the introduction of philosopher-kings and queens in the first place, namely *that* ruling requires knowledge – real knowledge, that is, as opposed to the «belief-based 'knowledge'»[34] of ordinary, so-called experts in statesmanship, or politician-sophists.

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[33] See Rowe 2013, in which I use this context in the *Statesman* for a larger thesis about the relationship between all of Plato's versions of the best city, including Magnesia in the *Laws*.

[34] *Doxastikê ... epistêmê*, *Sophist* 233c10.

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Diálogos, 98 (2015) | pp. 167

DESPLAZAR Y RECONFIGURAR LOS LUGARES: UNA OPERACIÓN POLÍTICA DE PLATÓN

ÉTIENNE HELMER

Abstract

In contrast to the abundant literature on Plato's rich characters, very little has been said so far about the places and their political meaning in his works, as if they were contingent to the various topics discussed. On the contrary, my claim is that these places are of primary importance to understand how Plato's political philosophy operates as a process of transformation and displacement of places, in their meaning and function and, sometimes, in their organization as well. I will first show why and how places are important in Plato's political thought. Second, I will bring to light how this process of transformation works, taking economic places as the klèros and the market place in the Laws *as my arguments and examples.*

* * *

Platón es probablemente el filósofo que, en su obra, ha otorgado más importancia al contexto de la discusión filosófica. La gran mayoría de sus Diálogos hacen referencia tanto a las características intelectuales, físicas, morales o sociales de quien habla con el locutor principal de los diálogos, sea Sócrates u otro personaje, como al lugar donde ocurre la

discusión. En la literatura filosófica secundaria se encuentran muchos estudios sobre los personajes de los Diálogos,[1] pero poco ha sido dicho en torno a los lugares. Tal falta de interés no deja de sorprender, si uno acepta que, lejos de ser un adorno artificial, los lugares en los que ocurren los Diálogos están estrechamente vinculados con los temas que se tratan y los modos de abordarlos. El sutil énfasis en los lugares es una manera de quitarle su dimensión abstracta a la discusión para enraizarla en un contexto cultural específico, marcado por ciertos tipos de hábitos y valores: cuando Sócrates entra en la palestra de Taureas al principio del *Cármides* (153a), ya sabemos que va a discutir con jóvenes y que se tratará de examinar la relevancia de ciertos aspectos de la educación en Atenas. Cuando se dirige a la casa de Polemarco, hijo del adinerado y moderado meteco Céfalo en la *República* (328b), sabemos de entrada que serán discutidos, entre otros temas, la cuestión de la riqueza en la ciudad, de cuán compatible la riqueza es con la moderación, y la del papel de la filosofía en una ciudad lujosa como Atenas.

Sin embargo, la discusión filosófica platónica pretende alcanzar una dimensión universal fundada en la hipótesis de las Formas inteligibles permanentes y, por consecuencia, en la diferencia de lo verdadero y de lo falso. Por eso, los lugares no se limitan a estos aspectos anecdóticos o particulares. Son sobre todo, en la mayoría de los casos, la expresión espacial de una manera específica de pensar, es decir, en última instancia, una manera de definir el Bien y los demás valores, con las consecuencias que estas definiciones implican tanto en términos de los usos del lenguaje y del pensamiento como en términos éticos y políticos. Los lugares en ese sentido no se limitan al espacio físico natural o artificial, sino que son señales de un modo específico de pensar y vivir, sea individual o, en la mayoría de los casos, colectivo o social. Por ejemplo, la consideración del mismo Céfalo para el poeta Sófocles (329b-d), y la presencia del orador Lisias y del sofista Trasímaco en la casa de Polemarco (328b),

[1] Véase Nails, D. (2012). *The People of Plato. A Prosopography of Plato and Other Socratics*. Hackett, Indianapolis. Y Blondell, R. (2002). *The Play of Character in Plato's Dialogues*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

señalan la conexión entre poder económico y modos de hablar y pensar. Implican también que el discurso filosófico de Sócrates se enfrentará tanto con la retórica de su tiempo, como con los valores y principios éticos y políticos vehiculados por el uso retórico común del lenguaje y del pensamiento. También en el *Fedro*, el que la discusión entre Sócrates y Fedro tome lugar cerca, pero fuera de Atenas (227a; 228e-230d), señala la posible neutralización del uso polémico de la retórica, y permite bosquejar otro tipo de retórica al servicio de la filosofía y de su propósito educativo (269d-272b).

Si tal es el significado general del lugar en sus dimensiones éticas y políticas, dos preguntas surgen que revelan una tensión entre la práctica de la filosofía y su necesaria ubicación en lugares que, como permiten divisar los pocos ejemplos anteriores, son más que meros espacios físicos. Por un lado, ¿cuán libre[2] es el diálogo filosófico platónico en su movimiento hacia la verdad y la justicia si, por supuesto, toma lugar en espacios ya orientados o marcados por maneras específicas de pensar, motivadas en muchos casos por el interés particular y el afán de poder y riqueza de quien vive en esos lugares y habla con Sócrates o los demás interlocutores principales de los diálogos? Por el otro lado, ¿hasta qué punto debe el diálogo filosófico arrancarse del lugar y de sus orientaciones «ideológicas» ya determinadas si, como piensa Platón, la filosofía tiene implicaciones éticas y políticas que necesitan de un lugar para realizarse? Sin poder entrar en un análisis detallado de todos los lugares mencionados en los Diálogos de Platón, este artículo propone un bosquejo de lo que me parece ser una operación característica del proyecto político de refundación de Platón respecto al tema del lugar – un proyecto que debe ser entendido como uno más teórico que práctico: esta operación puede ser vista como un desplazamiento y una reconfiguración de los lugares para volverlos conformes con, y expresivos de, la verdad y la justicia alcanzadas por el pensamiento filosófico. Esta operación no significa un

[2] La dialéctica es la ciencia de los «hombres libres» (*Sofista* 253c), es decir, entre otras interpretaciones posibles, hombres libres de las opiniones comunes y de la confusión entre el saber y la opinión.

movimiento físico, sino la transformación conceptual de trayectorias o lugares significativos para su audiencia.

Para demostrarlo, examinaré primero ejemplos significativos de lugares o tipos de relaciones con los lugares que se encuentran en los Diálogos de Platón, proponiendo en cada caso una interpretación política de esos lugares o relaciones. Segundo, a partir de un análisis político de la noción de «atopía», una palabra usada para calificar la rareza de Sócrates en Atenas, explicaré por qué esta rareza debe ser entendida como desplazamiento relativo a la ciudad de Atenas y los lugares políticos comunes, más que como una huida fuera del mundo, fuera de cualquier lugar hacia las «nubes» tan burladas por Aristófanes. Por eso, examinaré en algunos de los Diálogos varios ejemplos de sitios desplazados y específicos tanto de la ciudad de Atenas como de la nueva ciudad elaborada en las *Leyes* por el Extranjero. En este segundo caso, analizaré en particular el *oikos*, o hogar, transformado en *klèros* o lote, y el mercado. Ambos son lugares económicos definidos a nombre de la verdad y de la justicia, y propician estos dos valores en toda la ciudad.

Ubicar la filosofía política: sitios y trayectorias en los Diálogos de Platón

La mayoría de los Diálogos indican, en sus prólogos, dónde ocurre la discusión entre el personaje principal, sea Sócrates o los varios Extranjeros, y su(s) interlocutor(es). En algunos casos, los prólogos mencionan también lugares que forman polos entre los cuales se desplazan uno o varios de los protagonistas. Las descripciones de estos sitios y de estas trayectorias entre lugares son de amplitud variable, pero nunca dejan de ser muy exactas en su significación ética y política.

A distancia del centro de la polis

Los Diálogos señalan, primero, la diferencia entre, por un lado, conversar a distancia de la *polis*, sea en sus alrededores cercanos o, más lejos en el campo, y, por el otro lado, conversar en la *polis*. A distancia de ella, el alejamiento es variable, como se observa en la

República, el *Fedro* y las *Leyes*. En el prólogo de la *República*, Sócrates recuerda que la discusión que forma el contenido de esta obra tomó lugar fuera de la ciudad como tal, en la casa de Polemarco, ubicada cerca del Pireo (327a-328b). Esta casa y el puerto de Atenas son lugares que corresponden al estatus de Céfalo y de sus hijos como metecos adinerados e influyentes: representan una visión de la ciudad desde sus afueras cercanas, la distancia mínima gracias a la cual es posible convertirla en un objeto para pensar y cambiar. En el *Fedro* tanto como en las *Leyes*, la distancia se encuentra aún más marcada con la *polis*. En ambos diálogos, el marco de la discusión es uno campestre. Fedro y Sócrates salen de las murallas de Atenas para conversar por las orillas del río Iliso (*Fedro* 227a-229a). En las *Leyes*, el Ateniense conversa con el Espartano Megilo y el Cretense Clinias, siguiendo la ruta de Cnosos hasta la caverna del santuario de Zeus, una ruta con praderas y árboles con sombra para descansar (I, 625a-c).

En estos tres diálogos, la distancia con la *polis* democrática de Atenas tiene por lo menos dos implicaciones. Sirve, primero, para analizar y neutralizar prácticas y discursos considerados por Sócrates como posiblemente peligrosos y nefastos tanto por sus contenidos –por ejemplo la definición errónea de la justicia de Céfalo y de los «herederos» de su *logos* (*klèronomos*, *Rep*. I, 331d-e) –como por sus formas– por ejemplo, la retórica tal como la usan oradores como Lisias. Fuera de sus espacios políticos usuales, estos discursos y estas prácticas retóricas no pueden dar lugar al despliegue de su violencia intrínseca, y, por tanto, se prestan más a un análisis conceptual. Pasa algo similar en el *Menéxeno*, aunque es dentro de Atenas, cuando Sócrates desplaza la oración fúnebre de su espacio discursivo clásico, colectivo y público (la sala del Consejo ubicada en la plaza pública o ágora, 234a), hacia un espacio privado o, por lo menos, menos expuesto a la política (los alrededores de estos espacios públicos) y donde Sócrates puede captar la atención de Menéxeno. Así Sócrates puede desactivar los efectos retóricos y políticos de este tipo de discurso, y criticarlos mejor. Para volver a las *Leyes*, la mayor distancia geográfica con Atenas en comparación con la *República* y el *Fedro* permite una comparación pacífica y desapasionada entre los

regímenes políticos más conocidos en aquel tiempo. Sobre todo, la conversación tomando lugar en Creta, está supuestamente neutralizado el antagonismo histórico entre Esparta y Atenas a favor del análisis riguroso de sus instituciones.

Segundo, en estos tres diálogos también, la distancia geográfica con Atenas propicia un discurso constructivo e alterno a sus instituciones viciadas, sea una nueva manera de hablar y convencer (*Fedro*), o nuevos criterios e instancias del poder legítimo (*República*, *Leyes*). En estas tres obras, no se trata de destruir Atenas para elaborar algo totalmente nuevo sino de reconfigurar o rectificar prácticas e instituciones desviadas de esa ciudad, mediante una discusión que ocurra un poco «de lado» respecto al interior de la *polis*.

Casas

La manera de hablar y el modo de pensar, con sus fundamentos e implicaciones éticas y políticas, se revelan con aún más precisión cuando la discusión toma lugar en la casa de un individuo específico en Atenas, sea en la *polis* misma o, como pasa en la *República*, en sus afueras cercanas. Esa situación es la del *Banquete* en la casa del poeta Agatón, del *Gorgias* con la casa de Calicles, del *Protágoras* con la casa de Calias, y de la *República* con la casa de Polemarco. El *Gorgias* y, de nuevo, la *República*, son sin duda los más relevantes para observar la significación política de estos lugares domésticos.

Todo el *Gorgias* puede ser interpretado como la revelación progresiva de las posibles implicaciones éticas y políticas, encarnadas en Calicles, de la retórica tal como la concibe y práctica Gorgias, sin que este ni desee ni sea consciente de tales consecuencias. En breve, practica la retórica como Gorgias puede dar paso a una vida ética y política de violencia representada por Calicles. Esa implicación posible es legible de modo analógico, al principio del diálogo, cuando Calicles les dice a Sócrates y Querefonte que Gorgias «se hospeda en su casa» (447b). Sin embargo la revelación, a lo largo del diálogo, de este vínculo entre un modo de hablar y un modo de vivir, es posible gracias al que la discusión

toma lugar fuera, aunque probablemente cerca, de la casa de Calicles. En efecto, Calicles invita a Sócrates y Querefonte a visitarlo en cualquier momento para gozar de los talentos retóricos de Gorgias (447b), así que es probable que las discusiones que siguen con Gorgias, Polos y Calicles tomen lugar no en la casa de Calicles, sino fuera de ella. Al no ocurrir el diálogo en la casa misma, se abre entonces un espacio para neutralizar la fuerza retórica de Gorgias, a través de un diálogo que puede revelar en plena luz el vínculo teórico-práctico entre Gorgias y Calicles, más allá de la mera relación de hospitalidad. En la casa, el vínculo teórico-práctico representado por la relación de hospitalidad entre los dos personajes quedaría invisible, estaría fuera de alcance, y modificaría sin remedio la institución social fundamental –el *oikos*– con su papel educativo. Fuera de la casa, este vínculo puede ser expuesto, denunciado y, quizás, vencido, aunque el final del diálogo no deja mucha esperanza al respecto.

Otra casa reveladora de implicaciones políticas es la de Polemarco en la *República*. Es el sitio de una competencia entre dos formas «ideales» de vida: la del tirano, apoyada por Trasímaco, quien está presente en la casa de Polemarco, y la del filósofo, presentada por Sócrates, Glaucón y Adimanto. La casa de Polemarco contiene todas las condiciones culturales que pueden dar paso a la vida tiránica: entre otras, la educación basada en las referencias poéticas con sus códigos éticos tradicionales (Sófocles I, 329b-c, Simónides I, 331c-335e), el poder económico y el juicio de valor positivo hacia la riqueza representados por Céfalo (1.329e-331b), la presencia de representantes de la retórica (Lisias I, 328b) y de cierto tipo de sofística (Trasímaco I, 328b). Todos esos elementos no son sinónimos de vida tiránica –Céfalo y sus hijos son bastante moderados– sino que son elementos que pueden propiciar la vida de violencia presentada por Trasímaco. Igual que usar el lenguaje y concebirlo como Gorgias puede desembocar en vivir y pensar como Calicles, vivir y pensar como Céfalo podría desembocar en vivir y pensar como Trasímaco. El desplazamiento platónico aquí consiste en tratar de reorientar la tendencia tiránica hacia la vida filosófica o justa. Sin embargo, la tendencia tiránica parece inevitable al observar el deterioro de los regímenes en los Libros VIII y IX de la *República*. Es probable entonces que el gesto platónico

de desplazamiento sirva sobre todo para entender este proceso y sus consecuencias individuales y colectivas, para quizás frenarlas, gracias a la presentación de una posible, aunque difícil, vida alterna.

Trayectorias

Además de estos lugares o sitios significativos, Platón presenta también personajes moviéndose de un lugar emblemático hacia otro. En estos casos, interviene a veces Sócrates para interrumpir esta trayectoria y preguntarle indirectamente al protagonista si está consciente de su significado, de sus implicaciones, sus presuposiciones y de sus requisitos para que sea bien completada. Esto sucede en particular en el *Fedro* y en el *Menéxeno*. El *Fedro* empieza de la siguiente manera:

> Sóc.: Mi querido Fedro, ¿adónde andas ahora y de dónde vienes?
>
> Fed.: Con Lisias, Sócrates, el de Céfalo, y me voy fuera de las murallas, a dar una vuelta. Porque me he entretenido allí mucho tiempo, sentado desde temprano. Persuadido, además, por Acúmeno, compañero tuyo y mío, voy a dar un paseo por los caminos, ya que, afirma, es más descansado que andar por los lugares públicos.
>
> *Fedro* 227a-b

Estas primeras líneas señalan de entrada la fascinación de Fedro hacia Lisias y la retórica, ya que ha pasado mucho tiempo con el orador. Señalan también la relación pasiva de Fedro con estos discursos retóricos: después de escucharlos, no reflexiona sobre ellos. Le basta gozar de sus aspectos estéticos: todo lo contrario de la actitud socrática, la cual consiste en volver siempre a lo que se ha escuchado para entenderlo bien y ver si cumple con la verdad. La interrupción de la trayectoria consiste aquí en que el paseo de Fedro fuera de las Murallas se volverá uno más activo de lo que él quería, debido a las preguntas y los comentarios de Sócrates sobre el discurso de Lisias presentado por su amante.

También el *Menéxeno* empieza con la pregunta de Sócrates acerca de la trayectoria del personaje epónimo:

> Soc.: ¿De dónde viene Menéxeno? ¿Del ágora o de algún otro lugar?
>
> Men.: Del ágora, Sócrates, y de la sala de Consejo.
>
> Soc.: ¿Y qué asunto te llevó precisamente a la sala del Consejo? Está bien claro que crees haber llegado al término de la educación y de los estudios filosóficos y que piensas, convencido de que ya estás capacitado, inclinarte hacia empresas mayores. ¿Intentas, admirable amigo, a pesar de tu edad, gobernarnos a nosotros que somos más viejos, para que vuestra casa no deje de proporcionarnos en todo momento un administrador de nuestros intereses?
>
> *Menéxeno* 234a-b

Sócrates identifica aquí las ambiciones políticas de Menéxeno, determinando de dónde sale, y señalando el trasfondo político de su familia. Sobre todo, llama la atención de Menéxeno sobre los requisitos educativos para cumplir bien con este propósito, y primero que todo, el preguntarse sobre el valor de la retórica política, en particular la democrática. En el resto del diálogo Sócrates trata de desmitificarla tal como se manifiesta en las oraciones fúnebres, proponiendo una imitación supuestamente compilada por Aspasia, para que el joven Menéxeno tome distancia crítica frente este tipo de discursos. Al final del diálogo, no es claro si Menéxeno desenmascara a Sócrates o si cree todavía que Aspasia fue quien compuso esta oración fúnebre.[3] Así que cuando Menéxeno le pide a Sócrates que le reporte más discursos como este en el futuro (249e), no es claro si la imitación socrática ha logrado curarlo de su

[3] «Muy agradecido le quedo, Sócrates, por este discurso a ella o a quien te lo ha contado, quienquiera que sea», *Menéxeno* 249d-e.

fascinación por la retórica democrática, o si, Sócrates siendo un excelente imitador, Menéxeno no ha perdido nada de su fascinación para las oraciones fúnebres y la palabra democrática.[4] Cualquiera que sea la interpretación correcta, la interrupción socrática de la trayectoria de Menéxeno no consiste en alejarlo de la carrera política, sino en hacer que su trayectoria hacia ella pase por la filosofía e implique una nueva forma de política. Tanto en este diálogo como en el *Fedro*, la intervención de Sócrates sugiere un desvío significativo, lo cual implica un volverse otro, una reunificación del alma bajo la luz de la búsqueda de la verdad, con sus implicaciones éticas y políticas.

Las trayectorias iniciales que sirven de tramas simbólicas al principio de los Diálogos pueden también ser las de Sócrates, como al principio del *Lisis* (203a-204a), del *Protágoras* (309a-310a), o de la *República* (327a-b)[5]. Quizás la más representativa en términos políticos es la de la *República*, tal como la describe Sócrates en las primeras líneas del texto:

> Ayer bajé (*katebèn*) al Pireo, junto a Glaucón, hijo de Aristón para hacer una plegaria a la diosa, y al mismo tiempo con deseos de contemplar cómo hacían la fiesta, que entonces celebraban por primera vez. Ciertamente, me pareció hermosa la procesión de los lugareños, aunque no menor brillo mostró la que llevaron a cabo los tracios. Tras orar y contemplar el espectáculo, marchamos hacia la ciudad. Entonces Polemarca, hijo de Céfalo, al ver desde lejos que partíamos a nuestra casa, ordenó a su esclavo que corriera y nos exhortara a esperarlo.
>
> *Rep*. I, 327a-b

[4] Por ejemplo M.M. Henderson considera que Menéxeno no deja de ser fascinado, «Plato's *Menexenus* and the distorsion of history». *Acta Classica* 18, 1975, 26.

[5] Véase Makowski 1994, 134 y 146; pero se mantiene a nivel de una interpretación metafórica, acerca de los viajes del alma de Sócrates.

Académicos han notado que un modelo topográfico de bajadas y subidas corre a lo largo de la *República*[6]. Esta bajada inicial de Sócrates hacia el Pireo es análoga con la bajada del filósofo hacia la caverna y con la bajada de Er hacia el mundo infernal al final del diálogo, y les corresponde una serie de subidas simétricas.[7] Sin embargo, dos elementos deben ser tomados en cuenta en esta bajada inicial de Sócrates para entender su significación política. El primero tiene que ver con la novedad del pensamiento filosófico político de Platón, novedad simbolizada aquí por las nuevas celebraciones religiosas. ¿Cómo introducirla en la ciudad? La interrupción de la trayectoria de Sócrates y Glaucon indica que, contrario a lo que intentaba hacer Sócrates cuando trataba de convencer directamente a varios individuos a que cambien de vida para mejorar la de la ciudad, el papel del filósofo no puede ser uno directo sino que necesita una mediación, bajo la forma de una explicación a los que, como Polemarco, su familia y su círculo, representan una forma de poder en la ciudad. El segundo elemento remite al espacio del filósofo en la ciudad: la centralidad del filosofo-rey propuesta por Platón necesita un leve desvío para ser teóricamente posible. El filósofo debe hacer una etapa en el Pireo antes de, y para poder, regresar a Atenas. No se trata de cambiar la trayectoria de Sócrates, sino de reconfigurarla para que su bajada hacia el Pireo no sea una infernal sino una salvadora. Su trayectoria puede ser detenida provisionalmente o desviada,[8] a veces bajo una amenaza física simulada (I, 327c),[9] pero, contrario a lo que pasa con la de sus interlocutores, su dirección no puede ser cambiada:[10] cualquiera que sea el tiempo durante el cual Sócrates ha sido detenido o desviado, no pierde su trayectoria, sino que estas paradas provisionales (en la casa de

[6] Por ejemplo Kayser, J.R. (1970). «Prologue to the Study of Justice: *Republic* 327a-328b». *The Western Political Quarterly*, Vol. 23, No. 2, 256-265.

[7] *Ibid*. 257-258.

[8] Véase el principio del *Lisis*: Hipotales le pregunta a Sócrates «¿Adónde vas y de dónde vienes?», y después de la contestación de Sócrates (quien va de la Academia hacia el Liceo), Hipotales le pregunta si «se quiere desviar (*paraballeis*)» de su itinerario, entrando en una palestra reciente llena de jóvenes excelentes (*Lisis* 203a-b).

[9] Cf. *Fedro* 236c-d : Fedro amenaza a Sócrates para obligarle a hablar.

[10] Makowski 1994, 146-148.

Polemarco o en la palestra del *Lisis*) confirman su propia trayectoria poniéndola a prueba, puesto que, en tanto portavoz y seguidor de la filosofía, «siempre dice lo mismo» (*Gorgias* 482a-b) y no «es más que uno» (482c). Al no perder su trayectoria propia, Sócrates obliga los demás a cambiar las suyas.

Si, entonces, los lugares y las trayectorias contienen, entre otras, una significación política, y si es posible reconfigurar trayectorias individuales hacia la filosofía, es decir desplazar almas de sus rutas usuales a favor de otra, ¿es posible, y cómo, reconfigurar los lugares que tienen una dimensión política? Lo que la filosofía socrático-platónica intenta hacer con los individuos, ¿puede hacerlo con los lugares, y en particular los lugares de la *polis*? Tal es uno de los papeles o efectos de la atopía socrática, tanto como de la posición de los Extranjeros cuando hablan de política en los Diálogos.

Desplazar y reconfigurar lugares de verdad y de justicia

El poder transformativo de la atopía socrática

Como bien ha destacado Vlastos, la atopía de Sócrates es parte tanto de su persona como de su manera de filosofar.[11] Esta noción refiere a las apariencias, conductas y palabras de Sócrates que provocan la sorpresa de sus interlocutores y, de acuerdo con el origen matemático de la palabra,[12] les parecen ilógicas, inconsistentes o contradictorias. Esta atopía provoca en ellos, como muchos académicos han notado,[13] situaciones de «aporía», de perplejidad que Sócrates trata de llevar hasta sus últimas conclusiones. De acuerdo con las palabras mismas de Sócrates en el *Teeteto*: «Soy totalmente *atopos* y no sé provocar más nada sino

[11] Vlastos 1991, 2n.3. Entre otras ocurrencias del adjetivo *atopos* aplicado a Sócrates: *Banquete* 215a2; 221d2; *Gorgias* 473a1; 494d1; *Teeteto* 149e8-10. Para más referencias al adjetivo *atopos* y al nombre *atopia* en Platón, véase Eide 1996, 59-67.

[12] Eide 1996, 59-67; Arnott 1964, 119n.38. Sobre el origen matemático: véase Eide 1995.

[13] Schlosser 2014, 53-54; Eide 1996, 63-64; Hadot 1995, 57.

aporías» (149a). Por eso, su atopía ha sido estudiada hasta ahora sobre todo en sus aspectos «metafísicos», en términos de vinculación del alma con el cuerpo, y en términos epistemológicos de especificidad o novedad de la palabra y del pensamiento de Sócrates.[14] Pero poco ha sido dicho en lo que concierne a sus aspectos políticos. Una excepción es el libro reciente de J. Schlosser, *What Would Socrates Do? Self-Examination, Civic Engagement and the Politics of Philosophy* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2014). Schlosser propone tomar la atopía de Sócrates como una mejor puerta de entrada en su filosofía que la acostumbrada pero controversial «ironía».[15] Explica las varias transformaciones políticas implicadas en la ciudad democrática por la atopía socrática.[16] Enseña en particular cómo la atopía transforma la manera de dar cuenta implicada en el ser-ciudadano ateniense, cómo también subvierte las prácticas amorosas o eróticas, y, por fin, cómo radicaliza la práctica de la libertad del habla o «decisión para hablar» (*parrhèsia*).[17] Este libro da cuenta de que la posición extraña de Sócrates en Atenas no se limita a una curiosidad, sino que afecta las instituciones fundamentales de la *polis*. Sin embargo, Schlosser no observa cómo la atopía de Sócrates modifica o transforma los lugares políticos importantes de la ciudad. La perplejidad provocada por la atopía socrática y su potencial transformativo no se limita a modificar a los individuos,[18] sino que vale también para los lugares cívicos: entre los más significativos son la palestra, la cárcel y el tribunal.

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[14] Respectivamente Makowski 1994, y Vlastos 1991.

[15] Schlosser 2014, 11-18.

[16] Schlosser 2014: «[…] atopia also describes how Socrates' philosophy displaces the space and time of Athenian democracy» 144. «Transforming extant democratic practices elicits the appellation of atopos. These aspects of philosophy all displace politics from public spaces such as the Assembly and the theater to the agora, private homes, and even gatherings of Megarians outside of Athens» 145. «[…] atopia describes further displacement of the conventional practices of Athenian democratic life in terms of both time and space» 147.

[17] Schlosser 2014, 29-111.

[18] Hadot 1995, 57-60.

Las palestras le llaman la atención a Sócrates por su función a la vez educativa y erótica. Aquí se puede conversar con jóvenes.[19] Por ejemplo, el *Cármides* (153a) toma lugar en la nueva palestra de Taureas, y el *Lísis* en «la nueva palestra» (206e) dirigida por Mikkos e ubicada fuera de las murallas.[20] Pasa igual con los gimnasios, como el Liceo mencionado en el *Eutidemo* (271a) u otro anónimo aludido en el *Teeteto* con referencia a los jóvenes que se están «untando aceite en el exterior del estadio» (144c). En estos lugares se pueden observar los modos de pensar –o las opiniones– de la sociedad reflejados en las palabras de los jóvenes. Se puede notar también la influencia de modos alternos de pensar y juzgar, como la sofística y cierto tipo de retórica (en el *Eutidemo*) que Sócrates quiere refutar. Pero también son lugares donde Sócrates busca y encuentra individuos que manifiestan una aptitud para filosofar o para empezar a filosofar, como Lisis o Teeteto. A través de la conversación con Sócrates y su ser atópico (*Lisis* 218c; *Carmides* 158c; *Teeteto* 149a), estos lugares supuestamente perpetuadores de un orden político y social admitido pueden volverse lugares de crítica hacia esta misma tradición. Aquí, se trata de un desplazamiento político en potencia de lugares urbanos educativos, una manera de transformar su significación e implicación política.

Además de las palestras, están también en los Diálogos dos lugares de la *polis* muy significativos: la cárcel del *Critón* y del *Fedón*, y el tribunal de la *Apología*. La cárcel representa el lugar de la injusticia sufrida por Sócrates, de su privación de libertad, y por fin el lugar de su muerte. Lo que logra hacer el Sócrates de Platón es, de nuevo, invertir por completo la significación de este lugar. En el *Critón*, en vez de quejarse, denunciar una sentencia injusta y transgredir la ley escapando la cárcel como se lo propone Critón, Sócrates aprovecha la ocasión

[19] Sobre aspectos arquitectónicos y funcionales de las palestras y de los gimnasios, véase Miller, S.G. (2004). *Ancient Greek Athletics*. Yale University Press, New Haven, 176-195.

[20] No se sabe si la palestra de Taureas en el *Carmides* es idéntica con la palestra del *Lisis*. Véase Wycherley, R.E. (1960). «Neleion», *The Annual of the British School at Athens*. Vol. 55, 60-66, esp. 65n. 21.

para alabar a las leyes y recordar que atenerse a ellas forma parte del «ser justo» del ciudadano. No habla del contenido de las leyes sino de su función política fundamental. No dice Sócrates que el tribunal tiene razón en condenarlo, sino que la inescapable condición política de cualquier individuo lo obliga a aceptar la ley tal como es. Eso es ser políticamente justo (50a-54e). La cárcel como lugar de la injusticia se vuelve entonces, en cierto sentido, lugar de justicia. En el *Fedón*, Platón desplaza la verdadera cárcel: la cárcel no es tanto el edificio donde uno está detenido y puede morir sino el cuerpo, de tal modo que la cárcel en el sentido propio se vuelve un lugar de liberación y prolongación de la vida del alma. El tribunal ateniense donde Sócrates presenta su defensa en la *Apología* se convierte también en un lugar de acusación a la política ateniense. Y esta inversión culmina con la propuesta provocativa de Sócrates de ser nutrido para siempre, a modo de castigo, en el Pritaneo (36e-37a), un lugar sagrado usado para nutrir los atletas victoriosos en las Olimpiadas a expensas de la ciudad.

Reconfigurar instituciones económicas mayores de acuerdo con la verdad y la justicia

La amplitud del gesto político de reconfiguración de los lugares centrales de la *polis* se observa mejor aun en las obras políticas en las cuales el protagonista principal es un Extranjero. Al estar ajeno al lugar donde está dialogando, puede proponer alternativas a las instituciones existentes con sus lugares específicos. Eso pasa en las *Leyes*, el Extranjero siendo un Ateniense en Creta. El carácter atópico de sus propuestas o conclusiones (por ejemplo I, 627b-c; 646b; II, 658c) hace que el Extranjero se sitúe en una situación parecida a la de Sócrates en Atenas. La diferencia es que, por estar fuera de Atenas, el Extranjero logra amplificar el gesto socrático, proponiendo cambios colectivos y más radicales, justificados por una comparación con lo que se observa en las demás constituciones más importantes y conocidas, la de Esparta y la Creta. Mientras la actitud de Sócrates respecto a la cárcel y al tribunal eran propuestas sugestivas pero sin implicar una reforma completa de la *polis*, las propuestas transformativas de las *Leyes* están enmarcadas en

un proyecto político reformativo abarcador. Este proyecto se lleva a cabo, en particular, mediante el desplazamiento o la transformación de lugares que pertenecen a instituciones fundamentales: el hogar o *oikos*, y el mercado. Estas dos instituciones económicas son puntos claves de la reforma política de las *Leyes*.

En Atenas el *oikos* era una finca agrícola identificada con una familia, que incluía a todas las personas viviendo y trabajando en esta finca. La repartición de las tareas era organizada por criterios de estatus (libre/esclavo) y de sexo.[21] La transformación del *oikos* estaba activa ya en la *República*. En vez de eliminarlo por su fuerza anti-política de privatización o particularización extrema, Sócrates lo transformaba en un instrumento al servicio de la unidad cívica, descartando su función económica productiva para quedarse con su dimensión personal afectiva e unificadora.[22] Las *Leyes* llevan acabo esta operación transformadora, tomando ahora en consideración la dimensión productiva del hogar y proponiendo una manera de volverla compatible con la unidad de la *polis*. Esta operación consiste en la elaboración del *klèros*, que sustituye al *oikos* en las *Leyes*. En el Libro V (737c-747e), el Extranjero inscribe el *klèros* dentro de un marco político que le quita su carácter privado para volverlo político, es decir verdaderamente común y justo, de acuerdo con los principios políticos presentados en esta obra. El *klèros* es un sitio de vivienda y de producción al servicio de toda la ciudad, y no sólo al de sus residentes. Eso pasa por la desapropiación individual de las haciendas a favor de la ciudad como dueña común e única de la tierra (740a), por la prohibición de comprar o vender la tierra, y por la limitación de la pobreza y de la riqueza, cuyo exceso será repartido «a la ciudad y los dioses» (745a). En términos espaciales, el Extranjero propone que los *klèroi* consten de dos partes, cada una con tierra y casa: una parte será ubicada en la periferia de la ciudad, la otra en la cercanía de su

[21] Véase Scheidel, W., Morris, I., and Saller, R.P. (eds.), (2008). *The Cambridge Economic History of the Greco-Roman World*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 87-112; y, por ejemplo, el *Económico* de Jenofonte.

[22] Para un análisis detallado, véase Helmer 2011 y 2012.

centro (745c-d). El propósito implícito de esta medida es probablemente evitar dos inconvenientes políticos simétricos que debilitan el sentimiento de la comunidad. En efecto, los que viven cerca del centro tienden a descuidar la periferia. Al contrario, los que viven en la periferia son más expuestos al peligro de potenciales enemigos exteriores y se inclinan más a la guerra. Además, en la Atenas democrática, se les hacía difícil alejarse de su *oikos* para atender las sesiones de la Asamblea o de las varias magistraturas públicas.

El mercado es otro lugar económico sobre el cual opera el gesto transformativo político de Platón en las *Leyes* (Libro VIII). El mercado era en Atenas un lugar de intercambio económico en el que circulaban también valores y representaciones ajenas a la ciudad. Para frenarlos y limitar el deseo de riqueza intrínseco a la práctica comercial más común (*Gorgias* 467d) –lo que Platón diagnostica como síntoma de la enfermedad de muchas ciudades, en particular de la Atenas democrática (*Rep*. VIII, 564e)– el Extranjero propone regular el mercado en la ciudad de las *Leyes*. Esta regulación pasa por reglas muy limitadoras. La principal es la prohibición de cualquier forma de contacto entre, por un lado, los ciudadanos y los administradores de los *klèroi*, y, por el otro lado, los extranjeros que pueden practicar el negocio *al por menor* con los varios artesanos y sus esclavos. El motivo de esa prohibición descansa en el incentivo que el negocio al por menor puede representar para realizar grandes ganancias que pondrían en peligro la virtud de moderación (VIII, 849a), indispensable para la integridad moral y política de los ciudadanos, y por tanto, para la justicia en toda la *polis*. La única forma de negocio aceptable es el que se hace al por mayor – se trata de vender una parte de la producción agrícola a los extranjeros y otros artículos producidos en los *klèroi* (VIII, 849a *sq*.). Solo los administradores de los *klèroi* –o sea, no los ciudadanos que viven en ellos y los dirigen sino los esclavos que los administran– pueden practicarlo. Esta repartición estricta entre el trabajo político y las funciones comerciales descansa en la idea de que ser ciudadano es un trabajo difícil y requiere mayor responsabilidad.[23]

[23] Sauvé-Meyer 2002.

La traducción espacial de estas leyes consiste en diferenciar y apartar dos plazas de mercado. La primera se encuentra en cada uno de los doce pueblos que componen la ciudad (VIII, 848d), y está dedicada a esta venta al por mayor. Aquí se prohíbe la venta al por menor (VIII, 849c). El segundo tipo de plazas del mercado está relacionado con la venta al por menor de varios artículos que los extranjeros venden a los artesanos y sus esclavos (VIII, 849c-d). Estas plazas –«plazas de los extranjeros» (*en tais tôn xenôn agorais* VIII, 849d)– no son para los administradores ni tampoco, *a fortiori*, para los ciudadanos. El texto no dice donde se encuentran, pero es probable que no ocupen un lugar central, sino uno periférico.

Otra traducción espacial de la estricta regulación del mercado con vista a la justicia consiste en el requisito de total transparencia en la presentación de los «artículos e utensilios» (VIII, 849a) vendidos y comprados: serán colocados en lugares específicos del mercado, determinados por los guardianes de las leyes y los responsables de las plazas o «agoranomoi» (VIII, 849a). En este caso, es probable que el Extranjero no esté hablando del comercio al por menor que sigue una compra al por mayor, sino de la venta al por menor de objetos producidos en pequeñas cantidades. Por otra parte, es probable que esté evocando el primer tipo de mercado, ya que estos «artículos y utensilios» son aquellos «que todo el mundo necesita» (VIII, 849a), incluyendo, por tanto, los ciudadanos. Esto es lo que parece confirmar un pasaje del Libro XI: «cada intercambio realizado mediante la compra o venta entre una persona y otra será por entrega en el lugar asignado para cada elemento en el mercado» (XI, 915d). Designar un lugar para la transacción de objetos es garantizar un control más efectivo sobre lo que se vende y en qué cantidad. El espacio comercial se vuelve entonces un espacio de verdad y de justicia, propicio para el bien político de toda la *polis*.

Conclusión

Estos análisis demasiado rápidos no tienen más propósito que servir de bosquejo e incentivo para un estudio más detallado y extensivo de los lugares en Platón, y de la dimensión política de los lugares en general. Revelan ser una puerta de entrada para entender que la reflexión política platónica no se mueve en el «cielo de las Ideas», sino en los espacios más frecuentados por todos los miembros de la colectividad cívica. Queda abierta, sin embargo, la pregunta de hasta qué punto estos lugares verdaderamente políticos son lugares aceptables para la actividad filosófica, y para qué tipo de filosofía. La filosofía en su versión socrática y platónica, al ser atópica, nos lleva a preguntarnos, ¿qué sería un *topos atopos*, y además, un *topos atopos* dentro de una *polis*?[24]

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DEL HOMBRE GREGARIO AL ANIMAL GREGARIO

DE PLATÓN HACIA NIETZSCHE, Y VUELTA

MONIQUE DIXSAUT

Abstract

Despite Nietzsche's criticisms to Plato's philosophy, both philosophers have in common the same interest and the same distrust about what democracy is and means. This paper explores how both philosophers understand democracy not only as a political system but also and mostly as a specific set of values and a particular way of thinking, desiring and living. It also explores their respective use and understanding of genealogy in their reflection on democracy and the democratic man.

* * *

Si uno se refiere al fragmento póstumo en el cual Nietzsche define su propia filosofía como un «platonismo invertido»,[1] sería legítimo asociarla con el nombre de Platón sólo para contrastarla con el mismo Platón,

[1] Nietzsche, *Œuvres philosophiques complètes*, (= OPC), I, París, Gallimard, 1977, fragmento póstumo 7 [156]; he criticado el uso que Heidegger hace de este fragmento en *Nietzsche par-delà les antinomies*. Paris [2006], Vrin, 2012, 14-15.

excepto por los aspectos que tienen en común: el totalitarismo, la eugenesia, el racismo, el desprecio por los débiles, etc. Me limitaré a decir que prestar estas opiniones políticas a ambos filósofos es malentenderlos: como Platón lo hace decir a Sócrates y como Nietzsche lo dice de sí mismo, ninguno de ellos se ocupa de política, mientras pretenden ser al mismo tiempo los únicos que se ocupan de política en verdad, porque entienden que cualquier «verdadera» o «gran» política es inseparable de una antropología y una psicología, y que su reto principal lo es la cultura (*paideia*, *Bildung*). No son «enemigos de la democracia» por ser partidarios de otro tipo de organización política,[2] sino que la critican porque la ven como el síntoma de la degradación del hombre. Para ellos, la crítica no tiene una intención normativa, no se ocupa de los excesos o de las perversiones posibles de dicho régimen para proponer una definición de lo que debería ser. A unos siglos de distancia, ambos formulan un mismo diagnóstico paradójico y, por esta razón, a la vez histórico y transhistórico: la democracia es la penúltima etapa de una degeneración, que culmina en la tiranía, habiendo una relación de filiación entre estas dos etapas.

Por eso no voy a hablar de sus análisis respectivos de la democracia –no voy a hablar de política en el sentido estricto– sino de cómo cada uno crea el paradigma, o el tipo, del hombre democrático. Una constitución política, dice Sócrates parafraseando a Homero, no «nace acaso de alguna encina o de alguna piedra», sino que resulta «de los caracteres que se dan en las ciudades, los cuales, al inclinarse, por así decirlo, en una dirección arrastran tras de sí a todo lo demás.»[3] Una *politeia* se enraíce en un *ethos*, en una configuración particular y contingente de disposiciones físicas y psicológicas, de costumbres, de gustos, de cultura, que se formó y se fijó en una ciudad particular bajo la acción de causas necesarias. Todas las fuerzas que mueven a los hombres y todos los conflictos que sufren son la exteriorización de las fuerzas y de

[2] Véase P. Wotling, *Nietzsche*. Paris, Le cavalier bleu, coll. « Idées reçues », 2009, 57.

[3] *República* 544d7-e1; cf. *Odisea* XIX, v. 162-163.

los conflictos que están en sus almas y sus cuerpos. Y si, en la *República*, el análisis de la estructura política de cada «constitución» viene antes del análisis de su forma psíquica, es sólo para proporcionar «mayor claridad» (545b4). ¿Cómo, sin embargo, «la creación de una jerarquía *(Rangordnung)* de las almas se vuelve un principio político para evaluar los regímenes?» pregunta McIntyre en un artículo en el que evidencia la inspiración platónica de la filosofía política de Nietzsche.[4] Por bien planteada que sea la pregunta al poner de relieve la primacía de lo psicológico sobre lo político, la respuesta de McIntyre no deja de ser decepcionante (debido a una sobrevalorización de la subjetividad). Es decepcionante, a mi juicio, porque, de no ser suficientemente nietzscheana, no es tampoco platónica para nada.

Voy entonces a referirme a Nietzsche para tratar primero de responder una pregunta debatida: ¿qué hace exactamente Platón en el Libro VIII y al principio del Libro IX de la *República*? Luego, me basaré en el vínculo establecido por Platón entre los dos excesos contrarios que son el hombre democrático y el tirano para explicar el siguiente diagnóstico de Nietzsche: la democratización de Europa la lleva a un nihilismo pasivo, por tanto, a una esclavitud sutil. De Nietzsche hacia Platón, y vuelta, pero me limitaré a lo que es para ambos la forma más «actual» del deterioro del animal humano.

Genealogía

El Libro VI de la *República* nos enseña en qué ciudad y en qué clase de hombre es posible aprehender la forma pura de la justicia; queda entonces por descubrir la forma pura de la injusticia. Se capturará al final de una serie de transiciones que van del menos malo hacia lo peor, cada régimen estudiado siendo calificado por Sócrates de «enfermedad de la ciudad» (544c7). ¿Está Platón describiendo una secuencia histórica inevitable? ¿O está construyendo una secuencia lógica irreversible?

[4] A. McIntyre, «Virtuosos of contempt. An investigation of Nietzsche's political philosophy through certain Platonic political ideas». *Nietzsche Studien* 21, 1992, 184-210.

¿Quiere dar un carácter dinámico a una taxonomía de las constituciones, o desarrollar algún tipo de fenomenología?[5]

La interpretación histórica se remonta a Aristóteles.[6] «El problema del cambio [...] no está tratado adecuadamente por Sócrates», dice Aristóteles, por tres razones: se dice que el tiempo es «la causa del cambio de todo», la historia refuta la sucesión de los regímenes tal como Sócrates la presenta, y, por fin, Platón se equivoca sobre las causas de los trastornos –en particular, otorga demasiado peso a la ruptura entre los ricos y los pobres– e ignora la diversidad de formas que puede tener una misma especie de constitución. Es posible contestarle a Aristóteles que para Platón, la causa del cambio no es el tiempo (*khronos*) sino el devenir (*génesis*), o, más exactamente, el tener el modo de existencia de algo en devenir. Sin embargo, es cierto que Sócrates busca identificar patrones e ignora la diversidad empírica. También es cierto, sobre todo, que no se puede insertar la serie platónica de los regímenes en un tiempo histórico ya que su «primera» etapa, la ciudad perfecta, sólo existe «en palabras», y su «última» etapa, la tiranía, existió y sigue existiendo en muchos lugares sin haber pasado por los regímenes llamados intermedios (en particular, sin haber sido precedida por un régimen democrático). Por otra parte, según la interpretación cíclica de Aristóteles, la tiranía debería dar lugar a una aristocracia, sin embargo estas dieron lugar a cualquiera de las demás formas de regímenes. En resumen, una sucesión empírica no puede tener un origen ideal, y la historia contradice por completo la serie propuesta por Sócrates. Aristóteles, por tanto, tiene razón ... en ver su propia interpretación como imposible. Era poco probable, de entrada, que Platón de repente se hubiera transformado en un historiador, cuando él busca

[5] Acerca de estas interpretaciones, véase las referencias en F.L. Lisi, «*Repubblica* VIII e *Leggi* III», en *La Repubblica*, a cura di M. Vegetti, vol. VI. Napoli, Bibliopolis, 2005, 645-647n. 12-22. G. Leroux (*Platon. La République*, trad., introd. et notes. Paris, GF Flammarion, 692n.4 et 693n.15) adopta una posición intermedia: el relato de Platón sería la combinación «de un análisis de las formas políticas y una psicopatología de los individuos que son los tipos característicos de cada una de estas formas», y sería conveniente «limitar la dimensión puramente histórica del análisis» – pero no nos dice cómo hacerlo.

[6] Aristóteles, *Política* 1316a1-b27.

en realidad «la forma pura de la injusticia» – la historia de la humanidad no tiene «formas puras».

Algunas lecturas neo-hegelianas prefieren atribuir la dinámica de los cambios a un proceso dialéctico cuyo motor sería la contradicción, pero el carácter confuso del análisis, las explicaciones superficiales del deterioro del régimen perfecto y la vaguedad del isomorfismo entre el microcosmos psicológico y el macrocosmos político no son muy compatibles con un método lógico, sea hegeliano o no. Para poder descubrir algo así como una «lógica de la historia» en los análisis platónicos, hay que quitarles su complejidad, pero entonces nos arriesgamos a considerarlos como la puesta en marcha de una clasificación un poco novelada de las constituciones, como la que se encuentra por ejemplo en el *Político* (300a-303b). ¿Deberíamos, por lo tanto, concluir que Platón, al no distinguir «nunca claramente los pasajes en los cuales habla como un teórico de aquellos en los que evoca sucesos de su época», nos sume en plena «confusión»?[7] La confusión parece más bien consistir en creer en la alternativa errónea entre la teoría y la historia; una tercera opción, de hecho, está descartada, una especie de inteligibilidad que no se deriva del descubrimiento de las *causas* sino de un regreso hasta los *orígenes*.

En el relato platónico de la generación de los regímenes, no se habla ni de esencias ni de formas inteligibles ni de especies resultando de una división: un régimen no se nombra democrático por participar de la idea de democracia, ni por ser parecido a la constitución cuyo modelo fue elaborado por Atenas, sino porque en él domina una forma específica de deseo orientado hacia un valor específico. Cada constitución psicológica o política resulta de una estructura deseadora y jerárquica. Explicar esta estructura consiste en describirla y relatar como se engendra. Se podría objetar que, en el *Sofista*,[8] los que se atienen a ese método genético están acusados de contarnos historias sobre el ser «como si fuéramos

[7] J. Annas, An *Introduction to Plato's* Republic. Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1981, 295.

[8] *Sofista* 252c-243b.

niños». Pero en este caso, eso no es una objeción, ya que desde el principio del Libro VIII, Sócrates invoca a las Musas: dice que vinieron a jugar y bromear con nosotros «como con niños», pero van a adoptar un tono trágico y pretender hablar en serio (545d5-e3). Desde Hesíodo y Teognis, sabemos que las Musas pueden decir la verdad mintiendo, y viceversa. Al dejarlas hablar, Platón indica que no está escribiendo la Historia, sino que nos cuenta una historia, un *muthos* que no se realiza ni en la temporalidad dialéctica del aprender ni en el tiempo de la experiencia histórica, sino en el tiempo ficticio del mito. En el mito, cualquier evento es un nacimiento y remite a una filiación. La única manera de entender a un mito es genealógica. Pero una genealogía no tiene como propósito único deducir las características del ser engendrado a partir de las de sus progenitores, sino que permite someter este ser a un *krisis* para determinar su valor.

Cualquier genealogía se mueve dentro de un contexto de bodas y mezclas. La continuidad se nubla, y se vuelve difícil de leer a través de bifurcaciones, bodorrios y callejones sin salida: un grado de nobleza casi siempre depende de accidentes. Para establecer una genealogía, dice Michel Foucault, hay que seguir un modo de cuestionamiento regresivo para observar «los detalles y azares de los inicios; prestar una atención escrupulosa a su maldad patética», y reconocer «las victorias temblorosas» y «las derrotas mal aceptadas» que «dan cuenta de los principios, de los atavismos y de la herencia». Su estudio de la *Genealogía de la moral* llevó Foucault a reflexionar sobre la diferencia entre la genealogía y la historia, y a distinguir entre el origen, *Ursprung*, fuente de una génesis simplificada, lineal y ciega al complejo juego de las pulsiones, y la procedencia, *Herkunft*. La genealogía es una historia de procedencia, que «permite encontrar, detrás del aspecto monolítico de un carácter [...] la proliferación de eventos a través de los cuales (gracias a los cuales, en contra de los cuales)» se formó este carácter, de «detectar las pequeñas desviaciones o reversiones completas, los errores, los juicios erróneos, los cálculos falsos que dieron lugar a lo que existe». La genealogía permite identificar, entonces, todo lo que es responsable de la aparición de un

«tipo» – alianzas, mejoras y perversiones.[9] La procedencia determina un proceso que no es lineal, la fuerza mayor no triunfa mecánicamente, sino que está contaminada por las fuerzas a las que pretende imponerse, y la noción de la filiación excluye cualquier forma de determinismo. El tipo no es un resultado, sino una mezcla de tendencias contrarias que a veces están de acuerdo y a veces en conflicto. En un tipo convergen varias clases de instintos, sentimientos, pasiones, valores, que deben ser estudiados por una «historia natural» (este término aparece en *Más allá del bien y del mal*, obra en la cual todavía no aparece la palabra «genealogía»): así se explican las metáforas vegetales o animales utilizadas para describirlo sin apartar el tipo de sus condiciones de aparición (sin presentarlo como un carácter de La Bruyère).

Sin embargo, aplicar los conceptos de genealogía, procedencia y tipo al método adoptado por Platón, va en contra de la opinión de Nietzsche, quien cree que su método requiere «el sentido histórico, la capacidad de adivinar con rapidez la jerarquía de las valoraciones según las cuales han vivido un pueblo, una sociedad, un ser humano, el 'instinto adivinatorio' de las relaciones existentes entre esas valoraciones, de la relación entre la autoridad de los valores y la autoridad de las fuerzas efectivas.»[10] Este «sexto sentido» se deriva, según Nietzsche, de la mezcla democrática de las clases y razas que ocurrió en Europa en el siglo XIX: «Platón y las demás filosofías no han tenido ni una idea de esto». Esto es lo que vamos a ver.

1) ¿Es posible atribuirle a Platón una interpretación de las estructuras psico-políticas en términos de sistemas pulsionales jerárquicos? Todas las constituciones de la *República* se definen por la subordinación de algunas especies de deseo a otra; cada tipo (de ciudad y de hombre) se caracteriza por esa organización jerárquica. Explicar su aparición es determinar el tipo de deseo que va a tomar el poder en él y con él. Las

[9] M. Foucault, «Nietzsche, la genealogía, la historia» [1971], en *Microfísica del Poder*, Varela, J., y Alvarez-Uría, F. (eds.). Madrid, La Piqueta, 1992, 7-30.

[10] *Más allá del bien y del mal* §224.

metáforas animales (zánganos con o sin aguijón) y medicales (un leve movimiento externo basta para matar un cuerpo enfermo) son entonces las más apropiadas, por ejemplo cuando se trata de describir la transición de la oligarquía a la democracia.[11] Cuando ciertas tendencias psíquicas adquieren suficiente fuerza, se imponen, se vuelven colectiva y políticamente decisivas, y se lo llevan todo «con la fuerza de una corriente». El relato de Platón es, desde principio hasta el final, una historia de *epithumia* y de *eros*.

2) ¿Podemos aplicar a este relato la distinción entre origen y procedencia? La génesis del hombre democrático proporciona un muy buen ejemplo al respecto: el hijo de un hombre oligárquico padece de la incompetencia educativa de su padre, mientras hereda algo del sentido paternal acerca de lo que es vergonzoso o deshonroso (el *aidôs*).[12] Su ambigua procedencia explica tanto la batalla que tiene lugar en su alma como la posibilidad que tiene de no volverse un hombre democrático. El final de la pelea no es fatal ni definitivo, y así se elimina cualquier interpretación determinista. En la medida en que la filiación es el único esquema capaz de dar cuenta de los cambios, y en la medida en que su temporalidad específica implica necesariamente isocronía, no puede existir un origen «puro»: en el hijo, en tanto hijo, el padre está presente como un modelo imitado o rechazado, pero nunca olvidado. En cada tipo se combinan la memoria de un pasado con rostro del padre, la agitación de un presente desgarrado por una lucha entre especies contradictorias de deseos, y el camino ciego hacia un futuro que promete un aumento de la injusticia y del *non-sens*. Mi método, dice Nietzsche, intenta «mostrar con claridad las configuraciones más frecuentes y que más se repiten de esa viviente cristalización», la «de delicados sentimientos y diferenciaciones de valor, que viven, crecen, engendran y perecen» para preparar «una tipología de la moral». Pero aunque dos tipos predominantes se destacan, la moral de los señores y la moral de los esclavos, Nietzsche añade que

[11] Cf. *República* 52c *sq*.

[12] Cf. *República* 560a-b.

entre los dos existen «intentos de mediación», de interpenetración, de mala comprensión, de severas yuxtaposiciones, incluso en el mismo hombre, dentro de una misma alma.[13] La genealogía no está interesada en la diversidad de especies dentro de un mismo género, sino en la complejidad conflictiva que resulta de la herencia aceptada y denegada, de la inscripción dentro de un linaje, y de la decisión de superarlo. El análisis de la procedencia, sin embargo, no es un fin en sí mismo: debe servir para evaluar el valor del tipo y cuestionar el valor de sus valores.

3) ¿Podemos encontrar en Platón el equivalente de la pregunta de Nietzsche acerca del valor de los valores? Según Nietzsche, «los valores son exigencias fisiológicas orientadas a conservar una determinada especie de vida.»[14] Se traducen en creencias internalizadas e incorporadas que cumplen una función de organización y regulación. Plantear el problema de su valor es preguntar si favorecen el florecimiento de la vida –lo que puede ser llamado felicidad– y contribuyen a la intensificación o a la disminución del poder. Esta pregunta, Platón la plantea precisamente a propósito de cada tipo de constitución, cuando le parece necesario considerarlas desde el punto de vista de la felicidad y de la infelicidad. No se trata, entonces, de clasificar sino de evaluar, de acuerdo con un criterio que no es el del bien y del mal, sino el de lo sano y de lo enfermo. Todos los regímenes que no son aristocráticos revelan determinar sus valores de acuerdo con una representación de la felicidad que no debe nada a la inteligencia, y que lo identifica con un despreciable estado de bienestar. Todos elijen valores sin valor, pero el que mejor logra ocultarlo es la democracia.

Si, para Nietzsche, la democracia también se encuentra al nivel inferior de la jerarquía, es porque este régimen está llegando al final de una evolución que, con Platón y al contrario de las «Ideas modernas», Nietzsche no considera como un avance. Contrario a las afirmaciones del «optimismo hegeliano», lo que viene después no revela la verdad de

[13] *Más allá del bien y del mal* § 186 y § 260.

[14] *Más allá del bien y del mal* § 3.

la etapa anterior y no tiene más valor que lo que existía antes. El objetivo de la humanidad no se encuentra en su término (*Ende*) sino sólo en sus especímenes más altos. La historia humana sólo encuentra su significado y justificación en los tipos humanos más nobles, y precisamente, los valores de una constitución democrática son los factores más eficaces para resistir la aparición de grandes individuos. El régimen democrático siempre ha sido la constitución política donde el poder del Estado es el más débil, y el imperativo de conformidad el más grande. Siempre ha sido el régimen en el cual el nacimiento y la preservación de individuos con naturaleza de filósofos son lo más improbables, es decir, en términos nietzscheanos, la aparición de genios capaces de mantener la creencia en el hombre. Sean antiguas o modernas, las democracias consideran a esos genios como una «forma de lujo injustificado de la naturaleza».

Del hombre democrático al animal gregario

El hombre democrático no es aquel que vive en una democracia sino el hombre en quien el régimen de los deseos tiene la misma configuración y el mismo ritmo que los que son característicos de una ciudad democrática. En la *República*, tres tipos de constituciones (aristocrática, timocrática, oligárquica) corresponden a la tripartición del alma y se definen como el gobierno de una de sus partes con su deseo característico sobre los otros dos. Pero la *disposición* (*èthos*) o estructura (*kataskeuè*) democrática no surge del predominio del deseo característico de una parte del alma, sino que viene de la naturaleza misma del apetito. El apetito siendo en el alma una fuerza que no tiene ningún límite externo o interno, y que no reconoce límites al placer, la jerarquía (correcta o perversa) de los regímenes anteriores da paso a la anarquía. La unidad impuesta a una multiplicidad desaparece a favor de una diversidad imposible de unificar. Gobernar y gobernarse no consisten más en negociar con fuerzas capaces de aliarse o de oponerse, sino en reaccionar lo más rápidamente posible a una pluralidad cambiante de opiniones y tentaciones irracionales que se atienen a varios modelos. Cada ciudadano, entonces, puede elegir el tipo de régimen bajo lo cual desea vivir, pero será un régimen privado, ya que este supuesto régimen público tiene

como regla no imponer ningún tipo de reglas. Hay entonces dos diferencias entre la constitución democrática y los regímenes anteriores: la democrática tiene un origen violento, y no toma como base el deseo de un valor dominante, sino una rabia de emancipación y equivalencia. Es un «bazar de todos los regímenes», se parece a «un abigarrado manto en que se combinan todos los colores» (557 c). El tipo que le corresponde es abigarrado también, es una combinación de todos los estados de ánimo, todas las pulsiones y todas las opiniones posibles: «él es el lindo y abigarrado semejante a la ciudad de que hablábamos» (561e). La belleza del abigarramiento cubre el vacío, y el polimorfismo del deseo tiene como análogo la policromía de la ropa que oculta tanto la total insignificancia de las elecciones, como la diversidad casi infinita de los objetos deseables que resultan de la multiplicación ilimitada de los deseos innecesarios.

Para entender la naturaleza del hombre democrático, hay que preguntarse primero: ¿de quién es el hijo? De un oligarca parsimonioso y trabajador, en quien fue llevada a cabo la articulación de dos tipos opuestos de deseos: los deseos «necesarios» para adquirir y acumular, y los deseos que tienden a dilapidar y gastar. El dinero es para el padre un valor respetable que le costó esfuerzo, tiempo y sacrificio, pero su hijo lo considera un mero medio para apaciguar temporalmente un gran número de deseos innecesarios y obtener el mayor placer posible. Estos deseos y los placeres que proporcionan no tienen nada real, y con ellos empieza el mundo de los simulacros y de lo imaginario. No son sólo los valores y los discursos verdaderos los que abandonan el alma del joven, sino la realidad misma. Los cálculos de una razón al servicio de los apetitos son necesariamente erróneos, es imposible administrar adecuadamente el principio de placer; al multiplicar los placeres falsos, el hijo se otorga la libertad ficticia de rechazar la frustración que le impone el principio de realidad. Su padre aceptaba esa frustración, pero su retirada hacia el espacio privado del *oikos* refleja el deseo de libertad individual que dominará en su hijo. El oligarca tiene una apariencia de unidad, pero en realidad es doble (554d), no puede resistir sus deseos innecesarios sino con una fuerte represión, le impone la austeridad a su familia pero anima a los demás a que gasten para poder despojarles. El nacimiento de un

hijo democrático representa entonces una especie de retorno de lo reprimido: «Lo que el padre calló, eso habla en el hijo; y a menudo he encontrado que el hijo era el desvelado secreto del padre.»[15]

El hijo no puede incorporar la estructura psíquica de su padre porque ésta es contradictoria, inestable y patológica. La filiación no garantiza más la transmisión, aun parcial, de los valores y estilos de vida, el hijo ya no imita más al padre, sino que está usurpando su papel, y este fenómeno sucede en todas las relaciones de autoridad: el gobernante, el padre, el maestro, el preceptor comienzan a imitar la «libertad» –la desenvoltura y la arrogancia– de aquellos que se supone que educarán o dirigirán a los demás. El conflicto entre los diferentes tipos de deseos da paso al caos. Cuando las fantasías y las imágenes predominan, el discurso persuasivo es omnipotente: es inevitable que un hombre democrático sea rodeado de las zumbantes palabras de los demagogos y sofistas. El sofista en Nietzsche es el periodista, el parlanchín, quien sólo tiene control sobre el ahora y sabe que lo que dice va a ser olvidado, no después, sino al mismo tiempo que lo pronuncia.[16] El periodista es el síntoma de la descomposición de la política, la cual se acompaña de la inflación de lo social. La sociedad moderna produce lo colectivo en cada momento, la «cultura» periodística le da una dimensión gregaria a cualquier opinión, cualquier palabra merece ser «publicada» y «comunicada». Esta multiplicación genera individuos que constantemente dicen «yo», pero este «yo» sólo quiere decir «nosotros». Como dijo Sócrates a Calicles: crees que eres quien controla las opiniones del pueblo, pero como dices sólo lo que éste quiere escuchar, el pueblo más bien te controla a ti.[17] Para conocer el hombre democrático, no basta examinar cómo se comporta, es importante no dejarse engañar por su lenguaje. Este lenguaje no es realmente el suyo, sino el eco del lenguaje de los sofistas, oradores o periodistas que, cuando las circunstancias lo requieren, se encargan de

[15] *Así habló Zaratustra* II, De las tarántulas.

[16] Véase M. Dixsaut (2012). *Nietzsche, par-delà les antinomies*. Paris, Vrin, 80-81.

[17] Véase *Gorgias*, 513a-c.

invertir los valores mediante la inversión de las denominaciones. Por tanto, hay que revertir estas inversiones para dar a conocer las pulsiones tiránicas escondidas detrás de las grandes palabras de un vocabulario liberal. Porque si la tiranía es el horizonte de cualquier régimen político, incluso del mejor, es el inseparable reverso de la democracia, ya presente pero desapercibido. Como declaran sabiamente las Musas al aparecer de nuevo al final de esta etapa: un exceso en una dirección necesariamente provoca un exceso en la dirección opuesta.

La única característica constante de un hombre democrático es su deseo desmedido de libertad, lo que resulta en el rechazo de la autoridad llamada esclavitud. Ser codicioso de libertad le obliga a inventarse siempre nuevos obstáculos y nuevas amenazas. Cuando se considera a la libertad como el valor supremo de la democracia y como objeto del deseo del hombre democrático, su representación es necesariamente negativa. Significa lo opuesto a la esclavitud, y la servidumbre, a su vez, no significa más que lo contrario de la libertad. Ambas se indeterminan mutualmente, ya que buscar una es huir la otra, y viceversa, de manera que lo que se busca o se huye no existe en sí mismo, sino como lo que controla el uno o el otro movimiento. Prueba de eso, es que estos dos nombres son intercambiables: todo depende de las circunstancias, de las perspectivas o situaciones. Usar este análisis para calificar a Platón como totalitarista no sólo es un anacronismo, sino que refleja una ignorancia.

La libertad es un término profundamente ambivalente en la obra de Platón: en su verdadero significado, se identifica con la virtud aristocrática. Cuando, en el *Teeteto*, Sócrates elabora el paradigma del filósofo, este paradigma es aquel de un hombre libre, libre de la urgencia de la clepsidra –Nietzsche lo llamaría «inactual»–, insensible a los valores comunes e indiferente a su propio interés.[18] Ser libre significa entonces responder por uno mismo, vencer tanto fuera como dentro de uno mismo todo lo en que no podríamos reconocernos.

[18] Véase *Teeteto* 172 c-174 b.

A menudo es tentador prestarle a Platón un lenguaje nietzscheano, especialmente porque la traducción del lenguaje platónico en «su» lenguaje es constante en Nietzsche: igualdad significa mediocridad, justicia significa jerarquía, y divino quiere decir sobrehumano. Pero la traducción probablemente la más increíble, para no decir la más chocante, es la que propone para la palabra libertad: este «instinto de libertad, es precisamente (para decirlo en mi idioma), la voluntad de poder».[19] La voluntad de poder, como cualquier protoplasma, pasa por una serie de procesos de subyugación más o menos independientes: el esfuerzo para tomar la forma más favorable para su crecimiento, la metamorfosis como reacción de defensa, la lucha incesante para superar las resistencias que no cesa de encontrar, pero que también la fortalecen. El vocabulario fisiológico sustituye el vocabulario psicológico de Platón, pero para ambos se trata de pasar de la esfera política a la esfera metafórica más apta para describir cómo procede el apetito o el instinto de libertad, para describir, según las palabras de Platón, su «pánico» o su «embriaguez», y, para hablar como Nietzsche, para denunciar «el requisito más terrible y fatal, el instinto de poder – a éste lo llamamos instinto de 'libertad'».[20]

Es un deseo de libertad que prevalece en un hombre democrático, pero no soporta que se mencione la mera posibilidad de una desigualdad, ya sea natural, adquirida o establecida. La igualdad que establece le proporciona su encanto a la democracia: es, dice Platón, «un régimen placentero», aunque perfectamente injusto, porque su abigarramiento «concede indistintamente una especie de igualdad tanto a los que son iguales como a los que no lo son».[21] Pero de ahí sigue la contradicción fundamental del hombre democrático: contradicción entre un apetito de libertad concebida como «permisividad» (*exousia*) sin límites, y el dogma de la igualdad indiferenciada (aritmética). A este tipo de igualdad, Platón siempre le ha opuesto otro: «darle a cada uno una parte equitativa en

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[19] Nietzsche, OPC, XII. Paris, Gallimard, 1978, fragmento póstumo 11 [33].

[20] Nietzsche, OPC, XIII. Paris, Gallimard, 1976, fragmento póstumo 10 [66].

[21] *República* 558c. Véase *Leyes* VI, 757a, que refiere a la diferencia del *Gorgias* (507e-508a) y la vincula a la que se establece entre las dos medidas en el *Político* (283d-285c).

proporción a su naturaleza». Eso es la «especie de igualdad más verdadera y la mejor». Es «teniendo siempre fija la mirada hacia el deseo de justicia y hacia esta forma de igualdad» que el Ateniense quiere fundar su ciudad en las *Leyes*.[22] «La verdadera justicia lo que dice es: 'igualdad para los iguales, desigualdad para los desiguales; de lo que se deduce que no se debe igualar nunca a los desiguales!'.»[23] La inspiración platónica de este «lema» es evidente, y esta inspiración puede ir en Nietzsche hasta tomar la forma de una paráfrasis. La justicia no sólo le enseña que la igualdad es una ficción e injusticia, sino que afirma que el deseo de igualdad –lo que la democracia considera una virtud– es la expresión del resentimiento y del deseo de venganza: « 'Voluntad de igualdad' – éste debe llegar a ser en adelante el nombre de la virtud. […] Vosotros predicadores de la igualdad, la demencia tiránica de la impotencia es lo que en vosotros reclama a gritos 'igualdad': ¡vuestras más secretas ansias tiránicas se disfrazan, pues, con palabras de virtud!»[24] Por lo tanto, uno debe tener el ímpetu de decir: «Pues a mí la justicia me dice así: 'los hombres no son iguales' ¡Y tampoco deben llegar a serlo!»[25] Para decirlo como Platón, no tomamos bueyes para gobernar a bueyes o educarlos.

La confusión entre igualdad y equivalencia se ha traducido de hecho en la desaparición de la «justa», de la competencia por la excelencia. La «libertad» excesiva es el valor de la decadencia, la igualdad incondicional es la del hombre degenerado y «transformado en un animal enano»:

> La degeneración global del hombre, hasta rebajarse a aquello que hoy les parece a los cretinos y majaderos socialistas su «hombre del futuro», –¡su ideal!– esa degeneración y empequeñecimiento del hombre en completo animal de rebaño (o, como ellos dicen, en hombre de la «sociedad libre», esa animalización del hombre hasta convertirse en animal

[22] Platón, *Leyes* VI, 757b-d.

[23] Nietzsche, *El Crepúsculo de los ídolos*, «Incursiones de un intempestivo», § 48.

[24] *Así habló Zaratustra* II, De las tarántulas.

[25] *Así habló Zaratustra* II, De las tarántulas.

> enano dotado de igualdad de derechos y exigencias son posibles, ¡no hay duda!.[26]

Los diagnóstico se cruzan, pero las genealogías difieren. El advenimiento del hombre democrático coincide en Platón con el de la apariencia, del falso semblante, de una pluralidad imposible de reunir. Para Nietzsche, el movimiento democrático es una herencia cristiana. Los sacerdotes capturaron el instinto gregario, natural y necesario para todas las especies vivientes. Lo revolvieron contra la vida, y lo transformaron en un imperativo de igualdad que justificaron con una teoría de la inmortalidad. «La inmortalidad otorgada a un hombre cualquiera es el ataque más perverso jamás perpetrado en contra de la humanidad aristocrática», y exigir que cada voluntad considere a la otra como igual es «un principio hostil a la vida, un orden destructor y disgregador del hombre, un atentado al porvenir del hombre, un signo de cansancio, un camino tortuoso hacia la nada».[27] Nietzsche conoce demasiado bien a Platón para asignarle tal teoría, sabe que para él, un alma no tiene el mismo valor que otra: «¿Por qué no todas las almas corresponden a su carácter ideal? Por ignorancia.»[28]

Nietzsche no dice «hombre democrático», sino «europeo moderno». La «Europa» amplía su geografía hasta los Estados Unidos, la historia europea se identifica con la historia multisecular de la destrucción de sucesivas autoridades con las que Europa trató de ocupar el lugar del dios cristiano. «La democratización de Europa está abocada, por lo tanto, a engendrar un tipo preparado para la esclavitud en el sentido más sutil.»[29] Tal es la versión nietzscheana de la secuencia platónica que va desde la democracia hasta la tiranía. En esta versión, el hombre tiránico no tiene más pulsiones con suficiente fuerza para ser un tirano, pero está tiranizado por su instinto gregario – un instinto que no es ni bueno ni malo, sino

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[26] *Más allá del bien y del mal*, § 203.

[27] *Genealogía de la moral* II, § 11.

[28] *Introducción a la lectura de los diálogos de Platón* § 19 ; cf. § 25.

[29] *Más allá del bien y del mal* § 242.

necesario para la supervivencia de la especie, y que forma, en Europa, la mejor manera de protegerse del terrible pensamiento del devenir. Pero cuando este instinto se convierte en un imperativo categórico, aparece entonces este completo animal de rebaño que representa el ideal del hombre para la sociedad «libre». La segunda disertación de *La Genealogía de la moral* nos hace presenciar el nacimiento de un hombre que deja de ser el animal de un rebaño por encima del cual está suspendida la tabla de los valores más adecuados para intensificar su poder, pero que es el miembro de un rebaño «supranacional y nómada», que se considera universal en derecho porque sus valores son incondicionalmente morales. El rasgo fisiológico característico de este individuo es un poder de adaptación que lo vuelve independiente del entorno natural, y esta nivelación fisiológica resultando de los avances técnicos, hace que sea utilizable «en muchas cosas».[30] Pero, ¿para qué cosas? ya que el único propósito propuesto por las ideas modernas consiste precisamente en esa misma nivelación.

Este tipo de hombre instrumentalizado no puede afirmar su poder trabajando, ya que cualquier trabajo consiste para él en obedecer y adaptarse, debe garantizar el buen funcionamiento de totalidades privadas, efímeras, triviales – las que, de acuerdo con Platón, sirven para satisfacer placeres innecesarios. Ya no es suficientemente sólido para ser la piedra angular de un edificio, sino que es un engranaje intercambiable que vive en una agitación perpetua «como alguien que, en cualquier momento, podría 'perderse' algo, reloj en mano.» Este reloj remite a la clepsidra,[31] el hombre democrático de Platón es también el hombre del «a veces ... a veces…», aquel por quien el tiempo pierde su coherencia y se deshace, y para quien todo, incluso la filosofía, no es nada más que un espectáculo. La filosofía, en verdad, no parecía haber sobrevivido a la descomposición del régimen aristocrático, pero cuando su nombre vuelve a aparecer en el análisis del tipo democrático (561d2), remite sin duda al tipo de filosofía

[30] *Más allá del bien y del mal*, *ibid*.

[31] Cf. *Teeteto* 173e1-2.

que pretende practicar el «filósofo bien raro» que se encuentra al final del Libro V. En la medida en que el hombre democrático no está dominado por un tipo único de deseo ni obsesionado con un objeto único, puede «filosofar» cuando le dé la gana.[32] Mientras que valores como la verdad o el honor obligan el apetito a trascenderse, el apetito desorientado obliga cualquier objeto a ser tal que le proporcione una satisfacción, y nada más. Enseñar por qué un tipo de hijo no puede derivarse sino de este tipo de padre no tiene nada que ver con la transición necesaria de una especie de régimen político a otro, con un determinismo histórico. El Europeo moderno ha llegado, de acuerdo con Nietzsche, a un estado intermedio que puede prolongarse en dos direcciones opuestas, según su estado resulte de un debilitamiento definitivo de sus fuerzas creativas, o según la decadencia no se ha inventado sus remedios todavía. El hombre no sabe más qué creer, ha llegado a un cruce último. Todavía no es un «completo animal gregario», pero, a juzgar por los habitantes de la «Vaca Multicolor» –aquella ciudad vestida del manto abigarrado de Platón– quiere convertirse en este animal,[33] porque el miedo es su pulsión dominante: «Quien examine la conciencia del europeo actual habrá de extraer siempre, de mil pliegues y escondites morales, idéntico imperativo, el imperativo del temor gregario: '¡queremos que alguna vez no haya ya nada que temer!'.»[34] Lo que más teme este moderno europeo es el sufrimiento, y este miedo se expresa en su instinto más tiránico, la compasión. La religión, la moral y la política ya no son más que religión, moral y política de la compasión. En este rechazo a aguantar, infligir e infligirse cualquier forma de sufrimiento, la vida se niega a sí misma: las contradicciones, los conflictos, la desconfianza, señalan una salud que no tiene miedo de enfrentarse a los obstáculos, a la duda, a la inseguridad y a la incertidumbre. Cuando la voluntad de poder renuncia a la agresividad, a la crueldad necesaria para vivir, se orienta hacia la nada. Un nihilismo activo y destructivo había engendrado el cristianismo, y luego se revolvió

[32] Cf. *República* 561c-d.

[33] Véase *Así hablaba Zaratustra*, Prólogo § 5.

[34] Ndt: *Genealogía de la moral* § 201.

contra él y todavía domina «hoy», pero tiene como futuro posible y demasiado posible, un nihilismo pasivo, un «budismo europeo» cuyo tipo es el último hombre descrito por Zaratustra.

El hombre democrático de Platón engendra el hombre tiránico cuando el imperativo de igualdad amenaza hasta las triviales transgresiones mediante las cuales se manifiesta lo que el hombre democrático cree que es la «libertad»; pero este hijo tirano no tiene ningún hijo: sólo puede reproducirse idéntico a sí mismo. Es probable que el europeo moderno, de acuerdo con Nietzsche, se convierta en un animal manada, que no tiene otro futuro que el de su reduplicación sin límite. Ambos están a «cinco pasos del abismo», y quien puede evitar de caer en él es, tanto para Nietzsche como para Platón, el filósofo. Éste no tiene padre, es la encarnación de la Idea que él sólo puede hacerse de sí mismo. Para Nietzsche los mayores tiranos son «tiranos del espíritu», son los grandes pensamientos los que cambian el mundo, y cuando Platón, en las *Leyes*, evoca al filósofo sin poder garantizar su llegada, igual que Nietzsche, lo llama «*Kosmos turannos*», es decir tirano, pero tirano ordenado, cuyas fuerzas están bien jerarquizadas. Es por esta razón que, para ambos, la política consiste en cuestionar las condiciones de aparición y preservación de este «natural», o de esta «bête philosophe»[35] todavía capaz de mandar y obedecer, guardián de una verdadera justicia y de una justa jerarquía. Al reflexionar sobre la mejor manera de promover su llegada, debemos entender que ambos dicen: «Quiero la conservación de mi propia especie» – una especie que no puede dar lugar a ningún rebaño.[*]

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[35] Platón, *República* VI, 484 a-487 a; Nietzsche, *Genealogía de la moral* III, 7 («bête philosophe» está en francés en el texto).

[*] Título original: «De l'homme démocratique à l'animal grégaire. De Platon vers Nietzsche et retour», *Revue Française d'Histoire des Idées Politiques* 2013/1 (N° 37), p. 81-95. Traducido del francés al español por Rosa O'Connor Acevedo, estudiante graduada de filosofía de la Universidad de Puerto Rico, y Étienne Helmer.

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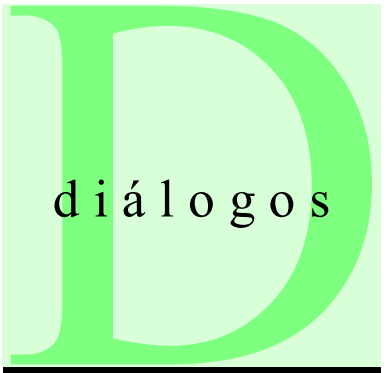

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