

**Fifth seminar: Music in *Laws* Books 4-6.**  
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**1. Ulrich von Wilamowitz and Plato's *Laws*.**

As a septuagenarian Ulrich von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff published his "Platon",<sup>1</sup> a philological biography of the philosopher and his dialogues from the *Ion* to the *Laws*. His approach led him to label the *Ion*, *Hippias* and *Protagoras* as "Jugendübermut (juvenile wantonness)",<sup>2</sup> dialogues written before the death of Socrates (399), and the *Laws* as a work of "Resignation"<sup>3</sup> after the death of Plato's friend Dion, who was murdered by Kallippos, a member of the Academy, in 354 B.C. Six years later, immediately after Plato's death (348/7), his pupil Philippus of Opus published the *Laws*, dividing the work, which existed as a draft, into 12 books and adding a supplement, the *Epinomis*. The *Laws* were read by Isocrates as early as 346 B.C.<sup>4</sup>

Because of many shortcomings in the disposition Wilamowitz considered the *Laws* to be an arrangement of incoherent pieces, which were held together superficially by the form of the dialogue. Wilamowitz also considered the *Laws* to be unfinished, as the promise of a conclusion in Book 12 (962 B) is never fulfilled.<sup>5</sup> On the other hand, a host of cross-references attests that Plato when writing the *Laws* followed a deliberate plan. This was seen first by Theodor Gomperz.<sup>6</sup> We shall find examples of such cross-references when embarking on a survey of the musical chapters in the *Laws*.

Books I-III of the *Laws* are preliminaries for the main subject, the legislation for a new state. Three old men, Plato (in the disguise of an anonymous Athenian), the Spartan Megillos and the Cretan Clinias, have set out to travel on midsummer day (683 C) from Cnossos to the cave of Zeus below Mount Ida, which means a walking tour (today the European hiking tour E4) of two days rising to 1495 metres above sea level. There are opportunities for delightful rests and talk in the cypress woods on the

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1 U. von Wilamowitz - Moellendorff, *Platon I, Leben und Werke, II, Beilagen und Textkritik*, Berlin 1919.

2 Wilamowitz I (1919) 122-152, II (1919) 32-46.

3 Wilamowitz I (1919) 647-697, II (1919) 305-322.

4 Isocrates, *Philippus* 12.

5 Wilamowitz I (1919) 647-650.

6 Theodor Gomperz, *Platonische Aufsätze III*, in: *Sitzungsberichte der Kaiserlichen Akademie in Wien phil. hist. Klasse* (1902) 145.

way (I 625). After having started with an inquiry about the Spartan constitution, the dialogue shifts to the appropriate use of wine at symposia and the importance of music in education (I 642). This topic, developed in the second book, has already been treated by Eleonora Rocconi and Andrew Barker.

The third book begins with a history of civilisation, which draws on Democritus,<sup>7</sup> resulting in a preliminary sketch of the origins of monarchy, aristocracy and democracy (III 683). Embedded in it is an interesting cross-reference: "And now - as it were by divine direction - we have returned once more to the very point in our discourse on laws where we made our digression, when we plunged into the subject of music and drinking-parties; and we can, so to speak, get a fresh grip upon the argument, now that it has reached this point".<sup>8</sup> This is a clear reference to I 638 D and II 653. After that, Plato qualifies his digression as πλάνη τοῦ λόγου, "going astray of the *logos*". This attests that Plato himself wanted to treat significant material concerning education and music not in Book 7, where the topic is resumed, as we shall see, but already in Book 2. Of course this is awkward, but there is no reason to see in this shortcoming the hand of the redactor, Philippus of Opus, as Ivo Bruns had suggested.<sup>9</sup>

The sketch of the history from the Trojan war until the Persian wars (Book 3, 682-700) gives the opportunity to discuss monarchy, aristocracy and democracy and the mixed constitution in Sparta, which happily maintains the balance between the despotism of the Persians and the excess of freedom of the Athenian people after the Persian wars. In order to explain the decay of Athens Plato draws on the opinion of Damon, which he had quoted in the *Republic*: "People should beware of change to new forms of music, for they are risking change in the whole. Styles of music are nowhere altered without change in the greatest laws of the city: so Damon says, and I concur".<sup>10</sup> In the *Laws* (III 700-701 B), Plato gives a vivid picture of the licentious music of the Athenian theatre, which eventually led to political anarchy, as Andrew Barker has

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7 Wilamowitz I (1919) 657 f.

8 Plato, *Laws* III 682 E: ὅθεν δὴ κατ' ἀρχὰς ἐξετραπόμεθα περὶ νόμων διαλεγόμενοι, περιπεσόντες μουσικῇ τε καὶ ταῖς μέθαις, νῦν ἐπὶ τὰ αὐτὰ πάλιν ἀφίγμεθα ὥσπερ κατὰ θεόν, καὶ ὁ λόγος ἡμῖν οἶον λαβὴν ἀποδίδωσιν.- Translation Bury.

9 I. Bruns, *De legum Platonis compositione quaestiones selectae*, Bonn 1877.

10 *Rep.* IV 24 C 3-6: εἶδος γὰρ καινὸν μουσικῆς μεταβάλλειν εὐλαβητέον ὡς ἐν ὄλῳ κινδυνεύοντα· οὐδαμοῦ γὰρ κινουῦνται μουσικῆς τρόποι ἄνευ πολιτικῶν νόμων τῶν μεγίστων, ὡς φησι Δάμων καὶ ἐγὼ πείθομαι.- Translation Barker.

shown. The same thought, the fear of every change in musical education, is resumed later in the *Laws* (VII 798 D - 799 B).

By a happy chance (*Laws* III 702 B 5), the Cretan Clinias is able to offer an opportunity for a practical test: he is charged, together with nine colleagues, by the city of Cnossos to plan the foundation of a new town between the Dorian city of Gortys and the Minoan palace of Phaistos in the Messara plane, on the site of the ruined old Magnesia,<sup>11</sup> eighty stadia north of the Libyan sea.<sup>12</sup> This fiction gives the background for the legislation of the second city after the *Republic*, which is carried out in Books 4 to 12. Interspersed are several chapters on music and two longer sections about education, in the seventh book musical education in general, and in the twelfth book the musical education of the highest class, the members of the "nocturnal council". In browsing in these passages we have to treat music together with poetry.

## 2. Laws IV 719: Enthusiasmus

Book 4 of the *Laws* begins with a survey of the geographical and economic conditions and the provenance of the inhabitants of the new town. After that, the qualities of an enlightened tyrant cooperating with an enlightened legislation are debated. After this echo of the famous passage of the *Republic* (5, 473 D) about the philosopher-king, a mixed constitution is chosen for the new town, the legislation of which must now be investigated. Thus, the legislator is summoned as interlocutor, to be interviewed about the best form of the legislation. In order to recommend to the legislator unequivocal regulations, the Athenian tells him an old story, which is introduced by a cross-reference to a series of earlier Platonic dialogues:

"There is, O lawgiver, an ancient saying - constantly repeated by ourselves and endorsed by everyone else - that whenever a poet is seated on the Muses' tripod, he is not in his senses, but resembles a fountain, which gives free course to the upward rush of water; and, since his art consists in imitation, he is compelled often to contradict himself, when he creates characters of contradictory moods; and he knows not which of these contradictory utterances is true. But it is not possible for the lawgiver in his law thus to compose two statements about a single matter; but he must always publish one

<sup>11</sup> Plato, *Magneten*: *Laws* VIII 848; XI 861; XI 919; XII 946; XII 968.

<sup>12</sup> For the detail see Wilamowitz I (1919) 661-663.

single statement about one matter".<sup>13</sup>

In this tale we find joined together two notions of the nature of poetry and music, namely ἔνθουσιασμός and μίμησις, which are properly incompatible.<sup>14</sup> The introducing cross-reference covers Plato's whole work: ἔνθουσιασμός (possession by the God) is attested in the *Ion*, the *Apology*, the *Meno*, the *Phaidros* and the *Laws*, μίμησις (imitation) in the *Cratylus*, in the *Phaidros*, in Books 3 and 10 of the *Republic* and in the second, fourth and seventh books of the *Laws*. It is interesting to see the development of two significant literary conceptions which culminates in Aristotle's *Poetics*, written in Athens before the death of Plato, and before Aristotle's departure to Assos after 348/47 B.C.<sup>15</sup>

The rhapsode Ion, in his dispute with Socrates in the *Ion*, claims for himself a craft (τέχνη), the ability to explain Homer with respect to the content of his works, their poetic means, especially the appropriateness (πρέπον) of the language of the actors, which produces illusion, and their impact on the souls of their hearers. This comes close to sophistic Homer-exegesis in the manner of Gorgias' *Helen* of 393 B.C.<sup>16</sup> But Socrates, mercilessly insisting not on poetic style and impact, but only on content, compels Ion to concede that there is for every sector of human life an expert like the helmsman or the general, who knows better than the rhapsode how to speak about the relevant facts. Thus, the powers of the rhapsode cannot result from a craft (τέχνη), but must have another source, namely possession by the god (ἔνθουσιασμός). This notion, which was already propagated by Democritus (460-370) in his *Poetics* (Περὶ Ποιήσιος, B 16a - 18), may have been borrowed by Plato,<sup>17</sup> who expands it in a famous parable (533 C-E):

Like rings which cling to a magnetic stone, a simile adopted from Euripides'

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13 *Laws* III 719 C: Παλαιὸς μῦθος, ὃ νομοθέτα, ὑπὸ τε αὐτῶν ἡμῶν ἀεὶ λεγόμενός ἐστι καὶ τοῖς ἄλλοις πᾶσι συνδεδογμένος, ὅτι ποιητῆς, ὁπότεν ἐν τῷ τρίποδι τῆς Μούσης καθίζηται, τότε οὐκ ἔμφρων ἐστίν, οἷον δὲ κρήνη τις τὸ ἐπιὸν ῥεῖν ἐτοίμως ἔῃ, καὶ τῆς τέχνης οὔσης μιμήσεως ἀναγκάζεται ἐναντίως ἀλλήλοῖς ἀνθρώπους ποιῶν διαπιθεμένους ἐναντία λέγειν αὐτῷ πολλάκις, οἷδε δὲ οὔτ' εἰ ταῦτα οὔτ' εἰ θάτερα ἀληθῆ τῶν λεγομένων. Τῷ δὲ νομοθέτῃ τοῦτο οὐκ ἔστι ποιεῖν ἐν τῷ νόμῳ, δύο περὶ ἑνός, ἀλλὰ ἓνα περὶ ἑνός ἀεὶ δεῖ λόγον ἀποφαίνεσθαι.- Translation Bury.

14 E. Pöhlmann, 'Enthusiasmus und Mimesis: Zum platonischen Ion', in: *Gymnasium* 83 (1976) 191-208.

15 W. Burkert, 'Aristoteles im Theater. Zur Datierung des 3. Buchs der "Rhetorik" und der "Poetik"', in: *MH* 32 (1975) 67-72,

16 Cp. *Ion* 535 C-E and Gorgias *Helen* 9 with Plato, *Meno* 71 E about Gorgias' typology of people's behaviour.

17 Wilamowitz I (1919) 478.

*Oineus* (Fr. 567 Nauck), the poets and composers cling to the Muse who is responsible for the relevant genre. Like prophets they receive from the Muse a mysterious power, the *θεία μανία*, which they transmit to the mediators of poetry and music, rhapsodes, actors, chorus-leaders and choristers. The latter transmit this power to the listeners. When poets, mediators and listeners are in the grip of inspiration (*ένθουσιασμός*), they lose all mental control (*έκφρονεϊ*), like the maenads in bacchic frenzy. Thus, inspired poetry cannot be taught, learned and explained like a craft (*τέχνη*).

In the *Apology* (21 C - 22 E) and the *Meno* (99 B-D) Socrates uses the conception of inspiration ironically, in order to demonstrate that politicians, poets and craftsmen don't participate in insight (*έπιστήμη*), but rely only on correct opinion (*όρθή δόξα*), which is a gift of the gods. In the *Phaedrus*, in the second speech about Eros, Socrates gives the concept of *ένθουσιασμός* an unexpected turn, contrasting inspired poetry and poetry pursued like a craft:<sup>18</sup> "The third is the possession and enchantment by the Muses which seizes a tender and untouched soul, awaking and arousing in her songs and other poetry ... But everybody who arrives at the doors of poetry without the frenzy of the Muses, thinking that he will become a poet because of his craft (*τέχνη*), will miss the goal, and the poetry of the well tempered will be defeated by the poetry of the inspired poet.<sup>19</sup> Thus, the musician (*μουσικός*) together with the philosopher, the *φιλόκαλος* and the *έρωτικός*, keeps the first place in respect of his perception of the ideas, while the poet (*ποιητικός*) and other representatives of illusion (*περὶ μίμησιν τις άλλος*) are relegated to the sixth place (*Phaedrus* 248 DE). It is interesting that *μίμησις* is connected here with *τέχνη*.

In the *Laws* however, the contrast between the inspired (*ένθεος*) poet and the technician of verse producing illusion (*μίμησις*) is forgotten. Both are identified, as we have seen. Nevertheless, in the third book of *Laws* we still can find a reflection of the *enthousiasmos* of the *Ion*: "For being divinely inspired in his chanting, the poetic tribe with the aid of Graces and Muses, often grasps the truth of history".<sup>20</sup>

18 See E. Heitsch, *Platon, Phaidros, Übersetzung und Kommentar von E.H.*, Göttingen 1993, 113 f.

19 *Phaedrus* 245 A: τρίτη δὲ ἀπὸ Μουσῶν κατοκοχή τε καὶ μανία, λαβοῦσα ἀπαλήν καὶ ἄβατον ψυχὴν, ἐγείρουσα καὶ ἐκβακχεύουσα κατὰ τε ὤδας καὶ κατὰ τὴν ἄλλην ποίησιν ... ὅς δ' ἄνευ μανίας Μουσῶν ἐπὶ ποιητικὰς θύρας ἀφίκηται, πεισθεὶς ὡς ἄρα ἐκ τέχνης ἱκανὸς ποιητὴς ἐσόμενος, ἀτελεῖς αὐτός δὲ καὶ ἡ ποίησις ὑπὸ τῆς τῶν μαινομένων ἢ τοῦ σωφρονοῦντος ἠφανίσθη.

20 *Laws* III 682 A: Θεῖον γὰρ οὖν δὴ καὶ τὸ ποιητικὸν ένθεαστικὸν ὄν γένος ὑμνωδοῦν, πολλῶν τῶν κατ' ἀληθειάν γιγνομένων σὺν τισιν Χάρισιν καὶ Μοΐσαις ἐφάπτεται ἐκάστοτε. See Wilamowitz I (1919)

### 3. Laws IV 719: Mimesis

The concept of ἐνθουσιασμός is known to Democritus, as we have seen, while the notion of poetic μίμησις appears already in the *Homeric Hymn to Apollo* (l. 163), which falls into three parts: 1-145 treats the birth of the god on Delos, and 179-546 the god's journeys to Olympus and to Delphi, while 146-178 forms a link between the Delian and the Delphian part.

Walter Burkert<sup>21</sup> has found a convincing date for this complex composition: In 522 B.C., Polycrates of Samos inaugurated in Delos a Delian and Delphian festival (Δήλια καὶ Πύθια), according to a Delphian oracle. For this occasion a member of the guild of the *Homerides* of Chios linked a Delian Hymn to Apollo to a Delphian one by a connecting part, which depicts the Ionic *panegyris* and the Delian festival, consisting of pugilism, dance and song (146-164), and mentions in a peculiar *sphragis* the Chian poet, but praises also the ancestor of the guild of *Homerides*, blind Homer (165-178).

The highlight of the Delian festival are the songs of the chorus of the Delian maidens (156-164), who praise first in a *prooimion* the local gods, Apollo, Leto and Artemis. After that, they perform mythological tales by impersonating men and women of past times in a dramatic hymn to the greatest delight of the listeners:<sup>22</sup>

"Besides, there is a great miracle of eternal fame, the Delian girls, servants of the far shooting god, who start with the praise of Apollon and after that sing about Leto and Artemis. After that they sing a hymn about men and women of old, thus pleasing the many listeners. They are able to imitate the voices and βαμβαλιαστύς<sup>23</sup> of these persons so perfectly, that each of them would believe that he himself was singing - so excellently was the song of the Delian maidens fitted together".

The peculiar meaning of μιμεῖσθαι in the *Homeric Hymn* is prepared in the *Iliad*

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21 W. Burkert, 'Kynaithos, Polycrates and the Homeric Hymn to Apollo', in: *Arkturos. Hellenic Studies presented to Bernard M.W. Knox on the occasion of his 65<sup>th</sup> birthday*, ed. G.W. Bowersock, W. Burkert, M.C.J. Putnam, Berlin-New-York 1979, 52-62, esp. 59-62.

22 *Homeric Hymnus to Apollo* 156-164: πρὸς δὲ τόδε μέγα θαῦμα, ὄου κλέος οὔποτ' ὀλεῖται / κοῦραι Δηλιάδες ἑκατηβελέταο θεράπναι· / αἶ τ' ἐπεὶ ἄρ πρῶτον μὲν Ἐπόλλων' ὑμνήσωσι, / αὐτίς δ' αὖ Λητώ τε καὶ Ἄρτεμιν ἰοχέαιραν / μνησάμεναι ἀνδρῶν τε παλαιῶν ἠδὲ γυναικῶν / ὕμνον ἀείδουσιν, θέλγουσι δὲ φύλ' ἀνθρώπων. / πάντων δ' ἀνθρώπων φωνὰς καὶ βαμβαλιαστὺν / μιμεῖσθ' ἴσασιν· φαίη δὲ κεν αὐτὸς ἕκαστος / φθέγγεσθ'· οὕτω σφιν καλὴ συνάρηρεν ἀοιδή.

23 v.l. κρεμβαλιαστὺν. Both words are *hapax legomena*, depicting the sound of the speech. See Eva Tichy, *Onomatopoeitische Verbalbildungen des Griechischen*, Wien 1983, 217-220.

and in the *Odyssey*.<sup>24</sup> Nevertheless, in explaining the miracle of the Delian maiden's chorus by reference to μιμεῖσθαι, imitation of speech and song, the poet uses the word for the first time as a catchword of poetics. The relevant quotations of μιμεῖσθαι between the *Homeric Hymnus* and Plato teach us nothing more.<sup>25</sup>

Plato uses μίμησις for the first time in the *Cratylus*, in order to explain the relation between word (ὄνομα) and matter (πρᾶγμα), employing music and painting as apposite analogies (*Cratylus* 423 A - 424 A). But while painting imitates shape (σχῆμα) and colour, and music the object's sound or voice, the art of name-giving (ὀνομαστική) imitates with the word, and its components imitate the essence (οὐσία) of the matter. It is interesting that Plato here ridicules extravagances of musicians, excluding vocal imitations of the noises of sheep and cocks and other animals from the category of words or names,<sup>26</sup> a polemic which reappears in other forms in *Republic* III 395 B, 397 A and *Laws* II 669 CD. Taking all this together, it is evident that in the *Cratylus* μίμησις denotes nothing but an image (εἶδωλον) of the matter.

In *Republic* III, the meaning of μίμησις has been somehow narrowed. Socrates, in order to classify the different genres of poetry, splits it up first into two classes: poetry which is simply narrated (ἄπλη διήγησις) and poetry which consists of the speeches of the persons who are acting (μίμησις). Of course, both classes may appear together.<sup>27</sup> As Glaucon does not understand, Socrates analyzes the beginning of the *Iliad* (A 8-42), separating the narrated parts (8-16, 22-25, 33-36) from the speeches of the priest Chryses (17-21, 37-42) and Agamemnon (26-32). Thus he obtains a new definition of μίμησις: "Thus, assimilating oneself to another with regard to the voice or the shape is impersonating (μιμεῖσθαι) the person to whom you assimilate yourself".<sup>28</sup> Moreover, Socrates presents a version of *Iliad* A 8-42 in prose without μίμησις in order to give Glaucon an example of ἄπλη διήγησις, the opposite of which is tragedy and comedy

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24 See Tichy (1983) 218: Y 81, δ 277.

25 Aeschylus *Isthmianstai* F 78 a 7; Pindar *Pyth.* 12, 21; *Parth.* 2, 15; Aristophanes *Thesmophoriazusai* 156; Xenophon *Mem.* III 10.- See Göran Sörbom, *Mimesis and Art. Studies in the Origin and Early Development of an aesthetic vocabulary*, Diss. Uppsala, Stockholm 1966; S. Halliwell, 'Aristotelian Mimesis Reevaluated', *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 28 (1990) 487-510.

26 *Cratylus* 423 C: Τοὺς τὰ πρόβατα μιμουμένους τούτους καὶ τοὺς ἀλεκτρούνας καὶ τὰ ἄλλα ζῷα.

27 *Rep.* III 392 D: ἼΑρ' οὐκ οὐχὶ ἤτοι ἄπλη διηγήσει ἢ διὰ μιμήσεως γιγνομένη ἢ δι' ἀμφοτέρων περαίνουσι (sc. οἱ ποιηταί).

28 *Rep.* 393 C: Οὐκοῦν τό γε ὁμοιοῦν ἑαυτὸν ἄλλω ἢ κατὰ φωνὴν ἢ κατὰ σχῆμα μιμεῖσθαι ἔστιν ἐκεῖνον ὃ ἄν τις ὁμοιοῖ;

(*Rep.* III 393 D - 394 B). Eventually, Socrates is able to classify poetry according to its use of μίμησις:

"One part of poetry and mythology is based wholly on μίμησις, as you say, namely tragedy and comedy, the other is based wholly on the report of the poet himself, which you find mostly in the dithyramb, the third is based on both ways, which you find in the epic poetry and elsewhere".<sup>29</sup> This is the first testimony for a system of poetry which was extremely wide-spread in antiquity.<sup>30</sup> The grammarian Diomedes (4th century A.D.), in an excursus *De poematibus* to his grammar, gives a Latin version of this theory, using Greek sources, as he declares: "*poematos genera sunt tria. aut enim activum est vel imitativum, quod Graeci δραματικὸν vel μιμητικόν, aut enarrativum vel enuntiativum, quod Graeci ἐξηγητικόν vel ἀπαγγελτικόν dicunt, aut commune vel mixtum, quod Graeci κοινόν vel μικτόν appellant*". His Greek source appears in the Platonic-Aristotelian terminology: δραματικὸν vel μιμητικόν, ἐξηγητικόν vel ἀπαγγελτικόν, κοινόν vel μικτόν (GrLat I 481 Keil).

Plato did not invent this classification of poetry, as his interest in μίμησις was quite different. Rather he used sophistic poetology like Gorgias' *Helen* for his own purpose. As the mimetic genres, tragedy and comedy, but epic poetry too, involve the μίμησις of unwelcome behaviour by men and women, they are excluded from the education of the guardians of the state (*Rep.* III 398 AB). The same moralistic rigorism is extended to music. As melody consists of words, harmony and rhythm (*Rep.* III 398 D: λόγος, ἄρμονία and ῥυθμός), the musical elements have to endure the same restrictions as the words (*Rep.* III 398 A - 400 D). Therefore plaintive harmonies like the Mixolydian and the Syntonolydian, as well as slack and intoxicating harmonies like the lastian and the Low Lydian are eliminated. There remain only the Dorian and the Phrygian harmony, which are suitable for imitating the voice and intonation of a brave man in war and peace.<sup>31</sup> Thus there is no need for instruments with a wide compass and the capacity for many harmonies like harps, lutes and modulating auloi. All that is left

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<sup>29</sup> *Rep.* III 394 BC: Τῆς ποιήσεως καὶ μυθολογίας ἡ μὲν διὰ μιμήσεως ὅλη ἐστίν, ὡς περ σὺ λέγεις, τραγωδία τε καὶ κωμῶδια, ἡ δὲ δι' ἀπαγγελίας αὐτοῦ τοῦ ποιητοῦ - εὐροίς δ' ἂν αὐτὴν μάλιστα που ἐν διθυράμβοις - ἡ δ' αὖ δι' ἀμφοτέρων ἐν τε τῇ τῶν ἐπῶν ποιήσει, πολλαχοῦ δὲ καὶ ἄλλοθι.

<sup>30</sup> See J. Kayser, *De veterum arte poetica*, Diss. Leipzig 1906.

<sup>31</sup> *Rep.* III 399 AB: κατάλειπε ἐκείνην τὴν ἄρμονίαν, ἣ ἐν τε πολεμικῇ πράξει ὄντος ἀνδρείου ... πρεπόντως ἂν μιμήσαιτο φθόγγους τε καὶ προσωδίας ... καὶ ἄλλην αὖ ἐν εἰρηνικῇ ... πράξει ὄντος.

are the lyre and cithara with seven strings and the syrinx (*Rep.* III 399 C-E). Eventually the search is extended to rhythms which belong to a ordered and brave life. But because of the lack of competence of the interlocutors this question is delegated to the rhythmician Damon (*Rep.* III 399 D - 400 C).

Having developed his theory of ideas in Books 4 to 9, Plato returns to the subject of poetry and music in the tenth book of the *Republic*. Because of their mimetic character epic poetry, tragedy and comedy are excluded altogether from the educational program of the new state (*Rep.* X 595), so that only hymns to the gods and eulogies on virtuous men remain (*Rep.* X 607 A). But the theory of ideas forces Socrates to find a wider definition of μίμησις, which includes every kind of art. Using as starting-point an artefact like a table, the maker of which produced it with regard to the idea of the table, Socrates denounces a painted table as an image of an image, which does not represent the real being of the idea of the table (*Rep.* X 596/7). This conception is expressly transferred to all kinds of poetry. Thus μίμησις is understood as image of virtue and the other subjects of poetry, which has nothing to do with truth.<sup>32</sup> This leads to a definition of μίμησις in poetry, which comes very close to the conception of Aristotle in his *Poetics*, as we shall see: "The art of poetic imitation imitates men acting under constraint or of their own free will, who think that they are happy or unhappy because of their acting, and consequently are melancholy or cheerful".<sup>33</sup> Once this concept of μίμησις and its inherent dangers have been exemplified with examples from tragedy, comedy is eventually included too (*Rep.* X 606 CD).

In the *Laws* the subtle classification of mimetic poetry, namely tragedy and comedy, and non-mimetic poetry like the hymns and the dithyramb, which we have found in the third book of the *Republic* (392 C - 397 B), is completely forgotten. Instead of this, Plato adopts (at *Laws* 2, 668 B-C) the wider conception of μίμησις found in the tenth book of the *Republic* (*Rep.* 10, 596 D-E), which covers all kinds of arts with the simile of the mirror. Thus, the Athenian is able to treat all kinds of μουσική, namely poetry in all its branches, music and dance, as μίμησις, an opinion which, as he points

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<sup>32</sup> *Rep.* X 600 E: Οὐκοῦν τιθῶμεν ἀπὸ Ὁμήρου ἀρξαμένους πάντας τοὺς ποιητικοὺς μιμητὰς εἰδώλων ἀρετῆς εἶναι καὶ τῶν ἄλλων περὶ ὧν ποιοῦσιν, τῆς δὲ ἀληθείας οὐχ ἄπτεσθαι. See also *Rep.* X 605 A.

<sup>33</sup> *Rep.* X 603 C: πράπτοντας, φαμέν, ἀνθρώπους μιμεῖται ἢ μιμητικὴ βιαίους ἢ ἐκουσίας πράξεις, καὶ ἐκ τοῦ πράπτειν ἢ εὖ οἰομένους ἢ κακῶς πεπραγέναι, καὶ ἐν τούτοις δὴ πᾶσιν ἢ λυπουμένους ἢ χαίροντας.

out, is shared by all poets, listeners and actors.<sup>34</sup> In the third book of the *Republic* the fact of μίμησις itself was attacked by Socrates. But in Book 2 (668-670) of the *Laws* the problem is not μίμησις itself, but its application to improper objects, as Andrew Barker has demonstrated. This conception is resumed in the seventh book together with the educational program, as we shall see.

#### 4. Aristotle on μίμησις in the *Poetics*.

Aristotle, born in 384 B.C. in Stageira, moved to Athens in 367 B.C., where he remained Plato's pupil and member of the Academy until Plato's death (348/7 B.C.); Plato was succeeded by his nephew Speusippus (347-339). In this period Aristotle could study Plato's *Republic* and witness Plato's work on the *Timaeus* and the *Laws*. Besides, he had the opportunity to attend in the Dionysus Theatre restaged tragedies of the fifth century and the first nights of new pieces of Middle Comedy. From 347 Aristotle was in Assos, Mytilene and Pella, from where he returned to Athens in 335/34, where he founded his own school, the Peripatos.

Aristotle's keen interest and thorough knowledge of the Athenian theatre is attested by many quotations of tragedies, comedies, performances and actors in the third book of his *Rhetoric* and in the *Poetics*. As he cannot have had the relevant experiences during his exile from 347 to 335, Walter Burkert<sup>35</sup> demonstrated that the third book of the *Rhetoric* and the *Poetics*, which are linked by cross-references, belong to the first period of Aristotle in Athens, the time of learning, arguing and dispute with Plato and Plato's works, between the years 367 and 347. Thus, we shall try to understand the mimesis-theory of Aristotle against the background of Plato's *Republic* and *Laws*.

Aristotle begins his *Poetics* with the wide conception of μίμησις which we have met in Plato's *Republic X* and the *Laws*. All kinds of poetry, together with dance and dramatic prose like the Socratic dialogues, are imitations. Their means are λόγος, ἄρμονία and ῥυθμός (voice, harmony and rhythm), the use of which results in a first

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34 *Laws* II 668 BC: Καὶ μὴν τοῦτό γε πᾶς ἂν ὁμολογοῖ περὶ τῆς μουσικῆς, ὅτι πάντα τὰ περὶ αὐτὴν ἔστιν ποιήματα μίμησις τε καὶ ἀπεικασία· καὶ τοῦτό γε μῶν οὐκ ἂν συμπάντες ὁμολογοῖεν ποιηταὶ τε καὶ ἄκροαταὶ καὶ ὑποκριταί.- See too *Laws* II 668 A.

35 See above p. 4 n. 15.

classification according to the means of imitation (ἐν οἷς), the elements of which are Platonic<sup>36</sup>:

The dance uses only the rhythm, dramatic prose only the voice; solo playing on the auloi, the cithara and the syrinx uses *harmonia* and rhythm; epic poetry the voice and the rhythm; the dithyramb, the citharodic and aulodic nomos and the melic parts of tragedy (with satyr-play) and comedy use voice, harmony and rhythm throughout; while the spoken parts of stage poetry use only voice and rhythm.

The second classification applies to the object (ἄ) of μίμησις, which is in all cases men in action.<sup>37</sup> Here we meet again the Platonic πράττοντες ἄνθρωποι,<sup>38</sup> who are classified as good (σπουδαῖοι) or bad (φαῦλοι), moreover as tragic heroes of superhuman virtue (βελτίονας ἢ καθ' ἡμᾶς), or comic heroes of worse behaviour (ἢ χείρονας) or men like you and me (ἢ καὶ τοιούτους). Thus, Aristotle can distinguish tragedy and comedy better and gains new compartments for new genres like the parody of epic poetry or the middle class comedy of the fourth century B.C. (*Poetics* 48 A). While Plato abhorred the μίμησις of bad characters,<sup>39</sup> Aristotle is in this respect morally indifferent, as for him the aim of poetry is not education, but the specific aesthetic pleasure (ἡδονή) of epic poetry, tragedy and comedy, which is produced by μίμησις. The pleasure of tragedy is produced by compassion and fear, the pleasure of comedy might have been the laughter, and the pleasure of epic poetry is the supernatural.<sup>40</sup>

The third classification concerns the form (ὡς) of the μίμησις. Here we meet again (*Poetics* 48 A 19-23) the Platonic classification of *Rep.* III 393 D - 394 B:<sup>41</sup> the epic poetry which uses the report of the poet together with impersonation of acting persons (ὅτε μὲν ἀπαγγέλλοντα, ἢ ἕτερόν τι γινόμενον ὥσπερ Ὅμηρος ποιεῖ), the dithyramb where the poet speaks alone, and stage poetry which uses only impersonation. But while Plato uses here, in Book 3 of the *Republic*, the concept of

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36 See above p. 7 f.

37 *Poetics* 48 A 1: Ἐπεὶ δὲ μιμοῦνται οἱ μιμούμενοι πράττοντας.

38 See above p. 9 n. 33.

39 See above p. 10.

40 Tragedy: ἐπεὶ δὲ τὴν ἀπὸ ἐλέου καὶ φόβου διὰ μιμήσεως δεῖ ἡδονὴν παρασκευάζειν τὸν ποιητὴν: *Poetics* 53 B 11-13; Tragedy and comedy: ἔστιν δὲ οὐχ αὕτη ἀπὸ τραγωδίας ἡδονὴ ἀλλὰ μᾶλλον τῆς κωμωδίας οἰκεία: *Poetics* 53 A 35/36; Tragedy and epic poetry: τὸ δὲ θαυμαστὸν ἡδύ: *Poetics* 60 A 17; δεῖ γὰρ οὐ τὴν τυχοῦσαν ἡδονὴν ποιεῖν αὐτάς ἀλλὰ τὴν εἰρημένην: *Poetics* 62 B 13/14.

41 See above p. 7 f.

μίμησις only for impersonation, Aristotle considers all three forms of poetry indiscriminately as μίμησις.

Taking all this evidence together, we see that Aristotle, while borrowing all relevant elements from Plato's *Republic* and *Laws*, has written with his *Poetics* a treatise which stands Plato's criticism of poetry on its head. While Plato, in the *Ion* (see above p. 4 f.), denied that poets and their mediators followed an art (τέχνη), but instead were driven by inspiration (ἐνθουσιασμός), a divine madness (θεία μανία), Aristotle classifies the different branches of poetry and music as arts (τέχναι), which produce illusion (μίμησις) by rhythm, word and harmonia.<sup>42</sup> As the aim of the art of poetry is illusion, its standards of accuracy are different: it is not the true and the false, but the probable and the improbable (πιθανόν, ἀπίθανον) that are relevant.<sup>43</sup> This was first seen by Homer, the teacher of illusion,<sup>44</sup> who was indebted for his extraordinary faculties to the art (τέχνη) or to his talent (φύσις).<sup>45</sup> The divine madness as source of poetry is not altogether forgotten, but marginalized: poetry is the faculty of a well gifted person, who is able to learn an art, or the manic, who produces while in a state of ecstasy.<sup>46</sup>

Of course, the old idea of poetic imitation had to be re-evaluated in this context. Far from suspecting moral dangers in μίμησις as Plato did, Aristotle considers it an innate inclination of human beings from childhood onwards,<sup>47</sup> who in contrast to the animals are most prone to imitation and who learn by imitation in their early years (*Poetics* 48 B 6-8) and enjoy every kind of imitation.<sup>48</sup> Therefore Aristotle considers pleasure (ἡδονή) and imitation (μίμησις) the two natural causes of poetry.<sup>49</sup> This is incompatible with Plato's view in the *Laws*, since he considers the lawgiver to be the best poet, the imitation of a virtuous life to be the best tragedy, and philosophy to be the

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42 *Poetics* 47 A 21: οὕτω κἀν ταῖς εἰρημέναις τέχναις ἅπασαι μὲν ποιοῦνται τὴν μίμησιν ἐν ῥυθμῷ καὶ λόγῳ καὶ ἁρμονίᾳ.

43 *Poetics* 60 B 13-15: οὐχ ἡ αὐτὴ ὀρθότης ἐστὶν τῆς πολιτικῆς καὶ τῆς ποιητικῆς οὐδὲ ἄλλης τέχνης καὶ ποιητικῆς.

44 *Poetics* 60 A 18/19: δεδιδαχεν δὲ μάλιστα Ὅμηρος καὶ τοὺς ἄλλους ψευδῆ λέγειν ὡς δεῖ.

45 *Poetics* 51 A 22-24: ὁ δ' Ὅμηρος ὥσπερ καὶ τὰ ἄλλα διαφέρει καὶ τοῦτ' ἔοικεν καλῶς ἰδεῖν, ἦτοι διὰ τέχνην ἢ διὰ φύσιν.

46 *Poetics* 55 A 32 f.: διὸ εὐφροῦς ἢ ποιητικὴ ἐστὶν ἢ μανικοῦ· τούτων γὰρ οἱ μὲν εὐπλαστοὶ οἱ δὲ ἐκστατικοὶ εἰσίν.

47 *Poetics* 48 B 5/6: τό τε γὰρ μιμεῖσθαι σύμφυτον τοῖς ἀνθρώποις ἐκ παίδων ἐστί.

48 *Poetics* 48 B 8/9: καὶ τὸ χαίρειν τοῖς μιμήμασι πάντας.

49 *Poetics* 48 B 4-19, esp. 4/5: Ἐοίκασι δὲ γεννηῖσαι μὲν ὅλως τὴν ποιητικὴν αἰτία δύο τινές καὶ αὐτὰ φυσικαί.

true incontestable poetry.

### 5. Prooimion and Nomos in Music and Legislation.

An ancient story about the divine possession of the poets, told by Plato in Book 4 of the *Laws* (4, 719 C), has led us astray to a long digression concerning central conceptions of music and poetry, beginning with Plato's *Ion* and culminating in Aristotle's *Poetics*. Some pages later, Plato eventually approaches his subject, the legislation, qualifying everything that has been said before as mere preliminaries. At the same time, he calls to the reader's mind the literary setting of his dialogue, which unfolds during a long walk from Cnossus to the cave of Zeus on Mount Ida:

"It was little more than dawn when we began talking about laws, and now it is high noon, and here we are in this entrancing resting-place; all the time we have been talking of nothing but laws, yet it is only recently that we have begun, as it seems, to utter laws, and what went before was all simply preludes to laws (προοίμια νόμων)".<sup>50</sup>

Having established this, Plato wants to go a step farther: Not only are Books 1-3 a prooimion to Books 4-12, but every single law must have an individual prooimion, which persuades people to obey willingly. This combination of *Prooimion* and *Nomos* is explained by analogies from music and rhetoric, which conversely tell something about Plato's understanding of the musical *Nomos*:

"What is my object in saying this? It is to explain that all utterances and vocal expressions have preludes (προοίμια) and tunings-up (ἀνακινήσεις), as one might call them, which provide a kind of artistic preparation (ἔντεχνον ἐπιχείρησιν) which assists towards the further development of the subject. Indeed, we have examples before us of preludes, admirably elaborated, in those prefixed to that class of lyric ode called the *Nomos*, and to musical compositions of every description. But for the *Nomoi* (i.e. laws) which are real *Nomoi* - and which we designate "political" - no one has ever uttered a prelude".<sup>51</sup>

The last sentence must be understood as a cross-reference. Indeed, Andrew Barker has already treated a section on music which describes the distribution of music into different genres in the good old times (*Laws* 3, 700 f.). Choral lyric comprised

<sup>50</sup> Plato *Laws* 4, 722 CD, Translation Bury.

<sup>51</sup> Plato, *Laws* 4, 723 D; Translation Bury.

*Hymns to the Gods*, *Threnoi* (dirges) for the dead, *Paeanes* for Apollo and *Dithyrambs* for Dionysus. Monodic lyric was represented only by the *Nomos Kitharodikos*, while the *Nomos Aulodikos* appears later in Plato's description of the lawlessness of music (παρανομία εἰς τὴν μουσικὴν). But in the good old times, the system of genres, especially the different *Nomoi*, had the character of law. Thus, Plato is able to use in Book 4 the notion of musical *Nomos*, as an analogy for the *Nomos* in legal sense, which should have a prelude (προοίμιον) as the *Nomoi* in musical sense always had, at least according to Plato. The function of the prelude to the law which Plato recommends is described by categories of contemporary rhetoric: "The part which preceded this (the law itself), and which was uttered as persuasive thereof, while it actually is "persuasion" (πειστικόν), yet serves also the same purpose (δύναμις) as the prelude to an oration".<sup>52</sup>

Nevertheless, it remains uncertain which musical reality Plato has in mind, when he refers to the προοίμια which were as a rule attached to the *Nomoi Kitharodikoι* and the other genres of vocal music. The *Nomos Kitharodikos* which is attributed to Terpander<sup>53</sup> had with ἀρχά - μεταρχά a twofold προοίμιον. Another *Nomos Kitharodikos*, which is attested for Terpander also, the Νόμος Τετρασίδιος, had four melodically different sections.<sup>54</sup> The Νόμος τριμερής, an aulodic *Nomos* with three sections, is attested by an inscription for Clonas.<sup>55</sup> The famous *Nomos Pythikos* of Sacadas, an auletic *Nomos*, had according to Pollux five parts, beginning with the πεῖρα (investigation of the battlefield),<sup>56</sup> while Strabo places a special prelude (ἀνάκρουσις) before the "investigation".<sup>57</sup> Another auletic *Nomos*, the *Nomos of Athena* of Olympus, began with the ἀνάπειρα, followed by the central part, the so called ἁρμονία, and

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52 Plato, *Laws* 4, 723 A; Translation Bury.

53 Pollux 4, 66: μέρη δὲ τοῦ κιθαρωδικοῦ νόμου, Τερπάνδρου παρανείμαντος, ἐπτά: ἀρχά, μεταρχά, κατατροπά, μετακατατροπά, ὄμφαλος, σφραγίς, ἐπίλογος.

54 Pseudo-Plutarch, *De Musica* 4, 32 D.

55 Pseudo-Plutarch, *De Musica* 4, 33 B: τριμερής Xylander, τριμελής codd; 8, 34 B: ἐν δὲ τῇ ἐν Σικυῶνι ἀναγραφῇ τῇ περὶ τῶν ποιητῶν (FrGH 550 F 2) Κλονᾶς εὐρετῆς ἀναέγραπται τοῦ Τριμεροῦς νόμου.- The preceding ascription of the *Nomos Trimeres* to the aulos-player Sacadas (*De Musica* 4, 33 AB) is spurious, as it makes Sacadas lead a chorus (διδάξαι ἄδειν τὸν χορόν).

56 Pollux 4, 78; 4, 84: Πείρα - Κατακελευσμός - Ἰαμβικόν - Σπονδεῖον - Καταχόρευσις.

57 Strabo 9,3,10: Πέντε δ' αὐτοῦ μέρη ἐστίν, ἀνάκρουσις, ἄμπειρα, κατακελευσμός, ἴαμβοι καὶ δάκτυλοι, σύριγγες.

perhaps an epilogue.<sup>58</sup> Andrew Barker in two papers<sup>59</sup> collected all the relevant material concerning the "Prooimion" and the kindred notion "Anabolé".

## 6. Mimetic and Non-Mimetic Contests in the Laws.

Book 6 of the *Laws* comprises regulations concerning the institution of authorities and officials, among them the officials for gymnastic and musical education and competitions (*Laws* 6, 764 - 766). The musical competitions are split up into competitions for choral lyric and dance for children, young men and maidens on the one hand, and monodic genres on the other hand, which are imitative:

"In the case of music it will be proper to have separate umpires for solo singers and for mimetic performances (περὶ μονωδίαν τε καὶ μιμητικῆν) - I mean, for instance, one set for rhapsodists, citharodes, aulos-players (ῥαψωδῶν, κιθαρωδῶν καὶ αὐλητῶν) and all such musicians, and another set for choral performers (περὶ χορωδίαν). We ought to choose first the officials for the playful exercise of choirs of children and lads and girls (χορῶν παίδων τε καὶ ἀρρένων καὶ θηλειῶν κορῶν) in dances and all other regular methods of music; and for these one officer suffices, and he must be not under forty years of age. And for solo performances (περὶ μονωδίαν) one umpire, of not less than thirty years, is sufficient to act as introducer (εἰσαγωγεὺς) and to pass an adequate judgement upon the competitors".<sup>60</sup>

Plato's sketch of musical contests in choral lyrics has nothing peculiar about it. Dithyrambic choruses (κύκλιοι χοροί) of children and of men competing at the Great Dionysia were familiar to every Athenian since the time of Cleisthenes. The maidens choruses (παρθένεια) begin in a Doric environment with Alcman. It is puzzling however, that Plato, in spite of his severe restrictions against mimetic music (*Laws* book 2, 669 B - 670 B), now admits rhapsodists, citharodes and aulos-players. The contest of rhapsodists was the first branch of the Panathenaic competitions.<sup>61</sup> A lively picture of the mimetic character of the rhapsody in the 4<sup>th</sup> century B.C. is delivered by Plato himself in

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58 Pseudo-Plutarch, *De Musica* 33, 43 BC: οἶον Ὀλύμπω τὸ ἑναρμόνιον γένος ἐπὶ Φρυγίου τόνου τεθὲν παίωνι ἐπιβατῶν μιχθέν· τοῦτο γὰρ τῆς ἀρχῆς τὸ ἦθος ἐγέννησεν ἐπὶ τῷ τῆς Ἀθηναῖς νόμῳ ... ἡ γὰρ καλουμένη ἀρμονία ἐν τῷ τῆς Ἀθηναῖς νόμῳ πολὺν διέστηκε κατὰ τὸ ἦθος τῆς ἀναπείρας.

59 A. Barker, 'Greek Musical Introductions 1: The Prooimion; 2: The Anabolé, Cremona 2008, manuscript.

60 Plato *Laws* 6, 764 E - 765 A; Translation Bury.

61 L. Ziehen, Panathenaia, in: *RE* 18,3 (1949) 480-483.

the *Ion* (see above p. 4 f.). For the mimetic power of the citharodic Nomos we may cite the *Persians* of Timotheus of Miletus, a contemporary of Plato. The *Persians* might have been victorious at the Panathenaia.<sup>62</sup> It is doubtful which role Plato assigns to the aulos players in his fictive competition. At least, solo song accompanied by the auloi (αὐλωδία) must be understood as admissible. But auletic *Nomoi* like the *Nomos Pythikos* of Sacadas, which try to mimic the last hissings of the Delphic monster Python, and the imitation of these effects on the cithara<sup>63</sup> seem to be excluded from Plato's competition, taking into consideration Plato's verdict on solo instrumental music in *Laws* 2, 669 B - 700 B, which has been examined more closely by Andrew Barker. Taking all the evidence together, it seems that Plato in the *Laws* on the one hand admits developments of poetry and music which he cannot prevent, while he on the other hand tries to curb the unwelcome by administrative measures.

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<sup>62</sup> *The Fragments of Timotheus of Miletus*, ed. with an intr. and comm. by J.H. Hordern, Oxford 2002, 17.

<sup>63</sup> West, 1992, 212-215.