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ASPECTS OF PLATO'S POLITICAL THINKING IN *TIMAEUS* AND THE 10TH BOOK OF *LAWS*

The conditions of life that nowadays, in the era of globalization, are shaped intensively raise the question of reapproaching the platonic thought. The long course covered by the mechanistic account of the nature, the world and the human being, has driven to the separation of science (*ἐπιστήμη*) from philosophy and to the splintering off of knowledge (*γνώση*).

However, this separation, due to the gradual subordination of knowledge to the immediate profit (*χρησιμοθηρία*), is completely opposite to the Greek Platonic (and Aristotelian) perception of knowledge. Besides, a significant Aristotelian label which reflects as well the core of the platonic thinking, is well known: "*it is obvious that they pursued science for the sake of knowledge, and not for any practical utility*" (*φανερὸν ὅτι διὰ τὸ εἰδέναι τὸ ἐπίστασθαι ἐδίωκον καὶ οὐ χρήσεώς τινος ἕνεκεν*), [Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, A 982b 20].

Greek philosophical thinking is characterized by unselfish (*ἀνιδιοτελής*) knowledge and distinguished for its persistence in the unity of mankind — nature (*ἄνθρωπος — φύσις*) and of tangible (sensible) — perceptible (intelligible) (*αἰσθητά — νοητά*). This unity is quite easily comprehensible in Hesiodus cosmogony as well as in Presocratic Philosophers. It constitutes a very basic element of the platonic thinking and it is articulated through a variety of ways, in Plato's works. In this occasion we mention three of them: *Republic*, *Timaeus* and *The Laws* (*10th book*).

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The first is the ultimate utterance of Plato's agony and strong interest in the benefit of the community of citizens and their raising to the view (*θέα*) of Good (*Ἀγαθόν*). This is well declared through the allegory of Cave, in the 5th book of the *Republic*.

Timaeus is widely known mostly as a complete — even obscure — expression of Plato's cosmological and cosmogenic perceptions.

The Laws, and in particular the 10th Book, constitutes a thorough and documented expression of Athenian philosopher's interest for the citizen (*πολίτης*), the city (*πόλις*), and the policy (*πολιτική*). They provide a comprehensive framework of city life, which — focusing on Justice (*Δικαιοσύνη*) — intends to lead citizens' lifes toward the Good.

But which is nowadays, in the era of globalized communities and financial integration, the importance of studying Plato's political thinking? What can such a study contribute to the challenges of today?

Moreover, does a deeper relation exist between Plato's political thinking and his cosmology — physical theory? If there is, how can it be outlined? Does the natural world constitute for Plato a leader thread, so that enables him to shape his ideal Republic? Which are the ratios that are shown? How nature's order is reflected in the structure and function of the platonic city? Is there any relevance between the thruth about nature, the mankind and the city?

Is the platonic state (*πολιτεία*) too much of an ideal to be considered utopian not only from philosophy scholars, but also from the majority of people? Or is it, instead, absolutely consistent to the platonic cosmological prototype that the Athenian philosopher creates in *Timaeus* to explain creation and being? Why does Plato in his mainly cosmological work decide to dedicate a noteworthy part to speak, primar-

ily, about the achievements of the city where he himself and all those who converse with him live? Why this happens in *Timaeus*, since already a complete development of Plato's political thinking and political "desires" (*πόθος*) exists in the previous *Republic* and all the aspects of a well ruled city are lighted in the twelve books of *Laws* of his old age?

On these matters we shall try to stand, by locating hint points of *Timaeus* and the 10th book of *The Laws*, in order to show that all issues of (philosophical) concern of those times, as well as all the previously (pre-platonic) philosophical achievements coexist in Plato's mind as a whole.

In spite of its specific topics that each time examines, platonic dialogue presents common characteristics, as aspects of one particular platonic work often appear within the discussions developed in another. It would make sense to assume that the interrelation of platonic works reflects the unity that Plato recognizes in the world (*κόσμος*) and the beings (*ὄντα*).

Turning into Plato's political thinking we are obliged to keep in mind the entire platonic philosophy, definite characteristics of which it would be useful at the present case to point out.

a. Platonic philosophy's starting point and end is the Good. The Good inspires the philosopher to create its Theory of Ideas (*Θεωρία τῶν ἰδέων*). Moreover, to the Good refers the entire world, the sensible (*αἰσθητός*) of things and the perceptible (*νοητός*) of ideas. The Good "is located" beyond the Substance (*Οὐσία*) (*Republic*), even beyond subjectivity and objectivity.
b. Having turned his intellect (*νοῦς*) towards the Good and having met its light, the philosopher is in anguish over the daily life of the human beings, of his co-citizens and of the city. This anxiety motivates him to re-

flect on the city and its citizens and prompts him to develop the identical state in the *Republic*, aiming at leading the citizens to the Good (*Laws*).

c. The erotic attraction the view of Good exercices to the philosopher, as well as the concern for the citizens (Socrates) motivates Plato to describe the creating of the world and to shape a theory of nature. In this theory, the role of the Creator (*Δημιουργός*) is fundamental, since its (his) abilities convince the Necessity (*Ἀνάγκη*) to cooperate with him (*Timaeus*).

d. The theory of nature devoped in *Timaeus* facilitates the Athenian philosopher in shaping the entire framework of the city function (*λειτουργία τῆς πόλεως*). The settlement of the city, its enactment, the establishment of laws and the formation of such an operation and security plan appropriate in driving the citizens — through Justice — to the Good, this is the core of the platonic political teleology.

Given the above, we shall seek to underline the narrow relationship of Plato's political thinking with the knowledge of the world's creation and operation and we will set off the holisticity of his thinking.

Moreover, we shall try to show that *Timaeus* has never denied its political identity, although the discussion on politics — in a narrow sense — covers a very short extent in it, in relation to other relevant works (*Republic*, *Laws*). We shall have the opportunity to underline the fact that according to Plato, the universe, the God — Creator, the formation of the world, the cosmic soul (*ψυχή*), the human soul and body, the existence of the city and its operation, are all in relation and unity.

We will attempt to substantiate the opinion that, what — among others — is after in the above platonic works, is:

a. The mark of cosmos unity, throughout the function of nature, of human being and of the state.
b. The institution of city's laws in such a way, so the state set-up and operation serves the materialization of the human — social — political life as a school (*παιδευτήριον*) where souls are cultivated. This cultivation aims at Virtue (*Ἀρετή*). Virtue is the necessary presupposition that permits the meeting of the human being — citizen with the Good.
c. The reminder that the course towards the Good is a continuous, endless, ascetic and dynamical development of the human being considered as spirit (*πνεῦμα*) and logic (*λόγος*).

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ИДЕИ ПЛАТОНА О ВЕЧНЫХ ЦЕННОСТЯХ

Платон — выдающийся древнегреческий ученый. Он оказал решающее влияние на становление учения о духовно-нравственных ценностях: добре красоте, любви, истине, благе, идеях, душе, Боге. Его учение, его идеи получили широкое распространение и развитие в будущем. В трудах Платона показано решающее значение для общества и для человека высших духовно-нравственных ценностей, которые являются первоосновой, законами общественного развития. Учение Платона об идеях, духовно-нравственных ценностях актуально и в наши дни. В современном мире есть много разных

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