

Sixth seminar: Music in *Laws* Books 7-12.

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1. Leading ideas of *Laws* book 7.

Book 7 of the *Laws*, which is connected by many cross-references and repetitions with Books 2-3 and 8-12, gives a synopsis of education, which had already been treated in Books 2 and 3. Eliminating gymnastics and dance and limiting our interest to the main subject of Book 7, namely music and poetry, we can identify Plato's leading ideas. One of them is the refusal of every change in inherited customs and values, which results in shocking censorship of poetry and music. Another recurring theme of Plato's thinking is his fear of the dangers which are inherent in μίμησις of unworthy objects by the citizens of his *politeia*. Thus, he is inclined to abandon unwelcome genres to foreigners or slaves, as for example the dirges for the dead to hired Carian mourners (*Laws* 7, 800 E). Finally, Plato's musical *curriculum* in the *Laws*, which is destined for all citizens, is quite restricted, compared with the *curriculum* of the *Republic*, which is destined only for the guardians of Plato's ideal state. Thus, the most demanding subjects of learning are reserved for the members of the nocturnal council, which is established in Book 12.

2. Preliminaries.

Plato begins Book 7 of the *Laws* with an essay on the education of the unborn, and of children until the third year of their life. Thus it is advisable for pregnant women to undertake long walks, which may benefit the unborn child by the movement (7, 789 E). Moreover, the pregnant women should not indulge in intense pleasures or pains, but cultivate a bright and calm demeanour, in order to keep the child free from pleasure and fear (7, 792 E). The same holds good for the new born children, who are calmed down from excitements by a homoeopathic cure through motion and song:

"When mothers have children suffering from sleeplessness, and want to lull them to rest, the treatment they apply is to give them, not quiet, but motion, for they rock them constantly in their arms; and instead of silence, they use a kind of crooning noise; and thus they literally cast a spell (καταυλοῦσι) upon the children (like the victims of Bacchic

frenzy) by employing the combined movements of dance and song as a remedy".¹

As soon as the children, after their third year, have learned to speak, they need some training by games under strict supervision (*Laws* 7, 793/4). After the sixth year of their life girls and boys are separately trained in gymnastics, the use of weapons and dance (*Laws* 7, 794-6). After that, by an unmistakable cross-reference to *Laws* 673 B, Plato returns to the topic of musical education, which he had already treated in Book 2 of the *Laws*:

"The subject which comes next to this (i.e. gymnastics), and deals with the gifts of Apollo and the Muses, is one which was previously thought we had done with, and that the only subject left was gymnastics; but I plainly see now, not only what still remains to be said to everybody, but also that it ought to come first. Let us, then, state these points in order".²

3. Leading principles of education.

As Plato attempts in Book 7 a fresh start with the subject of musical education, he is compelled to return to leading principles which he had formulated before. The first of them is his far-reaching fear of changes in the moral principles which maintain the state. Plato develops this notion in chapter 7, warning against every innovation in children's games and education:

"ATH.: The man they hold in special honour is he who is always innovating or introducing some novel device in the matter of form or colour or something of the sort; whereas it would be perfectly true to say that a State can have no worse pest than a man of that description, since he privily alters the characters of the young, and causes them to contemn what is old and esteem what is new. And I repeat again that there is no greater mischief a State can suffer than such a *dictum* and doctrine: just listen while I tell you how great an evil it is. CLIN.: Do You mean the way people rail at antiquity in States?. ATH.: Precisely".³

1 Plato, *Laws* 7, 790 DE; Translation Bury.

2 Plato, *Laws* 7, 796 E; Translation Bury.

3 Plato, *Laws* 7, 797 C: ΑΘ.: τόν τι νέον ἀεὶ καινοτομοῦντα καὶ εἰσφέροντα τῶν εἰλωθότων ἕτερον κατὰ τε σχήματα καὶ χρώματα καὶ πάντα ὅσα τοιαῦτα, τοῦτον τιμᾶσθαι διαφερόντως, τούτου πόλει λώβην οὐκ εἶναι μείζω φαῖμεν ἂν ὀρθότατα λέγοντες· λανθάνειν γὰρ τῶν νέων τὰ ἤθη μεθιστάντα καὶ ποιεῖν τὸ μὲν ἀρχαῖον παρ' αὐτοῖς ἄτιμον, τὸ δὲ νέον ἔντιμον. τούτου δὲ πάλιν αὖ λέγω τοῦ τε ῥήματος καὶ τοῦ δόγματος οὐκ εἶναι ζημίαν μείζω πάσαις πόλεσιν. ἀκούσατε δὲ ὅσον φημι αὐτ' εἶναι κακόν. ΚΛ.: Ἡ τὸ

Again we have some kind of a cross-reference: πάλιν αὖ λέγω (*Laws* 7, 797 C) reminds the well known Damonian opinion about the dangers inherent in changes in the style of music: "To put it briefly, then, those in charge of the city must devote themselves to ensuring that ... no innovations shall be made in gymnastics and music beyond what is laid down, but that what is laid down shall be preserved as closely as possible. When someone says that 'People praise more highly the song that is most newly come to minstrels lips' (*Od.* 1, 351 f.), they should fear that people might easily suppose the poet (i.e. Homer) to mean not just new songs, but a new style of song, and that they would applaud the latter. Such a thing should not be applauded, nor should the poet be so understood. 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".⁴ Andrew Barker has already demonstrated how Plato in Book 3 of the *Laws*, in his picture of the Athenian θεατροκρατία gives the aforesaid Damonian opinion historical background. As we shall see, Damonian thought permeates Book 7 of the *Laws* also.

The second leading principle of Plato's thinking about art is the concept of μίμησις, which, as we have seen, has changed its meaning fundamentally during the work of Plato (see Seminar 5 above). In the *Laws* the notion of μίμησις eventually governs all branches of art, especially of music, as Plato reminds the reader:

"ATH.: Well then, do we still have confidence in what we said before, when we said that everything to do with rhythms and with music as a whole consists in imitations of the behaviour of better and worse men? Or what do we think? CLIN.: Our opinion has not changed, at any rate. ATH.: Do we say, then, that every possible technique should be used to prevent the children from wanting to try out other kinds of imitation in their dances and songs, and to prevent anyone from tempting them with all sorts of pleasure? CLIN.: You are quite right."⁵ Thus, the fear of every change in music

ψέγεσθαι τὴν ἀρχαιότητα λέγεις ἐν ταῖς πόλεσιν; ΑΘ.: Πάνυ μὲν οὖν.- Translation Bury.

⁴ Plato *Republic* 424 BC; Translation Barker.

⁵ Plato, *Laws* 7, 798 DE: ΑΘ.: Τί οὖν; τοῖς ἔμπροσθεν λόγοις πιστεύομεν, οἷς ἐλέγομεν ὡς τὰ περὶ τοῦ ρυθμοῦ καὶ πᾶσαν μουσικὴν ἐστὶν τρόπων μιμήματα βελτιόνων καὶ χειρόνων ἀνθρώπων; ἢ πῶς; ΚΛ.: Οὐδαμῶς ἄλλως πῶς τό γε παρ' ἡμῖν δόγμα ἔχον ἂν εἴη. ΑΘ.: Οὐκοῦν, φαμέν, ἅπασαν μηχανητέον μηχανὴν ὅπως ἂν ἡμῖν οἱ παῖδες μῆτε ἐπιθυμῶσιν ἄλλων μιμημάτων ἄπτεσθαι κατὰ ὀρχήσεις ἢ κατὰ μελωδίας, μῆτε τις αὐτοὺς πείσῃ προσάγων παντοίας ἡδονάς; ΚΛ.: Ὅρθότατα λέγεις.- Translation Barker.

according to Damon and the alleged dangers of μίμησις result in a fossilization of every art following an imaginary model of Old Egypt, which Plato had developed already in *Laws* Book 2, reporting with admiration that pictures or statues wrought 10 000 years before display the same beauty as the productions of Plato's own days.⁶ In Book 7 of the *Laws* the model of Old Egypt stimulates Plato to go back to the early beginnings of musical history in Greece, to the "Nomoi" of Terpander, imputing to them quality of laws and everlasting validity, as we shall see.

4. Musical Nomoi and political Nomoi.

Already in Book 3 Plato had commented on songs used in worship, namely *Prayers to the Gods* (ῥυμοί), *Dirges* (θρηνημοί), *Prayers to Apollo* (παιάνες) and *Prayers to Dionysus* (διθύραμβοί), and the solo songs to the accompaniment of the cithara, the *Nomoi*, classes which were mixed together by the modernists of Plato's own days.⁷ In Book 4 Plato commented on the *Prooimia* of these nomoi, as we have seen in the previous Seminar, recommending *Prooimia* also for his political *Nomoi*.⁸ In Book 7 of the *Laws* Plato, punning on the word νόμος, imputes to the musicians of old times (perhaps as a joke) his own concept of the lawful character of the musical *Nomoi* and, by extension, of every public hymn:

"ATH.: We are saying, then, that the strange fact should be accepted that our songs have become *nomoi* (i.d. laws) for us, just as in ancient times people gave this name, so it appears (οὕτω πως ὡς ἔοικεν ὠνόμασαν), to songs sung to the cithara. Hence they would probably not have disagreed with our present contention, which one of them perhaps dimly divined, as it were in a dream or a waked vision".⁹

Andrew Barker has demonstrated¹⁰ that the word νόμος with musical sense used by Pindar, Aeschylus, Sophocles and others means no more than "melody". The first

⁶ Plato *Laws* 2, 656.

⁷ Plato *Laws* 3, 700-701.

⁸ Plato *Laws* 4, 722/3.

⁹ Plato *Laws* 7, 799 E - 800 A: ΑΘ.: Δεδόχθω μὲν δὴ, φαμέν, τὸ ἄτοπον τοῦτο, νόμους τὰς ὠδὰς ἡμῖν γεγενῆσθαι, καὶ καθάπερ οἱ παλαιοὶ τότε περὶ κιθαρῳδίαν οὕτω πως, ὡς ἔοικεν, ὠνόμασαν - ὥστε τάχ' ἂν οὐδ' ἐκεῖνοι παντάπασί γ' ἂν ἀφεστῶτες εἶεν τοῦ νῦν λεγομένου, καθ' ὕπνον δὲ οἶον πού τις ἦ καὶ ὕπαρ ἐγρηγορῶς ὠνεῖρωξεν μαντευόμενος αὐτό.- Translation Barker.

¹⁰ A. Barker, *Greek Musical Writings vol. I: The Musician and his Art*, Cambridge 1984, 249-255, esp. n. 263.

testimony of this use is Alcman 93 Diehl, who declares, that he understands the "tunes" of all birds (οἴδα δ' ὀρνίχων νόμωζ πάντων). Thus, in the early 5th century the use of νόμος in musical sense is general and not technical. The notion of νόμος as a type of solo composition governed by strict rules of subject matter (e.g. the battle of Apollo and the dragon Python in Delphi) and structure (e.g. the seven parts of the *Nomos Kitharodikos*) was coined by musicologists of the late 5th century B.C., who wanted to classify many different solo-pieces, guided by hints of the poets themselves. This matches well with Plato, who really does not say at all that Terpander invented the term νόμος in its technical meaning in order to denominate his citharodic melodies. Rather Plato uses the term νόμος, a technical term of contemporary musicology, in order to subject all kinds of music in his educational system to the laws he is going to formulate:

"ATH.: At any rate, let that be our decree concerning this matter. And no one may make utterances or move in the dance in breach of the civic and sacred songs and the whole choric practice of the young, any more than he may break any other of the laws (i.e. *nomoi*). To the person who conforms no penalty is to attach, but as we said just now, the guardians of the laws and the priestesses and priests are to punish anyone who disobeys. Are we to regard these points as established, for the purposes of our discussion? CLIN.: Yes."¹¹ There follow special laws for hymns, the first of which demands auspicious sentiments (Εὐφημία), the second limits the contents to prayers to the gods, and the third obliges the poets to prayers for morally acceptable gifts. (*Laws* 7, 800 E - 801 B).

5. Supervising Authorities over Poetry, Music and Dance.

Stimulated by the existence of pieces for solo song, which obey rules of content and structure, denominated νόμοι, Plato had extended the lawful character of them to all kinds of poetry and music. Thus it became inevitable that the poets were subjected to strict censorship: "The poet shall compose nothing which goes beyond the limits of what the State holds to be legal and right, fair and good; nor shall he show his compositions to any private person until they have first been shown to the judges appointed to deal with these matters, and to the law-wardens, and have been approved by them".¹²

¹¹ Plato *Laws* 7, 800 AB; Translation Barker.

¹² Plato, *Laws* 7, 801 D; Translation Barker.

Moreover, Plato entrusts to these supervising authorities a second duty. As there are many old poems, songs and dances, there is installed a board of men over fifty years, which selects morally qualified pieces, which might be used in education, and abandons the unsuitable. But pieces which are somehow defective, have to be reworked by gifted poets: "They should get both poets and musicians to assist them, making use of their talents for composition, but not placing any reliance on their pleasures and desires, except in the case of a few of such people. Thus by working through fully the intentions of the lawgiver, they will put together in closest correspondence to the sense of these intentions dancing, singing and choric practices in general."¹³

In the next paragraph, Plato looks back to *Laws* Book 3, where he had designed an opposition between the music of good old times, which was regulated by laws (νόμοι), and contemporary music, which was governed by the search for aesthetic pleasure (ἡδονή): "But later, as time went on, there appeared as instigators of unmusical law-breaking composers who, though by nature skilled at composition, were ignorant of what is right and lawful (νόμιμον) in music ... thus unintentionally, through their stupidity, giving false witness against music, alleging that music possesses no standard of correctness, but is most correctly judged by the pleasure (ἡδονή) of the person who enjoys it, whether he is a better man or a worse".¹⁴

But now Plato attributes aesthetic pleasure (ἡδύ, ἡδονή) to all kinds of music, deprecating only the sweet and popular style of contemporary music (κοινή καὶ γλυκεία μουσική). Plato argues that the kind of music which gives people aesthetic pleasure depends on their early conditioning by education, an idea which finds an echo in an Aristoxenean story in the *De Musica* of Pseudo-Plutarch about a certain Telesias, an aulos-player of Thebes, who was educated in the Pindaric style of old lyric and was not able later to play successfully in the modern style of Timotheus and Philoxenus.¹⁵ Moreover, the shift in Plato's thinking from Book 3 to Book 7 reminds us of Aristotle, who maintains that aesthetic pleasure is the aim of all poetry, as we have seen in the previous seminar. In Book 7 of the *Laws* Plato maintains the same opinion:

¹³ Plato, *Laws* 7, 802 BC; Translation Barker.

¹⁴ Plato, *Laws* 3, 700 DE; Translation Barker.

¹⁵ Pseudo-Plutarch, *De Musica* 31, 42 BC = Aristoxenos 76 Wehrli.

"ATH.: All such activities alike give pleasure. For when someone passes his life from childhood up to the age of steadiness and sense among temperate and ordered music, then when he hears the opposite kind he detests it, and calls it unfit for free men (ἀνελεύθερον): but if he was brought up amid the sweet music that is generally popular, he says that the opposite kind to it is frigid and unpleasing (ψυχρὸν καὶ ἀηδῆ). Thus, as we said just now, neither is better than the other in respect of pleasantness (ἡδονῆς ἢ ἀηδίας): the difference lies in the fact that the one kind always makes those brought up in better, the other worse".¹⁶

As Plato's educational system deals with women also, he tries to find different styles for the two genders: "It will also be essential for the lawgiver to distinguish in outline what are suitable songs for men and women respectively, and he must match them appropriately to *harmoniai* and rhythms".¹⁷

This might have been the best place for a discussion of the inherent character of harmonies and rhythms, as in Book 3 of the *Republic*. But in the *Laws* there is no mention of Dorian, Phrygian, Lydian or other harmonies, or of dactylic, spondaic, iambic, trochaic or other rhythms. Where iambs are mentioned (*Laws* Book 11, 935 E), the literary genre is meant. This conscious avoidance of all technicalities in the *Laws* is the mark of the colloquialism of the literary dialogue. Thus, Plato is not willing to be more explicit about male and female poetry and music:

"Hence it is necessary to lay down at least the outlines of these by laws as well. We must assign to both kinds of song the *rhythmoi* and *harmoniai* that are essentially bound to them, and must clearly expound the character of those of the female type by reference to that in which the nature of each type is distinct. Thus it must be said that magnificence and that which tends towards manliness is of masculine type, while that which leans rather towards orderliness and moderation is to be treated as more of a female kind in both law and theory. That, then, is how this is to be organised."¹⁸

16 Plato, *Laws* 7, 802 CD: ΑΘ.: τὸ δ' ἡδὺ κοινὸν πάσαις. ἐν ἧ γὰρ ἂν ἐκ παιδῶν τις μέχρι τῆς ἐστηκυίας τε καὶ ἔμφρονος ἡλικίας διαβιῶ, σώφρονι μὲν μούσῃ καὶ τεταγμένη, ἀκούων δὲ τῆς ἐναντίας, μισεῖ καὶ ἀνελεύθερον αὐτὴν προσαγορεύει, τραφεῖς δὲ ἐν τῇ κοινῇ καὶ γλυκεῖα, ψυχρὰν καὶ ἀηδῆ τὴν ταύτη ἐναντίαν εἶναι φησιν· ὥστε, ὅπερ ἐρρήθη νυνδὴ, τό γε τῆς ἡδονῆς ἢ ἀηδίας περὶ ἐκατέρας οὐδὲν πεπλεονέκτηκεν, ἐκ περιποῦ δὲ ἢ μὲν βελτίους, ἢ δὲ χειροῦς τοὺς ἐν αὐτῇ τραφέντας ἐκάστοτε παρέχεται.- Translation Barker.

17 Plato, *Laws* 7, 802 D; Translation Barker

18 Plato, *Laws* 7, 803 E; Translation Barker

There follow some hints about school-buildings and hired teachers from abroad for gymnastics and music (*Laws* 7, 804). As Plato wants to assign the same duties to both sexes in war and peace, he has to introduce compulsory education for boys and girls, which is a novelty (*Laws* 7, 805-809). The *curriculum* comprises gymnastics, writing and reading (from the tenth to the thirteenth year), arithmetical calculation, elementary knowledge of the calendar year, dance, song and lyre playing (from the fourteenth to the sixteenth year). Having laid down the rules for the selection of suitable poetry and melodies for dance and song, Plato has now to find suitable texts for teaching in reading, which is difficult:

"With regard to lessons in reading, there are written compositions not set to music (ἄλυρα κείμενα), whether in metre or without rhythmical divisions - compositions (συγγράμματα) merely uttered in prose, void of rhythm and harmony; and some of the many composers of this sort have bequeathed to us writings of a dangerous character".¹⁹

This class of texts comprises epic poetry on the one hand, and prose texts on the other hand. Since the days of the Sophists such prose treatises, συγγράμματα about philosophy, rhetoric, politics, poetics etc. inundated the book market in Athens. As Plato had condemned the prose treatises περί τινοῦ severely in his *Phaedrus*,²⁰ he does not take them into consideration any more, attacking their authors only indirectly (σφαλερὰ γράμματα ... παρά τινων τῶν πολλῶν τοιούτων ἀνθρώπων καταλελειμμένα). There remains epic poetry, which was widely used in contemporary education:

"We have composers of verses innumerable - hexameters, trimeters, and every metre you could mention - some of them aim at the serious (ἐπὶ σπουδῆν), others at the comic (ἐπὶ γέλωτα); on whose writings, as we are told by our tens of thousands of people, we ought to rear and soak the young, if we are to give them a correct education, making them, by means of recitation, lengthy listeners and large learners, who learn off whole poets by heart".²¹

19 Plato, *Laws* 7, 810 B: ΑΘ.: πρὸς δὲ δὴ μαθήματα ἄλυρα ποιητῶν κείμενα ἐν γράμμασι, τοῖς μὲν μετὰ μέτρων, τοῖς δ' ἄνευ ῥυθμῶν τμημάτων, ἃ δὴ συγγράμματα κατὰ λόγον εἰρημένα μόνον, τητῶμενα ῥυθμοῦ τε καὶ ἀρμονίας, σφαλερὰ γράμματα ἡμῖν ἐστὶν παρά τινων τῶν πολλῶν τοιούτων ἀνθρώπων καταλελειμμένα.- Translation Bury.

20 Plato, *Phaedrus* 274 B - 278 E; see Th.A. Szlezák, *Platon lesen*, Stuttgart 1993, 56-66.

21 Plato, *Laws* 7, 810 E - 811 A; Translation Bury.

This is a nice picture of contemporary education, which is corroborated by many vase paintings.²² Epic poetry (ἐπὶ σπουδῆν), iambography (ἐπὶ γέλωτα) and didactic poetry contributed to the syllabus of the young Athenian, which was evidently gathered in anthologies: "Others there are who compile select summaries of all the poets, and piece together whole passages, telling us that a boy must commit these to memory and learn them off if we are to have him turn out good and wise as a result of a wide and varied range of instruction".²³

Plato certainly is not happy with this wide range of reading, which implies dangers for the children by introducing unsuitable subjects. Thus, he establishes his own discourses about laws, as a pattern with which other poetic texts should compete. It is interesting that Plato claims for them a poetic character created by inspiration by God (ἐπίπνοια θεῶν): "In looking back now at the discussions which we have been pursuing from dawn up to this present hour - and that, as I fancy, not without some guidance from Heaven - it appeared to me that they were framed exactly like a poem".²⁴ Thus, Plato dares to install the *Laws*, and by extension all his dialogues, as a syllabus of reading at school. We shall see later that we thus have understood him correctly.

6. Teaching in Cithara-Playing; Heterophony.

After the chapter about writing and reading Plato turns to teaching of cithara-playing (*Laws* 7, 812 B), which occupies the thirteenth until the sixteenth year. The selection of suitable melodies, which should be accompanied by the cithara, is delegated to the aged singers of the chorus of Dionysus, who are called to memory by a cross-reference to Book 2:²⁵ "We said, I believe, that our sixty-year-old singers to Dionysus must have acquired good perception in respect of rhythms and the constitution of harmoniai, so that when considering a representation in song, whether it is done well or badly, a representation in which the soul comes under the influence of the emotions - each of them shall be able to pick out the likenesses of both the good

22 See F.A.Beck, *Greek Education* 450-350, London 1964.

23 Plato, *Laws* 7, 811 A; Translation Bury.

24 Plato, *Laws* 7, 811 C: ΑΘ.: νῦν γὰρ ἀποβλέψας πρὸς τοὺς λόγους οὐς ἐξ ἔω μέχρι δεῦρο δὴ διεληλύθαμεν ἡμεῖς - ὡς μὲν ἐμοὶ φαίνόμεθα, οὐκ ἄνευ τινὸς ἐπίπνοιας θεῶν - ἔδοξαν δ' οὖν μοι παντάπασι ποιήσει τινὲ προσομοίως εἰρῆσθαι.- Translation Bury.

25 Plato, *Laws* 7, 812 BC and 2, 670/71.

kind and the bad, and while rejecting the latter, shall bring the former before the public, and sing them to enchant the souls of the young, summoning each of them to pursue the acquisition of virtue in company with them, by means of these representations".²⁶

When dealing with the accompaniment of the selected melodies, Plato, as usual in the *Laws*, avoids every technicality, but restricts himself to one important point. As the accompaniment must convey the same affective values as the melody, it must duplicate the melody exactly. Therefore Plato prohibits every deviation of the instrumental accompaniment from the melody (ἔτεροφωνία), which would in any case be too complicated for beginners. By his precious description of these deviations, which might have been familiar to contemporary virtuosos on the cithara or the auloi, Plato preserves details of a style of accompaniment which is still alive today in popular music in and around Greece:

"For these reasons, then, both the cithara teacher and his pupil must, for the sake of making the notes distinct, use the notes of the lyra in such a way as to give out its sound in unison (πρόσχορδα) with the sounds of the song. As for the use of different notes (ἔτεροφωνία) and ornamentation (ποικιλία) on the lyra, when the strings play one set of tunes and the composer of the melody another, or when people perform a combination of small intervals with wide ones or of speed with slowness or of high pitch with low, whether in concord or in octaves (σύμφωνον καὶ ἀντίφωνον), and similarly when they fit all kinds of elaboration of rhythms to the notes of the lyra, no such things should be taught to those who must assimilate quickly, in three years, that which is beneficial in music".²⁷

The word ἔτεροφωνία as a musical term appears only in the aforesaid quotation. But the musical reality behind it is used by Pseudo-Longinus as an analogy in order to describe the paraphrase (περίφρασις): "As in music the leading voice (κύριος φθόγγος) is embellished by the so called παραφῶνοι, so the paraphrase (περίφρασις) often

26 Plato, *Laws* 7, 812 C; Translation Barker.

27 Plato *Laws* 7, 812 DE: ΑΘ.: Τούτων τοίνυν δεῖ χάριν τοῖς φθόγγοις τῆς λύρας προσχρῆσθαι, σαφηνείας ἕνεκα τῶν χορδῶν, τὸν τε κιθαριστὴν καὶ τὸν παιδευόμενον, ἀποδιδόντας πρόσχορδα τὰ φθέγγματα τοῖς φθέγμασι· τὴν δ' ἔτεροφωνίαν καὶ ποικιλίαν τῆς λύρας, ἄλλα μὲν μέλη τῶν χορδῶν ἰσιῶν, ἄλλα δὲ τοῦ τὴν μελωδίαν συνθέντος ποιητοῦ, καὶ δὴ καὶ πυκνότητα μανότητι καὶ τάχος βραδυτήτι καὶ ὀξύτητα βαρύτητι σύμφωνον καὶ ἀντίφωνον παρεχομένους, καὶ τῶν ῥυθμῶν ὡσαύτως παντοδαπὰ ποικίλματα προσαρμόπτοντας τοῖσι φθόγγοις τῆς λύρας, πάντα οὖν τὰ τοιαῦτα μὴ προσφέρειν τοῖς μέλλουσιν ἐν τρισὶν ἔτεσιν τὸ τῆς μουσικῆς χρήσιμον ἐκλήψεσθαι διὰ τάχους.- Translation Barker.

sounds together with the leading sense (κυριολογία) and rings with it mostly for beauty".²⁸ It is odd that Pseudo-Longinus uses not ἔτεροφωνία, but the term παράφωτος, which has a different meaning in the technical treatises that discuss it.²⁹ But Pseudo-Longinus does not use it in technical sense, as he seems to understand παραφωτία in the sense of "sounding along (παρά) a given melody", which comes close to ἔτεροφωνία.

With the help of ethnomusicology, it is possible to transpose Plato's and Pseudo-Longinus' descriptions into musical reality. Singer and instrument (as a rule a stringed instrument) move in unison (πρόσχορδα, σύμφωνον) or in octaves (ἀντίφωνον). But while the voice sings the melody as it is, the instrument adds to the melodic line many ornamentations, small notes, small intervals and sometimes dissonances, and produces this way the ἔτεροφωνία.

In the picture shown in Figure 1, you see two youngsters of Peribolia in Crete with the usual solo instruments, a violin and the so called "lyra", which is a mandolin-like instrument played with the bow. The great lute between them punctuates only the rhythm and the basic harmonies of the song, which is executed by the lute-player himself. Before each piece the player of violin or "lyra" performs as a prelude (ἀναβολή) his ornamentation of the song, and after that the ἔτεροφωνία of song, solo instrument and accompaniment by the lute begins. Two examples from Crete can be heard on recordings. The first employs lyre, song and lute accompaniment, the second shows instrumental ἔτεροφωνία; while the lute plays the pure melody, the violin plays the same melody with many ornaments.³⁰

7. Comedy in the Laws.

After the passage about the lyre teacher Plato adds some supplements about gymnastics and dance. Plato excludes dance of orgiastic character, and recommends only warlike dances (πυρρίχη) and peaceful dances (ἐμμέλεια), which imitate the

28 Pseudo-Longin, *De sublimitate* 28, p. 51 Vahlen: ὡς γὰρ ἐν μουσικῇ διὰ τῶν παραφῶτων καλουμένων ὁ κύριος φθόγγος ἡδίων ἀποτελεῖται, οὕτως ἡ περίφρασις πολλάκις συμφθέγγεται τῇ κυριολογίᾳ καὶ εἰς κόσμον ἐπὶ πολὺ συνηχεῖ.

29 Bacchius 61, 305 Jan; Gaudentius 8, 337 Jan; 8, 338 Jan; 338 n.3 Jan; 323/324 Jan.

30 The First Recordings of Cretan Music. Original recordings made between 1940-60. Aerakis, Cretan Musical Laboratory S.A. 579; Greek Folk & Popular Music Series 6: nr. 1: Kondilies me ti lyra; nr. 17: Tragoudi tou gamou.

movements of beautiful bodies and souls (*Laws* 7, 814 E - 816 C). The opposite possibility, the movements of ugly bodies and thoughts brings Plato to an interesting chapter about comedy. To our surprise he recommends acquaintance with bad manners, in order to teach the citizens to avoid them: "The actions of ugly bodies and ugly ideas and of the men engaged in ludicrous comic-acting, in regard to both speech and dance, and the representations given by all these comedians - all this subject we must necessarily consider and estimate. For it is impossible to learn the serious without the comic, or any one of a pair of contraries without the other".³¹ But free-born citizens should never act themselves on the comic stage, considering the inherent dangers of imitation (μίμησις) of unworthy objects. Therefore Plato suggests that hired slaves from abroad should be used as actors on the comic stage: "δούλοις δὲ τὰ τοιαῦτα καὶ ξένοις ἐμμισθοῖς προστάττειν μιμεῖσθαι".³² This idea is obvious, as the dress of many of the actors of Ancient and Middle Comedy was the dress typically worn by slaves.

In Book 11, Plato deals with another aspect of the comic scene. Having introduced penalties for personal abuse of every kind in public (*Laws* 11, 934 E - 935 C), he examines the different ways in which people may be ridiculed, asserting that mockery is to be judged as forbidden abuse if it is done in earnest and not in fun. This brings him back to comedy: "Are we to countenance the readiness to ridicule people which is shown by comic writers, provided that in their comedies they employ this sort of language about the citizens without any show of passion?"³³ It must be admitted that Plato's question is somewhat anachronistic. Of course he had witnessed the excesses of personal abuse (ὀνομαστί κωμωδεῖν) of the Old Comedy before 400 B.C. Certainly he considered the insulting and slandering picture of Socrates, delivered by Aristophanes in the *Clouds* (423 B.C.) to be one of the causes of the sentence to death against Socrates in 399 B.C. This is evident in Plato's *Apology*, where Socrates defends himself explicitly by quoting the *Clouds*: "You have seen this in the comedy of Aristophanes, where some Socrates is presented, who boasts of walking in the air

31 Plato *Laws* 7, 816 DE: ΑΘ.: τὰ δὲ τῶν αἰσχροῶν σωμάτων καὶ διανοημάτων καὶ τῶν ἐπὶ τὰ τοῦ γέλωτος κωμωδήματα τετραμμένων, κατὰ λέξιν τε καὶ ᾠδὴν καὶ κατὰ ὄρχησιν καὶ κατὰ τὰ τούτων πάντων μιμήματα κεκωμωδημένα, ἀνάγκη μὲν θεάσασθαι καὶ γνωρίζειν· ἄνευ γὰρ γελοίων τὰ σπουδαῖα καὶ πάντων τῶν ἐναντίων τὰ ἐναντία μαθεῖν μὲν οὐ δυνατόν.- Translation Bury.

32 Plato, *Laws* 7, 817 E.

33 Plato, *Laws* 11, 935 D; Translation Bury.

(ἀεροβατεῖν *Clouds* 225) and utters much other nonsense".³⁴ But already in the Middle Comedy, which was on the stage in the time of the *Laws*, personal abuse of similar violence is wholly absent. Nevertheless, Plato wants to be sure. So he excludes every kind of ridicule directed at citizens from comedy, iambography and lyric song, with threats of drastic penalties: "A composer of a comedy or of any iambic or lyric song shall be strictly forbidden to ridicule any of the citizens either by word or by mimicry, whether with or without passion; and if anyone disobeys, the Presidents of the Games shall on the same day banish him wholly from the country, failing which they shall be fined three minas".³⁵

8. Tragedy in the Laws.

While pieces of Old Comedy - with the exception of the *Frogs* of Aristophanes - were not restaged after 400 B.C., the tragedies of the dead Euripides remained very popular and were restaged often in the fourth century. New tragedies of authors of the 4th century B.C. followed the taste which was coined by Euripides. Thus, Plato had to treat tragedy - after comedy - in a different way. In a very picturesque scene he stages the visit of a troop of travelling actors in Plato's town, who want to build their wooden stage building in the agora and perform tragedies on it (σκηνάς τε πήξαντας κατ' ἀγορὰν καὶ καλλιφώνους ὑποκριτὰς εἰσαγαγωμένους).³⁶ This scene mirrors contemporary usages. Troops of actors, who had won a prize at the Dionysia in Athens, travelled with their victorious pieces from town to town in order to compete at local festivals. But Plato is not inclined to admit them into the new town, as they are artistic rivals of Plato's citizens, who are poets of the best kind of tragedy: "All our polity is framed as a representation (μίμησις) of the fairest and best life, which is in reality, as we assert, the truest tragedy. Thus we are composers of the same thing as yourselves, rivals of yours (ἀντίτεχνοι καὶ ἀνταγωνισταί) as actors of the fairest drama, which, as our hope is, is true law".³⁷ This recalls Plato's recommendation of the *prooimia* of his

34 Plato *Apology* 19: ταῦτα γὰρ ἔωρᾶτε καὶ αὐτοὶ ἐν τῇ Ἀριστοφάνους κωμῳδίᾳ, Σωκράτη τινὰ ἐκεῖ περιφερόμενον, φάσκοντα τε ἀεροβατεῖν καὶ ἄλλην πολλὴν φλυαρίαν φλυαροῦντα.

35 Plato, *Laws* 11, 935 E - 936 A; Translation Bury.

36 Plato, *Laws* 7, 817 C.

37 Plato, *Laws* 7, 817 B: ΑΘ.: πᾶσα οὖν ἡμῖν ἡ πολιτεία συνέστηκε μίμησις τοῦ καλλίστου καὶ ἀρίστου βίου, ὃ δὴ φαμεν ἡμεῖς γε ὄντως εἶναι τραγωδίαν τὴν ἀληθεστάτην. ποιηταὶ μὲν οὖν ὑμεῖς, ποιηταὶ δὲ

Laws as the best texts for study in school (*Laws* 7, 811 C-D). Therefore he is not likely to admit the tragedies of professional poets, which might contradict the moral norms of Plato's city, and professional actors with their trained voices, who might seduce all citizens by the pleasure of their performances. Thus Plato subjects the pieces of the visitors to a critical comparison with the true tragedy (τραγωδία ἀληθεστάτη), which is his own philosophy, a comparison which professional poetry never can win (*Laws* 7, 817 A-D).

9. Musical education of the Nocturnal Council.

In the next chapter Plato begins to discuss education in arithmetic, geometry (including stereometry) and astronomy. But for the average citizen only the preliminary elements of these sciences are necessary. The higher levels of them are reserved to the education of an élite, as Plato declares: "All these sciences should not be studied with minute accuracy by the majority of pupils, but only by a select few - and who these are we shall say when we have come near to the end - since that will be the proper place".³⁸ We shall see that Plato has in mind the nocturnal council, which he does not introduce until Book 11. Necessary preliminaries are elements of the theory of numbers. Everybody has to know to count, to understand the difference between even and odd numbers and to know why some relations of magnitudes are ἄμετρα, incommensurable (*Laws* 7, 819 E - 820 D).

In a famous passage of the *Meno* (82 A- 85 B) a slave, guided by the questions of Socrates, tries to find the side of a square which has twice the surface of a given square. Eventually he recognizes that the diagonal of the given square is the side of the square in question. This diagonal is the square root of twice the area of the given square. Thus it is incommensurable to the side of the given square (84 A: εἰ μὴ βούλει ἀριθμεῖν, ἀλλὰ δεῖξον ἀπὸ ποίας). Because of the shortcomings of Greek arithmetics this diagonal could be found only by a geometric demonstration.

When dealing with the same problem in the *Laws*, Plato however is content with

καὶ ἡμεῖς ἐσμὲν τῶν αὐτῶν, ὑμῖν ἀντίτεχνοί τε καὶ ἀνταγωνισταὶ τοῦ καλλίστου δράματος, ὃ δὴ νόμος ἀληθῆς μόνος ἀποτελεῖν πέφυκεν, ὡς ἡ παρ' ἡμῶν ἐστὶν ἐλπίς.- Translation Bury.

38 Plato, *Laws* 7, 818 A: ΑΘ.: ταῦτα δὲ σύμπαντα οὐχ ὡς ἀκριβείας ἐχόμενα δεῖ διαπονεῖν τοὺς πολλοὺς ἀλλὰ τινας ὀλίγους - οὓς δέ, προϊόντες ἐπὶ τῷ τέλει φράσομεν· οὕτω γὰρ πρέπον ἂν εἴη.- Translation Bury.

some hints to it. The same holds good for the preliminaries to the education in astronomy (*Laws* 7, 821 - 822 C). Plato explains only that we have to distinguish the apparent orbits of Sun, Moon and the other Planets on the celestial hemisphere from their real courses in space, which are circles. As he does not want to be more explicit, he postpones the argumentation (*Laws* 7, 822 C: δείξωμεν). Quite surprisingly, Book 7 ends with some pages on hunting (*Laws* 7, 822 D -824 C).

The bulk of Book 12 is still occupied by legislation. But at its end the subject of education reappears. Already in *Laws* 951 D-E Plato had installed a nocturnal council, whose duty is the supervision of the legislation. Its members are older officials, of whom each has the right to introduce a younger citizen as future member. For this highest board the highest level of education is reserved (*Laws* 12, 963-968), first the dialectic ascension from the multitude to the one, especially from the four cardinal virtues, namely courage (ἀνδρεία), temperance (σωφροσύνη), justice (δικαιοσύνη) and wisdom (φρόνησις) to the leading principle, reason (νοῦς), secondly the doctrine of the preexistence of the soul of the world, which moves everything, and finally the order of the motion of the stars under the control of reason (νοῦς). The three mathematical sciences, arithmetic, geometry and astronomy, to which musical theory is attached, lead to this level of understanding: "He must also grasp that reason which controls what exists among the stars, together with the necessary preliminary sciences, and he must observe also the connection therewith of musical theory, and apply it harmoniously to the institutions and rules of ethics."³⁹ It is interesting that music theory is now a part of the *quadrivium*, while practical music in the elementary education as part of the *trivium* stands side by side with writing and reading.

Megillus and Clinias, after having approved of this educational program for the nocturnal council, want to lay it down in the form of a law, and the Athenian, through whom we hear the voice of Plato himself, promises his support: "You will find me a most willing helper, owing to my very long experience and study of this subject; and perhaps I shall discover other helpers also besides myself".⁴⁰ The helpers of the disguised Plato,

³⁹ Plato, *Laws* 12, 967 E: τόν τε ἡγημένον ἐν τοῖς ἄστροις νοῦν τῶν ὄντων τά τε πρὸς τούτων ἀναγκαῖα μαθήματα λάβη, τά τε κατὰ τὴν Μοῦσαν τούτοις τῆς κοινωνίας συνθεασάμενος χρῆσθαι πρὸς τὰ τῶν ἡθῶν ἐπιτηδεύματα καὶ νόμιμα συναρμοπτόντως.- Translation Bury.

⁴⁰ Plato, *Laws* 12, 968 B: ΑΘ.: συλλήπτωρ γὰρ τούτου γε ὑμῖν καὶ ἐγὼ γιγνοίμην ἂν προθύμως - πρὸς δ' ἔμοι καὶ ἑτέρους ἴσως εὐρήσω - διὰ τὴν περὶ τὰ τοιαῦτ' ἐμπειρίαν τε καὶ σκέψιν γεγνουῖάν μοι καὶ

we may guess, are his pupils in the Academy. But instead of beginning with the task the Athenian postpones the project again, demanding more time for careful preparation. As a matter of fact, the education of the nocturnal council is discussed no further in the *Laws* we have. This is why Wilamowitz considered the *Laws* to be unfinished.⁴¹ I think that the exclusion of the studies of highest intellectual level, the theory of the highest principles, which are reserved for the nocturnal council, must be explained otherwise. This makes an excursus on Plato's unpublished Philosophy unavoidable.

Both Platonic and Aristotelian philosophy fall in two different parts. On the one hand there were works published for a reading public (ἐκδεδομένα), on the other hand there was the unpublished teaching in the Academy and in the Peripatos. By chance of transmission we have all works which Plato had published, from the *Ion* to the *Laws*, while from his scholastic teaching there remain only meagre fragments⁴², reports and the title of a lecture "*On the Good*" (Περὶ Ἁγαθοῦ).⁴³ The inverse is true for Aristotle: here we have all his scholastic scripts. The *Ars poetica* of Aristotle, which we have discussed, is a treatise of this class. But from the published works of Aristotle only titles and fragments remain.⁴⁴ In the case of Plato the situation is complicated by his affirmation in the *Phaedrus* and in the *Seventh Letter*,⁴⁵ that his philosophical teaching cannot be transmitted by writing, but is developed in the argumentative oral dialogue, which is mirrored in Plato's published dialogues.

Of course it is possible to recover the outlines of Plato's teaching in the Academy. Sources include the writings of Aristotle, ancient commentaries on Plato and Aristotle and finally Plato's published (exoteric) works, which are full of hints on his esoteric teaching. This was the main purpose of the Tübingen Platonists, Hans Joachim Krämer, Konrad Gaiser and Thomas Alexander Szlezák. These hints are mostly connected with the fact that the conclusive solution of a problem is postponed unto the next meeting of

μάλα συχνήν.- Translation Bury.

41 U. von Wilamowitz - Moellendorff, *Plato I Leben und Werke*, Berlin 1919, 647-650. Klaus Schöpsdau, in his commentary (*Platon Werke, Übersetzung und Kommentar* Band IX 2; *Nomoi Buch I - III*, Göttingen 1994, *Buch IV - VII*, Göttingen 2003), while considering the *Laws* to be finished, explains the exclusion of the education of the members of the Nocturnal Council by the limited intellectual capacities of Megillus and Cleinias (Schöpsdau 1994, 104 f.).

42 The διαίρεσις, reported by Diogenes Laertius 3, 80-109.

43 Aristoxenos, *Harm.* 44, 5 M.

44 *Aristotelis Fragmenta selecta*, rec. W.D. Ross, Oxford 1955.

45 Plato, *Phaedrus* 274 B - 278 E), *Seventh Letter* 341 C; see Szlezak (1993) 56-66; 153-155.

the dialogue partners. Szlezák has coined for this device the term "Aussparungsstellen".⁴⁶ The surprising postponing of the highest level of studies, which were reserved for the nocturnal council in the *Laws*, is a case of such a "passage of exclusion". Fortunately, Plato explains the reasons for his strategy quite clearly. There exists no list of citizens who are suitable for the nocturnal council, and no detailed syllabus for their studies. But the true reason is a didactic one: "Moreover, with respect to the limits of time, when and for how long they ought to receive instruction in each subject, it were idle to lay down written regulations; for even the learners themselves could not be sure that they were learning at the opportune time until each of them had acquired within his soul some knowledge of the subject in question".⁴⁷ This means that the learning of the highest principles, to which arithmetic, geometry and music theory pave the way, cannot be described in a written book, but must be transferred to the oral teaching inside the Academy, because of their esoteric character: "Accordingly, although it would be wrong to term all these matters "indescribable" (ἀπόρρητα), they should be termed "imprescribable" (ἀπρόρρητα), seeing that the prescribing of them beforehand does nothing to elucidate the question under discussion".⁴⁸

46 Szlezák (1993) 92-105.

47 Plato, *Laws* 12, 968 DE: ΑΘ.: πρὸς τούτοις δὲ χρόνους, οὐς τε καὶ ἐν οἷς δεῖ παραλαμβάνειν ἕκαστα, μάταιον ταῦτ' ἐν γράμμασιν λέγειν· οὐδὲ γὰρ αὐτοῖς τοῖς μανθάνουσι δῆλα γίγνοιτ' ἂν ὅτι πρὸς καιρὸν μανθάνεται, πρὶν ἐντὸς τῆς ψυχῆς ἐκάστω που μαθήματος ἐπιστήμην γεγονέναι.- Translation Bury.

48 Plato, *Laws* 968 E: ΑΘ.: οὕτω δὴ πάντα τὰ περὶ ταῦτα ἀπόρρητα μὲν λεχθέντα οὐκ ἂν ὀρθῶς λέγοιτο, ἀπρόρρητα δὲ διὰ τὸ μηδὲν προρρηθέντα δηλοῦν τῶν λεγομένων.- Translation Bury.