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IV

FRIEDRICH SOLMSEN

Hesiodic Motifs in Plato



## HESIODIC MOTIFS IN PLATO

From Plato's *Protagoras* we may infer that some of the sophists, in spite of their professional and intellectual pride, were willing to regard Hesiod as one of their forerunners. If it was his aim to make men better he was a sophist in disguise and his poetic form was a πρόσχημα<sup>1</sup>. Plato too when appraising the poets is inclined to separate content from form but he would not take the view that the content of their epics qualifies Homer and Hesiod as philosophers in disguise. There is too much in their presentation of gods and men that is wrong — not only materially wrong in the sense of being a ψεῦδος (this would perhaps be pardonable) but fundamentally misconceived because the poets lacked the true discrimination between good and evil.

There are a few specific thoughts in the *Theogony* which Plato would appreciate but the story as a whole was for him one of filial rebellions and of crime and violence practiced in the divine family and had therefore to be classed with the worst moral errors to be found in the Homeric poems<sup>2</sup>. It is definitely not the kind of work through which a poet makes his audience better than he found it. In contrast to it the *Works and Days* embodies what would now-a-days be called a moral message and might by this token have a better chance of being tolerated in the new city. Unfortunately, however, its moral teachings are too simple and unsophisticated. True, the life of justice which this poem celebrated still figures in the κρίσις τοῦ βίου περί, i. e. the comparison and choice between different kinds of life, in *Republic* II; it still presents itself for consideration to the serious and troubled young man who so earnestly desires to make the right decision. In the general uncertainty and confusion of values, in the absence of any binding

<sup>1</sup> Pl., *Prot.* 316d.    <sup>2</sup> *Resp.* 377e f.; *Legg.* 886b f.; cf. *Euthyphro* 5e f.

tradition the individual must indeed make his choice. The great poets of the past are here one after another called in for consultation, each being asked what he has to offer and what kind of prospects he holds out. The trouble with Hesiod is that he promises too much, namely all conceivable good fortune and prosperity, all that the Greeks called ὄλβος<sup>1</sup>. By Plato's time the Greeks had long found out that the realities of life were far more complex than Hesiod had imagined them to be and they had become sufficiently realistic to accept the facts. Prosperity and success which Hesiod had promised to the just and hard working man materialize more often in the life of the wicked, unscrupulous man; what counts is not the reality of justice but the reputation for justice — not ἀλήθεια but δόξα — which hides crafty scheming from the eyes of the fellow citizens<sup>2</sup>. Moreover, Hesiod's assurances are not only untenable in the light of common human experience but also philosophically and ethically unsatisfactory because he recommends the way of justice on the strength of τὰ ἀποβαίνοντα, of the material advantages, instead of proving the intrinsic superiority of justice over a life of injustice and selfishness<sup>3</sup>. Plato would not take the charitable and historically perhaps correct view that if Hesiod's promises of material rewards fly in the face of experience he must have had deeper, more intrinsic and a-priori reasons for his belief in the power of justice. The basis on which he extolled it must be abandoned as a lost position. Hesiod is given no credit for being the first prophet of the cardinal excellence.

For many generations Greek moral and political thinking had been content to enrich, deepen, and revise Hesiod's teachings about justice and injustice. But when the gospel

<sup>1</sup> See esp. *Resp.* 363a f. <sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* 362a ff.; 365b; 366b. <sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* 362e ff.; 366e f.; 367c ff.

of *physis* and of the justice of nature gained ground no revision could keep pace with the radical transformation of values. The extremists of the new school were even ready to sacrifice the preferred position which Hesiod had assigned to man in the scheme of living beings<sup>1</sup> when he set him apart from fish and beasts and winged birds whose habit it is to devour one another "because there is no justice among them". For a Callicles the law of the animal world with its right of the stronger<sup>2</sup> is entirely good enough as a pattern for man. Clearly the reasons and appeals, the religious motifs and religious sanctions which Hesiod had used when proclaiming justice as the supreme value of human life were obsolete. For a new proclamation of justice the ground had to be prepared with the greatest circumspection and it had to be entirely new ground — how new may be seen from the fact that while Hesiod's passionate affirmations are frankly inspired by his own experience of injustice, for Plato the suffering of injustice is no longer one of the evils against which his just man must be protected. We need not here review the arguments of the new approach by which Plato establishes the necessity and intrinsic superiority of justice in the individual and in the political community and by which in his last work he arrives at a broader vision of *divine* providence and justice. Justice consists no longer in individual just actions but in the right condition and inner order of the soul. When on this basis the happiness of the just man has been contrasted with the utter wretchedness of the tyrant Plato can claim that he has not "like Homer and Hesiod" praised the rewards or the reputation of justice but has "found out that justice itself is best for the soul itself" (αὐτὸ δικαιοσύνην αὐτῆ ψυχῆ)<sup>3</sup>. This being settled, he feels that he may now restore to his good man the ad-

<sup>1</sup> *Op.* 276-285. <sup>2</sup> *Gorg.* 483d. <sup>3</sup> *Resp.* 612a f.

vantages of divine protection and even of worldly goods; yet even in this concession to δόξα he uses arguments — both philosophical and empirical—that would be alien to Hesiod's way of thought<sup>1</sup>.

We may still go on for a while collecting so called negative evidence — evidence for Plato's distance from Hesiod — before we turn to some Hesiodic motifs which Plato invested with a new meaning. Hesiod's conception of human excellence would meet with little or no appreciation on the part of Plato. To be sure the verse τῆς δ' ἀρετῆς ἰδρῶτα θεοὶ προπάροιθεν ἔθηκον is in everybody's mouth at the time and so are others of the same context which oppose the long and steep road leading towards ἀρετή to the easy access everywhere to κακότης. But everything depends on the interpretation put upon these lines. They were used to support a remarkable variety of attitudes, and where the lustre of *arete* had been dimmed they may even have been quoted as suggesting that the way to it was so full of troubles that it was hardly worth taking<sup>2</sup>. Thus the fact that Plato too quotes these lines means little since the specific form of human excellence to which Hesiod works up could only have a very limited appeal to Plato. Thrift, industry, shrewd economic planning, and diligent, careful husbandry are not among the excellences which he would wish to incorporate in his scheme, and if it is true (as I believe) that the canon of the four excellences antedates Plato by some generations we must infer that the *polis* generally regarded such domestic virtues as of limited merit and did not allow them to rank with the excellences of a more social and political character. Hesiod's *arete* is the excellence of the householder and farmer; its sphere is οἶκος and οἰκονομία.

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.* 612b-613e. <sup>2</sup> See e.g. *Resp.* 364a2 f.; cf. c5 ff. For quotations of *Op.* 287 ff. in Plato and other authors see the collection of passages in Rzach's *editio maior* (Leipzig, 1902, *ad loc.*).

In the Athenian democracy it may still have been understood that all improvement "begins at home". The pupils of the sophists and the admiring followers of Socrates expected that they would be better prepared to "administer home and city" (οἶκον καὶ πόλιν διοικεῖν)<sup>1</sup>. But although words like διοικεῖν had been transferred to the political sphere, the parallel approach to «running the home» and «running the city» could not be carried very far and the widely held notion that a good householder will also be a good statesman seems to have been no less disappointing in its theoretical returns than it would have been in its practical results. As for the 'oeconomic' (in the Greek sense of the word) implications of Socrates' search, they were of greater interest to Xenophon than they were to Plato. εὐθημοσύνη γὰρ ἀρίστη θνητοῖς ἀνθρώποις is Hesiod's opinion<sup>2</sup>. The solemn noun was probably in his mind associated with οἶκον εὖ θέσθαι<sup>3</sup>, and the dictionaries indicate that it retained this association. The next author to use the word is Xenophon, in whose *Cyropaedia* it is again applied to the order and orderliness of the household, conditions which Xenophon himself and therefore also his Cyrus greatly admire (Plato does not use the noun but he once employs the verb εὐθημονεῖν with definite reference to domestic concerns as distinct from political)<sup>4</sup>. For the larger tasks of political life εὐθημοσύνη did not suffice. Plato would as little relate it to the varieties of order (τάξις and κόσμος) with which he is concerned as he would accept Hesiod's recommendation of building up one's possessions through patient toil and thrifty management. For him φειδωλία and the closely related φιλοχρηματία are dispositions of the timocratic and of the oligarchic man.

<sup>1</sup> The phrase and others of a similar type occur frequently (e.g. Pl., *Prot.* 318e f.; *Meno* 91a; Xen., *Mem.* 1.7). Note Xenophon's opinion *Mem.* 3.4.12. See also Ar., *Ran.* 976 f. <sup>2</sup> *Op.* 471 f. <sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* 23.

<sup>4</sup> Xen., *Cyr.* 8.5.7; Pl., *Legg.* 758b.

The latter in particular is described as one who κατὰ σμικρὸν φειδόμενος καὶ ἐργαζόμενος χρήματα συλλέγεται<sup>1</sup>. The ethos of the *Works and Days* is never outright condemned; some lines of the poem are quoted with respect in the *Lysis*, in the *Cratylus*, and elsewhere<sup>2</sup> but certain aristocratic features in the ideal picture drawn of the philosopher-ruler — e.g. his μεγαλοπρέπεια<sup>3</sup> — make one wonder whether there were limits to Plato's sympathy with Hesiod's wisdom and with his concern for the common man and his work.

Ἔργον δ' οὐδὲν ὄνειδος<sup>4</sup> was a venerable piece of archaic wisdom but alas it had lost its archaic innocence. In Socrates' days it was a dangerous phrase, full of political dynamite, since it sounded one way to the man of the *demos* and another to the ears of the aristocrat. If Socrates himself quoted it (as seems likely)<sup>5</sup> he would do so in a probing and inquiring spirit, wishing to bring its latent problems to light. Was every kind of 'work' good, were even the most despised professional activities good, and free from opprobrium? In the *Charmides* the aristocrat Critias wants it to be understood that the work must be μετὰ τοῦ καλοῦ or καλῶς ποιούμενον<sup>6</sup> — which brings home to us that while ἀρετή itself, κῦδος and other related notions had been transferred from Homer's aristocratic form of excellence to Hesiod's more realistic one, this καλόν is in the *Works and Days* conspicuous by its absence. But even apart from τὸ καλόν, the question whether every activity was good, useful, socially valuable, and therefore blameless existed not only for the aristocrats. Did the value lie in the work itself, regardless of how it was performed, by whom it was performed, with what competence and what intention it was done? Clearly, the social usefulness (τὸ ὠφέλιμον) of the work was a problem which Hesiod with

<sup>1</sup> *Resp.* 548a ff.; 553c; 554e f.   <sup>2</sup> *Lys.* 215c; *Crat.* 428a; *Resp.* 466c; *Legg.* 690e; 910a.   <sup>3</sup> *Resp.* 486a, 487a.   <sup>4</sup> *Op.* 311.   <sup>5</sup> *Xen., Mem.* 1.2.56 f.   <sup>6</sup> *Charm.* 163b f.

all his concern for a man's standing in his community had not sufficiently taken into account. Many qualifications, differentiations, and discriminations, a whole scale of priorities had to be applied to the concept of ἔργον before it could safely become incorporated in Plato's political philosophy. "To do one's own work" (τὸ ἑαυτοῦ πράττειν) is the safe formula<sup>1</sup> but the applicability of even this formula depends on the new objective criteria of a man's personal worth which Plato himself had discovered. The *Charmides* indicates that the aristocrats had used the same formula in a different spirit<sup>2</sup>.

Thus there are certain threads of continuity between Hesiod and Plato, and it may be more profitable by tracing them to study the changes in the pattern of ethical thought than to record the instances in which Plato quotes a line of Hesiod's poetry or endorses a minor item of his thought. By and large Plato is moving on a level of thought on which direct contact with the Hesiodic legacy could serve little purpose. It may however be said that Plato on his level of καθόλου φιλοσοφήματα attempts something comparable to what Hesiod had attempted on his archaic level and had expressed in the medium of religious and mythical speculation. Both men are great organizers of the realities of the Greek world; to put it simply, Hesiod's *Theogony* organizes the world of divine realities (but we must bear in mind that anything that has power is a reality and indeed a divine reality for him) whereas Plato and the Academy through their method of *diairesis* try to organize many, if not necessarily all, human and other realities. I do not mean to suggest that *diairesis* is Plato's only way of establishing meaningful relations between τὰ ὄντα but it is perhaps the most obvious, and even if we confine ourselves to it a comparison between Hesiod's and Plato's procedures

<sup>1</sup> *Resp.* 433a f.; cf. 369e ff. <sup>2</sup> I am here indebted to an unpublished study of Helen North.

raises so many difficult problems of *Denkformen* that I must not be lured deeper into the matter which requires an investigator with the intellectual equipment of an Ernst Cassirer. All I would say is this: Mythical genealogy as handled by Hesiod and dialectical genealogy as practised by Plato aim both of them at setting up intellectually satisfactory relationships between kindred entities — συγγενῆ as Plato likes to call them. To put it differently, both construct pedigrees (γέννη) based on material and substantial rather than on accidental similarities.

If one were to carry the comparison further one might be tempted to say that Hesiod has less freedom since not a few genealogical connections were already fixed (and he had to make the best of them). But would it not also make sense to argue that he moves more freely inasmuch as he, for instance hypostatizes aspects of *charis* or qualities of the sea, presenting them as names of Charites and Nereids respectively<sup>1</sup>. Thus he is a discoverer of realities, whereas Plato merely reduces realities into order. Clearly much depends on the (modern) categories which one wishes to apply, and I had better repeat that a classicist is hardly competent to assess these achievements. Needless to say, there are sections of the *Theogony* which are not primarily genealogical and could therefore not be included in the comparison. I have noticed one instance in which the two methods are applied to the same — or almost the same — subject. This subject happens to be the evils, κακία in Plato and κακά or λυγρά in Hesiod<sup>2</sup>. Hesiod certainly had good reasons for making some evils children of Night and others children of Eris, who is herself Night's daughter; in the latter case we can clearly see that he thinks in terms of cause-and-effect relations. Plato on his part distin-

<sup>1</sup> *Tb.* 909; 240-264. <sup>2</sup> *Pl., Soph.* 228d f.; *Hes., Tb.* 214-217, 223-225, 226-232.

guishes in the *Sophist* among various κακίαι which affect the soul. Those which he mentions (e.g. δειλία, ἀκολασία, ἀδικία) are not necessarily too 'abstract' but they are too ethical and too inward to be considered of the same order as Murders and Quarrels or even as Forgetfulness and Lying Words which figure in Hesiod's catalogue of evils.

Having discussed Plato's *diairesis* as an ontological genealogy we should for the sake of fairness — as well as of completeness — mention that a few of Hesiod's theological names and genealogical connections prove quite acceptable to Plato. He welcomes the names of the three Moirai but replaces their Hesiodic mother by a more philosophic one, Ananke<sup>1</sup>. And as the new parents of Eros in the *Symposium* show<sup>2</sup>, he himself when it suits his purpose invents new mythical relationships — as so many poets had done before him. In Hesiod πένιη does not quite achieve the status which Λιμός and Πλοῦτος achieve<sup>3</sup>.

We may now give our attention to a Hesiodic *logos* which for Plato can only be a *mythos* but it is a *mythos* which he found philosophically very significant and whose usefulness he exploited more than once, focusing now on one aspect of it and now again on another. Actually the myth of the five generations is by no means entirely Hesiod's own invention<sup>4</sup> and when we record the successive metamorphoses which the myth underwent in Plato's mind we ought perhaps to consider whether particular motifs were inherent in the pre-Hesiodic tradition or whether they reflect the poet's own outlook. Where Plato for the

<sup>1</sup> *Resp.* 617b7 ff. (cf. d6); *Legg.* 960c. Note also *Tim.* 40d-41a (cf. 40c2 f.). <sup>2</sup> *Conv.* 203b f.; cf. 178b2 ff. <sup>3</sup> *Tb.* 227; *Op.* 299; *Tb.* 969, 972 ff. <sup>4</sup> *Op.* 106-201. The place of the fourth generation conflicts with the development in a downward direction which Hesiod must have inherited. In the question of Oriental models due weight should be given to the voices of caution (JULA KERSCHENSTEINER, *Plato und der Orient*, Stuttg., 1945, 164 ff.; H. C. BALDRY, *J. Hist. of Ideas* 17, 1956, 553 f.).

first time avails himself of the story, in Book III of the *Republic*, his adaptation of it is expressly called a 'lie' ( $\psi\epsilon\tilde{\upsilon}\delta\omicron\varsigma$ )<sup>1</sup>; more precisely, it is a part of a more complex lie which should be spread in the newly founded city with a view to making the strict and inexorable class-division more acceptable to the citizens. That the difference between the four metals here symbolizes qualitative differences between human beings is entirely in harmony with Hesiod's own intention. Where Plato presents the story in the form in which it is to be used for the purpose of persuasion he gives the metal motif a surprisingly concrete turn; he speaks as though gold and the other metals were physically present in the individuals whereas Hesiod had simply relied on the comparative value and other qualitative connotations of the metals<sup>2</sup>. However when Plato instructs the rulers to watch the quality of future generations he refers to the metals as admixtures in the soul<sup>3</sup>. Here we are closer to Plato's own criterion of differentiation which is of course the diversities in moral and intellectual endowment.

The feature of the Hesiodic myth which recommended it for this adaptation is evidently the qualitative scale. The temporal sequence of Hesiod's scheme and the motif of progressive deterioration could not serve Plato's purpose. He deliberately ignores the 'historical' point of view. In a passage of the *Cratylus*<sup>4</sup> where Plato uses Hesiod's description of the *daimones* for his etymology of this word he says in so many words: "don't you think that if anyone of those now living is excellent, (Hesiod) would include him in the golden race?"

A reference to the myth of the generations in *Republic* VIII adds no new elements of meaning but we may note that Plato here uses the words  $\tau\acute{\alpha}$  'Ησιόδου τε καὶ τὰ παρ' ὁμῶν

<sup>1</sup> *Resp.* 414b ff.    <sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* 415a.    <sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* 415b3 ff.    <sup>4</sup> 397e-398b.

γένη<sup>1</sup> to indicate the races or classes that would be adversely affected if the sacred number were to lose its control. He thus admits that he fashioned his own myth of the metals after the model of Hesiod's; in fact as Plato is not at all concerned with the effect of the sacred number on Hesiod's generations the words may be freely translated as "the races which you have distinguished in conformity with Hesiod".

Plato has not seen fit to transfer to his classes any of the specific items which figure in Hesiod's description of the successive generations and of their mode of life. The blessings of an affluent and carefree life which Hesiod's golden generation enjoys would accord as little with the duties of Plato's rulers as with their philosophical outlook. However in Book V Plato while speaking of the guardians promotes those who have died in battle *post mortem* into the golden race and appropriates for them the very peculiar honor and truly 'royal' prerogative which Hesiod had assigned to his golden race. After their death these guardians are to be regarded as *daimones* and are to receive worship<sup>2</sup>.

We shall have to say more about Plato's conception of the *daimones* and about his debt to Hesiod in the matter. As for Hesiod, let us bear in mind that he specifies the status after death also for the men of the silver generation and for the heroes who are his fourth race (the men of the third generation pass away *νόνημοι*, without name or honor)<sup>3</sup>. I think it likely that Hesiod himself created these connections between various current — but perhaps rather vaguely apprehended — beliefs and the three generations in question. He may have identified the men of his first group with the *daimones*, and those of the second with the *makares*, and he may have decided that the heroes had earned

<sup>1</sup> *Resp.* 546e.    <sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* 468e f.; cf. Hes., *Op.* 121-126 (see below p. 184).    <sup>3</sup> *Op.* 140-142, 152-155, 167-173.

a life after death on the Islands of the Blessed. But even if he did so and if I am right in crediting him with these speculative ventures, the fame and popularity which his poems came to enjoy inevitably gave his statements regarding the *daimones* and other forms of afterlife a certain authority for Greek religious belief. I do not mean to say that these statements were generally accepted, still less that they were accepted without any questioning and further speculating. Rather the authority of which I am speaking is evinced by the fact that the statements were modified and to some extent rewritten; they became subject to (*sit venia verbo*) dogmatic corrections<sup>1</sup>. The different readings between which we have to choose in these passages reflect variations and fluctuations of Greek belief. One of these textual problems is of special interest to us. While the manuscripts and three other late witnesses (Proclus, Lactantius, and Macrobius) inform us that the men of the golden generation have their *post mortem* status as *daimones* and friends of men Διὸς μεγάλου διὰ βουλάς, Plato's quotations in the *Republic* and in the *Cratylus*<sup>2</sup> include no reference to Zeus' counsels but give us instead two additional characterizations of the *daimones*. They are 'holy' and 'ward off misfortune' (ἄγνοϊ, ἀλεξίκακοι). Inasmuch as Hesiod placed this generation in the era of Cronus — a point to which we shall come back — it would indeed be slightly disturbing, although perhaps not altogether unthinkable, that these men should owe their honors after death to Zeus. Unlike other editors, Wilamowitz accepts the text as presented by Plato's quotations. He probably made the right choice<sup>3</sup>, yet whatever the truth and the true text may be,

<sup>1</sup> Note in this connection also the lines (173, 169-169e Rzach, 173a-e Wilamowitz) added to Hesiod's description of the Islands of the Blessed. ὑποχθόνιοι (for ἐπιχθόνιοι, v. 122) need not be an old v. l. <sup>2</sup> *Op.* 122; *Pl., Resp.* 469a; *Crat.* 397e f. <sup>3</sup> Cf. also F. LEO, *Hesiodica* (*Gött. Ind. lect.* 1894) 17; R. HARDER, *Kleine Schriften* (Munich, 1960), 167.

for Plato we must infer that he knew no connection of these *daimones* with the rule of Zeus. For him they belong to the age and reign of Cronus, a fact which has its bearing on the form and the use which this myth finds in his later dialogues.

Let us again for a moment go back to Hesiod. In the *Works and Days* the relation between the golden race and Cronus has caused the critics some worry. For when Hesiod begins this section of the poem by saying that the first race was created by the ἀθάνατοι ... Ὀλύμπια δώματ' ἔχοντες<sup>1</sup> the reader can hardly help thinking of Zeus and his group who are so often designated by this phrase. The verse οἱ μὲν ἐπὶ Κρόνου ἦσαν ὅτ' οὐρανῶ ἔμβασίλευεν reads oddly after the reference to the Olympians, and the critic (Göttling) who wished to eliminate the verse does not deserve Rzach's censure *temere*. It is perhaps best to regard the verse as an afterthought on the part of Hesiod himself who may have felt the need of coordinating the myth of the human generations with the history of the divine dynasty as he had set it forth in the *Theogony*. Still it is on the strength of this verse — whatever we may think of its origin — that the easy and carefree happiness of the first human race came to be known as “ the life under Cronus ” (ὁ ἐπὶ Κρόνου βίος).

In the *Statesman* and in the *Laws*<sup>2</sup> Plato does not return to the qualitative differences between the four or five generations but concentrates on the alleged supreme happiness of the first. This feature of the Hesiodic legacy needs scrutiny and philosophical reappraisal. Is the life of the golden age (as we may for convenience call it, with apologies to Professor Baldry) in truth the best conceivable life for man? Are the real problems of man's existence solved by this conception? Are the highest values realized in this kind of life?

<sup>1</sup> V. 110. <sup>2</sup> *Polit.* 271c-272b; *Legg.* 713c-714a.

In the *Statesman* Plato actually asks whether εὐδαιμονία was realized in a life of this kind and while avoiding a straight answer indicates that he sees reasons for a "no" <sup>1</sup>. In this lecture it is impossible to deal with the entire myth; we must limit ourselves to a few salient points. Plato provides something like a cosmological framework for the myth of the golden age as well as for some other myths which he incorporates in his story. He plays with a theory of cosmic phases and cosmic reversals. In an earlier period of its existence our Cosmos was in a condition of perfect order and under the sole control of the god <sup>2</sup> (in the terms of the *Timaeus* only νοῦς but not ἀνάγκη was operative in the cosmic processes). At that time everything happened in the reverse way to its present mode of functioning. Moreover just as the Cosmos itself was guided on its path by the god himself so the human and other living beings in it were under the direct care and supervision of those divine herdsmen, the *daimones* of Cronus. The definition of the ruler as a shepherd in which the *diairesis* immediately preceding the myth has resulted would hold good for the life under Cronus whereas it is hardly applicable to the present conditions of the world (the need for correcting the definition is in fact Plato's excuse for embarking upon the myth) <sup>3</sup>.

While Plato ignores and even by implication rules out some features of Hesiod's golden age he stresses one, the abundance of food which the Earth produced of itself. The αὐτόμακτον motif which Hesiod and others after him had emphasized recurs several times in Plato's account <sup>4</sup>. There was no agriculture but neither was there any form of political organization (πολιτεῖαι ... οὐκ ἦσαν), the place of the latter being taken by the rule of the *daimones* who

<sup>1</sup> *Polit.* 272b-d. <sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* 269c ff.; 271d (for the present cosmic period see 272d ff.). <sup>3</sup> *Polit.* 268d ff.; 274e; cf. 267e. <sup>4</sup> 271 d1, e5; 272a4 f.; cf. 274c2; Hes., *Op.* 117 f.

took care of man in the same fashion in which man now-a-days takes care of his flocks. In that earlier period human beings too were put together in flocks and each flock was in the charge of a *daimon* who fed it (or drove it to pasture, ἐνεμεν). Quite clearly, in some important respects human life in that supposedly happy age did not differ from the life of animals<sup>1</sup>. By comparison with Hesiod there is in Plato's account a somewhat greater emphasis on primitivism<sup>2</sup>. Plato may have borrowed some features which create this impression of primitivism from the more 'advanced' and scientific reconstructions of man's earliest life. But such borrowings would be slight and the features themselves are inoffensive. They do not disturb the picture of abundance, peace, and apparent happiness.

Hesiod had not said, and he can scarcely have meant to say, that the *daimones* help and protect the men of their own generation. The golden race is so richly provided with all good things that it does not need divine helpers. It may be pedantic to insist that the *daimones* come into existence when the men of the first generation pass away<sup>3</sup> but there can in any case be no doubt that Hesiod thought of them as belonging to his own world and environment. The conception of the *daimones* as agents of Cronus' government and as taking complete and constant care of man is Plato's own. For Hesiod the question of man's social organization in the golden age did not exist. It is Plato who approaches the myth with this question. He uses the Hesiodic *daimones* for his answer; but the answer is not a solution of the political problem. In fact it is rather a negation

<sup>1</sup> The ζῷα, as we learn 271 d6, were divided "into species and (presumably the species subdivided) into flocks". Ζῷα includes men and θηρία (272b10, c7). θεός, 271 e5 ('a deity') seems to have caused some misunderstanding. It is most unlikely that Plato means to make a distinction between 'gods' who looked after men and 'demons' who, were in charge of animals (see also 272e6 f.). <sup>2</sup> See e.g. 272a5. <sup>3</sup> *Op.* 121.

of it, and the sole relation of this utopia to the political organization of life in man's present state is one of contrast. There is nothing in the rule of the *daimones* that could serve as model or prototype for man's political life now — for there simply was no πολιτεία, and Hesiod's description if it still matters does not suggest one. The Cosmos as such was in an ideal condition which it later, when no longer governed by the god, tries to recover or to imitate<sup>1</sup>. This creates a presumption that man's life too was ideal but when Plato asks whether man enjoyed happiness (εὐδαιμονία) in that non-political life the contrast between the presumption and the reality produces some undertones of irony and ambiguity. Plato admits that under Cronus men did not lack leisure and that they had opportunities for self-improvement but as he does not know whether they used these opportunities to advantage — i.e. to philosophical advantage — he ends with a *non liquet*<sup>2</sup>.

Let us briefly sum up. The myth of the *Statesman* includes in this section many motifs which Hesiod and the post-Hesiodic tradition had associated with the golden age. There is happiness of the traditional variety, even though it falls short of the Hesiodic extreme, τέρψις and θαλίη<sup>3</sup>. There is the usual emphasis on the abundance of material provisions. But Plato makes it clear that in this condition mankind had, politically speaking, not come into its own. Man was treated as an animal but not as a political animal. Plato's attitude to the golden age and to the supposedly ideal state of man is sceptical and with regard to an essential question negative.

<sup>1</sup> *Polit.* 273a. <sup>2</sup> Cf. esp. H. HERTER, *Bonner Jahrbücher*, 158 (1958), 116. I should not say (with M. VANHOUTTE, *La philos. polit. de Platon dans les Lois*, Louvain, 1954, 338) that by integrating the myth in a cosmological legend Plato has deprived it of all political significance but rather that it is meant to have a negative significance for the problem of man's political existence. <sup>3</sup> *Op.* 115.

In Book IV of the *Laws* Plato reads an entirely different meaning into the myth of Cronus' rule<sup>1</sup>. Intimations of the new point of view may already be found in the *Critias* where the divine herdsmen treat the human beings with more respect and greater consideration<sup>2</sup>. However, in the *Critias* Plato does not speak of Cronus and as we are concerned with Plato's use and interpretation of Hesiodic ideas we may at once turn to the *Laws* and compare its account of the golden age with that of the *Statesman*.

To anticipate our main conclusion, the condition of mankind under Cronus is no longer characterized by the absence of a πολιτεία but by the realization of the best, in fact of the ideal πολιτεία. Yet it is clear that if the myth was to yield this meaning it had to be given a different form and to be developed in a different direction.

For one thing the entire cosmological framework of the *Statesman* has been discarded. This is easy to understand, for in the *Timaeus* (which, I take it, should be placed between the *Statesman* and the *Laws*) the divine mind and the antagonistic force inherent in the nature of the Cosmos have been shown to work peacefully together and Plato would no longer see a point in associating them with alternate periods of the world. Moreover Plato, just as in the meantime he had worked out his cosmology, has also in Book III of the *Laws* presented a reconstruction of human pre-history beginning with primitive conditions and the rudimentary πολιτεία of family life, and the first phase of this — rational or at any rate non-mythical — account<sup>3</sup> could, in spite of the all but ideal simplicity of human *mores*, not be identified with the age of Cronus. The dispensation of Cronus must be kept completely separate from the 'historical' development (which is closer to the rational

<sup>1</sup> *Legg.* 713a-714a. <sup>2</sup> *Critias* 109b f. Cf. PAUL FRIEDLÄNDER, *Plato I* (Engl. transl., New York, 1958). 205 and n. 37. <sup>3</sup> *Legg.* 678e ff.; 680 b. Cf. VANHOUTTE, *op. cit.* 344.

reconstructions attempted by thinkers like Democritus). Plato himself says that the 'most happy' rule of Cronus must be placed 'a very long time' before the settlements described in Book III<sup>1</sup>, which means that it is entirely outside the world of history.

As I have indicated, Plato this time unequivocally and indeed emphatically endorses the notion that mankind's condition under Cronus was a 'most happy one' (μάλ' εὐδαίμων). But he no longer stresses the abundance of food which according to Hesiod's and to his own earlier version the Earth produced for men without any toil on their part. Such items of material happiness are now quite irrelevant. True, the first sentence of our section accepts the tradition that the blessed life under Cronus had all things in abundance and that these things were forthcoming by themselves — ἀφθονα and αὐτόματα, two adjectives which are key-words already in Hesiod<sup>2</sup>; but the meaning of these words must be explained and Plato's new version of the myth supplies the explanation.

We read also this time that *daimones* have been placed in charge of man by Cronus, and the sentences which state this recall in their wording the corresponding statements in the myth of the *Statesman*<sup>3</sup>. Yet the *daimones* are no longer called 'herdsmen' but 'rulers' and 'kings'; they do not pasture flocks but are in charge of *poleis*. They had to take care of man, Plato explains, because Cronus in his wisdom realized that human nature as long as it is left to itself can never arrive at a form of community life that is not full of *hybris*, injustice, and civil strife<sup>4</sup>. Rule by the divine is the only solution. In the *Statesman* Plato had gone beyond Hesiod by putting the *daimones* of the *Works and Days* in control of their generation of men but

<sup>1</sup> *Legg.* 713b2 f.    <sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* 713c3 f.; cf. *Polit.* 272a3, b1. (Hes., *Op.* 118).  
<sup>3</sup> 713d1-5; *Polit.* 271e6 f.    <sup>4</sup> *Legg.* 713c5 ff.

their rule as there described excluded all elements of man's social and political life. Here in *Laws* IV the motif of the ruling *daimones* has evolved into the conception of a divine *politeia*. Even under the political aspect the golden age is no longer the antithesis but is once again the ideal. The myth has changed its meaning, keeping pace with the changes of Plato's political thought.

Plato does not picture in detail how the divine rulers went about their task of governing the 'cities'. All he says is that they did it with the greatest ease, and we know that all divine activity is characterized by *ῥαστώνη*<sup>1</sup>. But he does tell us what kind of condition they brought about in the communities entrusted to their rule. There was no civil strife, there was *εὐδαιμονία*, and there were *εἰρήνη*, *αἰδώς*, *εὐνομία*, and *ἀφθονία δίκης*<sup>2</sup>. This seems to be the essential and desirable kind of 'abundance' (as I have pointed out, the 'abundance of fruits', *ἀφθονία καρπῶν*, which the myth of the *Statesman* has in common with Hesiod, is not again mentioned).

We recognize Dike, Eirene, and Eunomia as the three Horai of the *Theogony* "who watch (*ὠρεύουσι*) the works of mortal men" — note Hesiod's etymology and interpretation of the word *ῥαστώνη*<sup>3</sup>. I think it probable that each of the three owes her name and individuality to Hesiod's own speculative mind. In the *Works and Days* each of them with her specific blessings may be found present in the city of just men who avoid deeds of *hybris* and « give straight judgments to strangers and to citizens »<sup>4</sup>. We may believe that also in Hesiod's view the condition of such a city

<sup>1</sup> 713d7. See for instance the comments *Legg.* 904a3 ff. on the *θαυμαστή ῥαστώνη* of divine rule and providence. The *ῥαστώνη* motif has a long history which would repay study. <sup>2</sup> 713e1-3. <sup>3</sup> Hes., *Tb.* 901 ff. <sup>4</sup> *Op.* 225-237 (regarding the presence of Eunomia it may suffice to say that the city while it may not have good "laws" clearly flourishes in its good "ways").

approximates the happiness of the golden age. He could conceive of εὐδαιμονία equally well with or without man's organization in a political community, with or without rulers, with *Dike* or without a need for her, whereas for Plato mankind under Cronus if it was to be happy had to have the best πολιτεία. In a context which embodied other Hesiodic reminiscences the names of Hesiod's Horai presented themselves to Plato as the epitome of the flourishing conditions produced by the best of governments. We started by observing that in this account some Hesiodic features of external or material happiness which the *Statesman* still retained have been discarded as irrelevant to Plato's purpose. We now see that another and profounder conception of Hesiod has been revived and is appreciated in its political significance. What ultimately matters for human happiness is not the presence in abundance of fruits and the absence of human toil but the presence of Eirene, Dike, and Eunomia. — We need not dwell on Plato's addition of αἰδώς to the names of the Horai. Hesiod's gloomy prophecy that *Aidos* will leave the unjust men of the fifth generation comes to mind but I should attach more importance to Plato's own emphasis in many passages of the *Laws* on αἰδώς as ensuring the desirable moral attitude of the citizens<sup>1</sup>. As the names of the Horai denote objective conditions prevailing in the well governed city Plato may have wished to supplement these names by an indication of the individuals' disposition without which peace, justice, and good order of the community life cannot materialize. In another Book of the *Laws* he calls *Dike Aidoῦς παρθένος*, the "maiden daughter of *Aidos*", another instance of a new parentage which is Hesiodic in type and in spirit — in fact Plato's wording suggests that this mother owes her existence to the adjective

<sup>1</sup> Hes., *Op.* 1967-200. See e.g. *Legg.* 647a5; 729b. Cf. JAEGER, *Paideia*, 3 (New York, 1945). 122, 226.

αἰδοίη which Hesiod had attached to the maiden goddess *Dike*<sup>1</sup>.

At the end of the myth the Athenian speaker reaffirms his conviction that no city where a mortal holds the rule which ought to be in the hands of god can be saved from troubles and misfortunes. This, he says, is the true meaning (the ἀλήθεια) of the story about Cronus and his government, and therefore human cities must by every possible means try to imitate the life under Cronus<sup>2</sup> (you remember that in the myth of the *Statesman* the μίμησις motif was restricted to the Cosmos). In the present dispensation in which gods and demons are no longer active among us we can imitate the ideal government only by letting the divine and immortal element in ourselves rule. This divine part of ourselves is νοῦς and the right νόμος is νοῦ διανομή.

In the city of the *Laws* the magistrates are to be servants of the νόμοι<sup>3</sup>. The much greater emphasis on laws remains one of the characteristics which distinguish this work from the *Republic* and the *Statesman*<sup>4</sup>. In our context the concept of law is, as we have seen, reached by the next step in the progress of the thought. Unlike the idea of divine government the νόμος motif as such cannot be found in the tradition about the golden age but the reason why Plato wished to connect it with the myth is not difficult to find. For the myth as now refashioned by Plato heralds the theocratic and theocentric conception of the state which this last work of his unfolds. It is impossible and fortunately also unnecessary here to set forth how persistently Plato throughout the *Laws* upholds the priority or primacy of the divine and how much more anxious than in the *Republic* he is to provide a religious foundation for

<sup>1</sup> *Legg.* 943 *ei* (cf. Hes., *Op.* 257). The references to the power of Δίκη here and elsewhere (e.g. 716a, 717d) in the *Laws* are in harmony with the archaic and religious atmosphere of this work. <sup>2</sup> *Legg.* 713e.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 715a ff., esp. c. <sup>4</sup> Cf. GLENN R. MORROW, "Plato and the Rule of Law", *Philos. Review*, 50 (1941). 105 ff.

his city. As he affirms in Book X, anyone holding the right views about the gods will thereby be kept from unholy deed and unlawful speech; the proofs of the reality and goodness of the gods which the same Book contains are in his opinion "the best and most beautiful proem of the entire legislation<sup>1</sup>." The city delineated in the *Laws* is meant to be a city of god, a *civitas Dei*, and the government of Cronus is intended as its model. The tendency to place the ideal in the past—the historical or myth-historical past—is rightly considered characteristic of Plato's old age. As for the statement that the rule of Cronus is 'imitated' by the best constitutions of Plato's own time, let us give the concept of *μίμησις* its full value but let us beware of fanciful analogies with the *Republic*. It can hardly be Plato's intention that the members of the nocturnal council are to keep their thoughts on the government of Cronus in the same way in which the philosopher rulers of the *Republic* are to look to the eternal Forms.

Actually Plato makes clear which of the *existing* constitutions he would regard as the best. The Spartan and Cretan interlocutors have just described their own states as a mixture of monarchy, aristocracy, and democracy<sup>2</sup>. Accepting their opinions, the Athenian treats the mixed constitution as a true *πολιτεία* and if not identical with, yet in any case as the closest approximation to the theocracy which was realized under Cronus. Again—as in the case of the *νόμος* motif—I should hesitate to say that the idea of a mixed constitution is germane to Plato's interpretation of the golden age. Plato has clearly made several roads to the best form of government converge in the myth of the ideal theocracy. In a historical perspective it is particularly interesting that he has brought the mixed constitu-

<sup>1</sup> *Legg.* 885b; 887b f. Note also the opening words of the *Laws* which set the tone for the entire work. <sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* 712c-e. Cf. K. VON FRITZ, *The Theory of the Mixed Constitution* (New York), 1954). 79 ff.

tion into contact with the city of god; for we are wont to regard these conceptions as alternatives, and later political thinkers would indeed, in accordance with their general outlook or bent of mind, favor one or the other of them as the solution of the political problem but would not find it easy to endorse both. However as there is evidence, though admittedly not of the best kind, that the Stoics approved of the mixed constitution<sup>1</sup>, we should perhaps bearing Plato's precedent in mind consider it possible that they too combined such a preference with their belief in the perfect πολιτεία as being the realization of divine reason in human society.

Allow me to conclude with a few more words about the *daimones*. We have found in the *Republic* the first indication that Hesiod's *daimones* may obtain a place in the new political or philosophical scheme. We have seen that Plato thinks of them as associated with Cronus, rather than with Zeus, and that he made the most of this association. In the *Statesman* they take care of man during another phase of the Cosmos and of human life, and in the *Laws* they are the agents and so to speak executives of the ideal theocracy. Plato has definitely revived Hesiod's idea that they are φύλακες θνητῶν ἀνθρώπων<sup>2</sup>. But this revival is not confined to the idealizing account of the past. Other

<sup>1</sup> Diog. Laert. 7.1.131 (*St. V. F.* 3.700 v. A.). M. POHLENZ, *Die Stoa*<sup>2</sup> (Göttingen, 1949), 76, somewhat arbitrarily treats the testimony as referring to Panaetius. Other scholars, including VON FRITZ (*op. cit.* 82) and MARGARET E. REESOR (*The Polit. Theory of the Old and Middle Stoa*, New York, 1951, 20) seem to regard it with a certain suspicion.

<sup>2</sup> *Op.* 123. I see no reason for supposing that Plato's text of the *Erga* included vv. 124 f. (= 254 f.). But I should not exclude the possibility that the description of the φύλακες in *Op.* 252-255 influenced Plato's conception of the *daimones*. An entirely different question is whether Hesiod himself identified these spirits. WILAMOWITZ (*Hesiodos Erga*, Berlin, 1928, 70 and 140) and others think that he did. It may be wiser not to press this point. Unlike the φύλακες, the *daimones* may be independent of Zeus (as we have seen, p. 184, the statement which connects them with him is of dubious authenticity).

passages of the *Laws* adumbrate similar or essentially the same thoughts with reference to man's present existence or, indeed, to man as such<sup>1</sup>. The *daimones* are spoken of as helpers and servants of god — each of them being in charge of some portion of the human world —, as having been set over man, and as helping him in the realization of good and in the fight against evil. This Platonic conception of the *daimon* could easily be fused with the definition in the *Symposium* of the *daimon* as a mediator and messenger between god and man, and a glance at the *Epinomis* shows how early this fusion materialized<sup>2</sup>. As you know, this Platonic or Hesiodic *daimon* — we may now call him the revived Hesiodic *daimon* — was destined for a long life and important career in later Greek thought and belief. In the course of this history he proved capable of further fusions, especially with the corresponding intermediaries and divine helpers of other religions. This story need not here be told<sup>3</sup>. Nor need I dwell on the fact that the Greeks ascribed to their *daimones* other functions as well and credited them with other intentions and that there were other and competing definitions of their nature. It may be too much to maintain that the *daimon* owes his quality as ἀλεξίκακος and his task as protector (φύλαξ) of man exclusively to Hesiod's and Plato's creative genius. But I think we are entitled to say that these are the aspects emphasized and developed by both of them and that Plato's conception drew its original inspiration from Hesiod's simpler and less philosophic belief.

<sup>1</sup> See esp. *Legg.* 903b4-9 (with the comments of A. Diès, édition Budé, Paris, 1956); 906a6 f. *Legg.* 717b and 747e are perhaps less conclusive. <sup>2</sup> *Conv.* 202d ff.; *Epin.* 984d ff. <sup>3</sup> See e.g. FRIEDLÄNDER, *op. cit.* 40 f. To his bibliography for the *daimon* (346 n. 17) may now be added M. P. NILSSON, *Gesch. d. griech. Relig.* II (Munich, 1950) 200 ff., 388 ff. (on Plutarch), 516 ff. H. ERBSE, *Hermes*, 80 (1952). 304 ff. (on Plutarch); K. REINHARDT, *R. E.* s.v. 'Poseidonios' 778 ff., 786 ff. (on Xenocrates and Posidonius).

## DISCUSSION

*M. von Fritz*: Für ein richtiges Verstehen der etwas negativen Beurteilung des Kronos-Zeitalters im *Politikos* muss man meines Erachtens anfangen mit einer Betrachtung der Geschichte vom Schweinestaat im zweiten Buch der *Politeia*. Plato lässt dort den Staat entstehen durch einen Mangel an ἀτάρκεια im Leben des Einzelnen. Er kommt dann zu einem Staat, der mit dem goldenen Zeitalter bei Hesiod eine ziemliche Aehnlichkeit hat. Nach der Frage des Adeimantos, worin sich ein solcher Staat von einer ὄων πόλις unterscheidet, wird zunächst der Luxus eingeführt, und in diesem Zusammenhang wird dann auf die Notwendigkeit, Soldaten (φύλακες) zu haben, hingewiesen. Mit den Soldaten werden nun aber auch die ἀρεταί hereingebracht, was ja wohl in gewisser Weise den Sinn hat, dass die Tugenden militant sind und dass deshalb die Leiter des Staates etwas Militärisches an sich haben müssen. Was nun den *Politikos* von der *Politeia* wesentlich unterscheidet ist meines Erachtens, dass im *Politikos* zum ersten Mal die Frage gestellt wird, ob nicht die politische Macht den Menschen notwendigerweise verdirbt und also infolgedessen dagegen irgendwelche Vorkehrungen getroffen werden müssen. Da wird nun dieser Kronos-Mythos hineingebracht. Es sollte Herrscher geben, die durch den Besitz der Gewalt nicht verdorben werden. Das ist nur möglich, wenn sie mehr als Menschen sind. Man braucht also einen göttlichen Herrscher. Darum wird der Kronosmythos eingeführt. Nun haben Sie ganz recht, wenn Sie sagen, dass das Zeitalter des Kronos, wie es im *Politikos* geschildert wird, mit dem Schweinestaat im zweiten Buch der *Politeia* eine gefährliche Aehnlichkeit hat. Aber andererseits gibt es den wichtigen Unterschied, dass es in dem Schweinestaat, der dem Zeitalter des Kronos bei Hesiod ähnlich sein soll, keine Herrscher gibt, während es bei dem Kronos-Zeitalter im *Politikos* eben gerade darauf ankommt, dass, wie Sie auch herausgehoben haben, dort ein göttlicher Herrscher da ist. Am Schluss

des *Politikos* wird dann über die Frage diskutiert, ob man Gesetze braucht, und was für einen Nachteil Gesetze haben. Ich würde also sagen, dass in diesem Zwischenstadium, wo Plato sehr intensiv die Frage diskutiert, ob eine absolute Herrschaft des Wissenden oder eine Gesetzesherrschaft besser ist (wobei die Schwierigkeit darin besteht, dass das Gesetz nicht an die Mannigfaltigkeit des menschlichen Lebens angepasst werden kann), diese Kronos-Herrschaft zwei Seiten hat, eine positive als Herrschaft des Wissenden, sofern er nicht der Korruption durch den Besitz der Gewalt unterliegt, und eine negative als absolute Herrschaft, welche mit Notwendigkeit der Korruption unterliegt, wenn der Herrscher nicht mehr ist als ein Mensch. Dagegen ist in den *Gesetzen*, worauf Sie hingewiesen haben, alles auf die Gesetzesherrschaft abgestellt. Die Königsherrschaft erscheint dort nur möglich als Herrschaft von göttlichen Wesen. Zugleich erhebt sich dort jedoch ein weiteres Problem. Da die Gesetze sich nicht selbst verteidigen können, muss es jemand geben, der sie erhält und für ihre Anwendung sorgt. Dies scheint wieder der Herrscher sein zu müssen. Um die Herrschaft nicht absolut werden und damit der Korruption unterliegen zu lassen, wird der Gesetzesstaat auf eine Art gemischte Verfassung basiert, innerhalb deren die verschiedenen Herrschaftsorgane sich gegenseitig kontrollieren und in Schach halten. Trotzdem soll dieser Gesetzesstaat so nah als möglich an die Herrschaft des Wissenden, welcher der Korruption nicht unterliegt, herankommen, d. h. an die Art der Herrschaft, die im Kronosmythos geschildert wird und faktisch nur von einem übermenschlichen Wesen ausgeübt werden kann. So erscheint also die Kronos-Herrschaft des goldenen Zeitalters bei Platon dreimal, als Schweinestadt im zweiten Buch der *Politeia*, dem aber sowohl die ἀρετή wie der Herrscher fehlen, als der etwas doppelseitige und zwielfichtige Zustand der Kronos-herrschaft im *Politikos*, und als das positive Ideal der Kronos-herrschaft, welcher aber der menschliche Staat sich nur annähern kann, in den *Gesetzen*.

*M. Solmsen*: Es ist sicher richtig, dass man in den späteren

Teilen des *Politikos* nach diesem Mythos manche Probleme aufgeworfen findet, die schon auf die Form hinweisen, die der Kronosmythos in den *Gesetzen* hat. Doch möchte ich darauf hinweisen, dass der im *Politikos* geschilderte Zustand des Kronosmythos eine menschliche Existenz ohne Staat ist: es gibt dort überhaupt keine menschliche Organisation; der Zustand ist ja von den Göttern geschaffen.

*M. von Fritz*: Das ist richtig, aber ich glaube, man kann doch nicht den Kronosmythos so ganz von den Diskussionen am Ende des *Politikos* trennen; es ist doch ein positives Element darin, wenn auch nicht eine richtige *Politeia*. Die Frage der richtigen Herrschaft wird im *Politikos* nicht zu Ende diskutiert, und erst in den *Gesetzen* wird das wirklich ausgeführt, aber die Probleme sind ja doch im *Politikos* alle schon da.

*M. Verdenius*: Wenn wir uns darüber einigen können, dass das politische Problem im *Politikos* wenigstens da ist, dann könnte man die Frage stellen, ob nicht vielleicht das politische Problem selbst in dem Kronos-Abschnitt der *Erga* schon vorliegt. Ich meine im Vers 119, und speziell in dem Ausdruck ἡσυχῶι. Wilamowitz hat das übersetzen wollen durch « ohne zu arbeiten ». Ich glaube, dass das sehr unwahrscheinlich ist, und dass Mazon recht hat mit seiner Uebersetzung « sans se jalouser ni se battre ». Man könnte hier vielleicht an den späteren Begriff der ἡσυχία als eines politischen Ideales denken.

*M. Solmsen*: Das spätere Ideal der ἡσυχία ist, so weit ich es kenne, identisch mit dem Ideale der ἀπραγμοσύνη, also nicht viel tun, keine Neuerungen vorschlagen, keine Schwierigkeiten machen. Das ist eine Bedeutung die man bei Hesiod kaum erwartet.

*M. Verdenius*: Ich dachte, dass ἡσυχία speziell bei Aristoteles, aber auch schon bei Plato, doch auch die innere Harmonie einer politischen Gemeinschaft bedeutet. Und das ist gerade, glaube ich, was Hesiod hier meint.

*M. Solmsen*: Meint er das wirklich, wenn man sich die Stelle im Zusammenhang ansieht?

*M. Verdenius*: Das hängt natürlich auch von der Interpretation des ἔργα νέμοντο ab. Das wird vielfach übersetzt mit «sie verrichteten ihre Landarbeit», was, wie ich glaube, nicht zu der weiteren Beschreibung des goldenen Zeitalters passt; die Bedeutung ist vielmehr: «sie hatten den Genuss von den ἔργα», d. h. von den Produkten des Landes. Und dieses νέμεσθαι verrichten sie ἡσυχῶι, «ohne Streit, in gegenseitiger Harmonie». Natürlich handelt es sich hier nicht um eine πόλις-Gemeinschaft, aber ich wollte zur Erwägung stellen, ob dieser hesiodische ἡσυχία-Begriff nicht ein gewisser Ansatz sein könnte zu dem späteren politischen ἡσυχία-Ideal.

*M. Solmsen*: Was das νέμεσθαι betrifft — Hesiod kann sich das Leben in dem goldenen Zeitalter doch nicht ganz so vollkommen anders vorstellen als es in seiner Zeit war; irgendwas mussten die Leute denn doch tun, und so stellt er sich vor, dass sie — obwohl dies im Grunde ganz unnötig ist — etwas Landarbeit betreiben. Das ist natürlich keine schwere Arbeit; sie sind sehr glücklich und zufrieden damit, und die Enttäuschungen, die dem Landmann in Hesiods eigener Zeit zufallen, sind bei ihnen abwesend. Wir haben eine ähnliche Stelle in 231 (es handelt sich dort um die gerechte Stadt, die dem Zeitalter des Kronos in manchem ähnlich ist): θαλίης δὲ μεμηλότα ἔργα νέμονται.

*M. Verdenius*: Es scheint mir, dass der Arbeitsgedanke in dieser Zeile nur durch das Wort μεμηλότα ausgedrückt wird: sie geniessen also die Produkte der Landarbeit, denen sie ihre Sorge und Arbeit gewidmet haben (μεμηλότα). Das Geniessen findet statt θαλίης, «bei Festen». Νέμεσθαι kann sehr gut bedeuten «sich selbst etwas zuteilen», darum «von etwas geniessen»; in der Odyssee hat es schon diese Bedeutung. Wenn man dagegen annimmt, dass Hesiod sich die Menschen des goldenen Zeitalters nur als Bauern vorstellen kann, so gibt es doch einen sehr auffälligen Widerspruch mit 118: nach dem αὐτομάτη dort kann Hesiod doch nicht gleich im nächsten Vers von Landarbeit sprechen.

*M. Solmsen*: Auch im goldenen Zeitalter müssen die Menschen

mindestens ernten. Sicher gibt Hesiod keine Andeutung irgendeiner politischen Organisation.

*M. Verdenius*: Ich wollte hier auch nicht mehr als eine Art von Vorstufe der späteren « politischen » ἡσυχία angedeutet finden.

*M. Solmsen*: Das ist möglich; vielleicht könnte man ἡσυχιοι mit « ohne politische Sorgen und Tätigkeiten » übersetzen.

*M. La Penna*: Pour déterminer si dans ce passage il y a une allusion politique ou non, ne serait-il pas utile de le comparer à la description du cinquième âge? S'il y a là une allusion aux στάσεις politiques, il est probable qu'il y en a une ici aussi.

*M. Solmsen*: I agree that it is a good method of interpretation to look at the descriptions of the other Ages and to see whether there is any political allusion in them.

*M. Kirk*: If I am not mistaken, such an allusion may be found in the description of the Silver Age, v. 134-135:

ὕβριν γὰρ ἀτάσθαλον οὐκ ἐδύναντο  
ἀλλήλων ἀπέχειν

There is an implication of a mutual strife there which, I think, does give to the ἡσυχιοι in the description of the Golden Age some kind of implication of social peace. This, I think, must also be implicit in the idea that they can reap the products of the earth without any trouble.

*M. Solmsen*: That is possibly right. However, I am not sure whether Hesiod conceived of these various ages as political communities. I would rather assume that he just thinks of people living somehow together, either perfectly at peace with one another or trying to do violence to one another.

*M. von Fritz*: It seems to me that we must make some distinctions in order to arrive at conclusions. We have till now used the word « political » with rather different meanings. If we start from the Greek πόλις and πολιτικὸν ζῶον, we see that it not only means what we call « political » but also « social ». There is a social living-together in the Golden Age, but, as you pointed out, the tensions are lacking, and therefore there is no need for

authority and for political organisation in the modern sense of the word. If we start from this observation, we can, I think, also come to a better understanding of the Kronos-myth in the *Politikos*. You quite rightly pointed out that the notion that the political leaders were «shepherds of people» is a very old one; and it has certainly played a part in the teaching of Socrates, as we see both from several anecdotes and the philosophy of Antisthenes and other disciples of his. Furthermore it is very important that right at the beginning of the *Politikos*, in the *διαίρεσις*, Plato makes it clear that there is a fundamental difference between the situation in human societies and the relation between shepherd and sheep, because the shepherd is a superior kind of being — if this relation were to be applied to human societies, the human shepherd or ruler must also belong to a higher category of beings, and that is, in my opinion, exactly the idea which we find in the Kronos-myth. Further, I still believe that this Kronos-myth is fundamentally connected with the story of the good monarchy that comes later in the *Politikos*: the important thing is that there we find a superior power and a superior insight, which deals with existing tensions in such a way that no further great political organisation is necessary. But all this is brought in—and this seems to me to be the important point—not for its own sake but in order to discuss a real problem that arises in human society. The problem is this: if we could find a human being who could be such a ruler, then kingship would be by far the best form of government; but since this is impossible—for even the best ruler may be corrupted by the possession of power—it is necessary to make other arrangements. So far, I think, the question is carried in the *Politikos*, for there no final connection is made between these last discussions and the Kronos-myth. The next step is taken in the *Laws*, where this connection is actually made, but in such a way that the problem is: «If we had a divine ruler, as in the case of Kronos, we still would need a social organisation but not a political organisation in the sense of a distribution of power and hierarchy and mixed constitution. But since we do

not have such a divine ruler, we shall need a political organisation indeed, but—and here it seems to me that the positive connection is made which was not made in the *Politikos*—this organisation is to come as near as possible to the state that would exist under a ruler belonging to a superior category of beings.

*M. Solmsen*: You may indeed say that later in the *Politikos*, in the discussion of kingship, we do well to remember the Kronos myth; but I should not say that when we read Plato's version of that myth we should have in mind any of the thoughts that Plato develops later. In the Kronos myth he tries to envisage a condition of human beings in which there is no political organization. We cannot call these herdsmen βασιλεῖς in the proper sense of the word. Your distinction between political and social life is certainly helpful, though we should not forget that this distinction hardly existed in Plato's time. For him and his contemporaries it was natural to think in the terms of the πόλις. It was a great effort to imagine any kind of society—any living together of human beings—that was not « political ». For Hesiod, I suppose, it was easier to think of human beings living together without a πόλις.

*M. von Fritz*: I want to ask just one question: what, in your opinion, is the function of the myth of Kronos in the *Politikos*? For what purpose do you think that Plato has introduced it? To give a clear picture of an undesirable state of things or to point out what the problem of rulership is?

*M. Solmsen*: Not necessarily the latter: he certainly points out the problem of rulership in the last part of the *Politikos*, but in the myth of Kronos he just wants to give a picture of human beings living without a πολιτεία.

*M. von Fritz*: This seems to me extremely unlikely, because, after all, Plato introduces the distinction between the ποιμήν (as described in the myth of Kronos) and the political ruler. I cannot believe that he should merely set out this whole myth in order to show human beings without a political order, as a purely negative picture, which then is not criticized in any way.

*M. Solmsen*: It is criticized in so far as further progress is considered necessary.

*M. Verdenius*: I would like to return now to Hesiod and to ask this question: is there not a very fundamental contrast between the function of the φύλακες in Hesiod and Plato? Plato's φύλακες are rulers, whereas Hesiod's φύλακες are watchers. It seems to me that the idea of providence and protection and, in general, of a positive function is almost completely missing in Hesiod's conception of the φύλακες: they watch over human unrightfulness but, as far as I can see, this is their only task. In short, there is no rule.

*M. Solmsen*: Certainly there is no rule. It may be that I have left this point out but I thought I dealt with the subject when I said that for Hesiod the political problem did not here exist. When Plato approached this description of the Golden Age with the question « What kind of community life was there, who took care of human beings? », he gave the φύλακες an entirely new function indeed.

*M. Grimal*: Le problème que vous soulevez, celui de la différence d'interprétation du mythe de l'Age d'or entre Hésiode et Platon, ne repose-t-il pas sur le fait que, pour Hésiode, les différentes races ont entre elles une différence de nature, tandis que pour Platon, les hommes de l'Age d'or sont substantiellement identiques à l'humanité que nous connaissons, c'est-à-dire que Platon transpose l'état de l'humanité actuelle avec ses besoins et toutes ses tendances dans un monde antérieur qui était meilleur? Donc ces hommes ont besoin d'une πολιτεία, tandis que je me demande si, dans l'esprit d'Hésiode, les hommes de l'Age d'or n'étaient pas dépourvus du besoin de πολιτεία par leur nature même. A ce propos, je pense aux variations du dix-huitième siècle français sur le mythe du « bon sauvage »: l'homme dans son état actuel a besoin de politique, de πολιτεία, de πόλις, parce qu'il est corrompu, tandis que le « bon sauvage » n'a pas besoin de πολιτεία parce qu'il n'est pas corrompu.

*M. Solmsen*: I certainly agree with your first proposition,

namely that Hesiod thinks of the men of the Golden Age as essentially different from the present generation, whereas Plato ignores that. For the rest, I believe that, when we start comparing the notions of the eighteenth century with the utterances of Hesiod, we should remain alive to the fact that Hesiod himself did probably not think out these things rationally: as he conceives the men of the Golden Age, they do not need a πόλις or πολιτεία; but I do not think that he ever asked himself what this implied and whether a political organization is necessary only after men have become corrupted.

*M. Grimal*: Ce n'est pas la seule fois que la poésie archaïque présentait un peuple sans πόλις. Comme les hommes de l'Age d'or, les Cyclopes odysseens vivent en dehors de toute « cité », mais ils sont mauvais, tandis que les hommes dont parle Hésiode sont bons. Platon est sans doute plus proche d'Homère que d'Hésiode.

*M. Solmsen*: Here I would say that there were various intermediate stages, because philosophers, too, and authors of comedies (I am thinking particularly of the Ἄγριοι of Pherecrates) speculated on the primitive conditions of man and brought in several notions which are neither found in Hesiod nor in Homer: for instance that these primitive people were particularly repulsive and that conditions were very bad. Therefore in this point I would not make a complete and simple correlation between Plato and Hesiod or Homer. All these variants of the description of man's earliest political existence were known to Plato, and to all of them he has defined his attitude, partly in the myth of the *Politikos* and partly elsewhere.

*M. von Fritz*: It seems to me that what Mr. Grimal said is really very important; and perhaps if we start from this even Mr. Solmsen and I may come to an agreement concerning both the relation of Plato to Hesiod and the meaning of the Kronos-myth in the *Politikos*. In this dialogue, after the state of things under Kronos has been described, Socrates asks the question: « What do you think is preferable, the state of things under

Kronos or the state of things under Zeus (that is, the state of things as it exists now)?». Then he says: « We must make a distinction. If the people under Kronos used the leisure which they had, and the fact that they were under such a good government, and the fact that they could talk with the animals in order to become philosophers and to arrive at φρόνησις, then the life under Kronos will have been a thousand times better than the life that we have. But if, on the other hand, they used all these gifts solely in order to eat and drink well and to do nothing else, they were undoubtedly inferior in to the men of our time.» So here the ἀρεταί are brought in again, and the important point is whether the ἀρεταί existed in this benevolent rule of a higher being or whether they really did not exist. Yet, at this point, Plato does not take up the problem again which he brings in the *Republic*, that is, whether the ἀρεταί can exist in a state of things when there is a complete lack of tension or whether they arise only where there is tension, and where they therefore have to be militant. Now to come back to the question of Plato's relation to Hesiod. It seems to me that Plato neither takes a completely negative nor a completely positive attitude toward Hesiod but that he rather asks him a question: « What exactly is your Golden Age? Is it something like the pigs' state or is it the state of things that I consider desirable?». In order to find an answer, it should be observed that in Hesiod's description of the Golden Age nothing is said about the higher virtues. On the other hand, since we have said that the Golden Age is probably introduced in order to provide a contrast to the Iron Age, and since the Iron Age is not lost beyond hope but can be retrieved by Δίκη, the picture given of the improved Iron Age, though certainly not quite what Plato envisaged as the ideal state of things under the rule of Kronos, comes yet at least somewhat nearer to it than Hesiod's description of the Golden Age. And so, I think, we obtain in this way a view of a rather complicated relation both of Plato to Hesiod, and of the different concepts of the Kronos-Age in Plato's writings to one another.

*M. Solmsen*: I have not much to say to this because it is my own opinion, too, that Plato was also interested in the description of the just city in Hesiod, and that later on, in the representation of the Kronos-myth in the *Laws*—that representation which is much more synthetic and also much more positive, and which solves problems unsolved in the *Politikos*—he makes use of the conceptions which Hesiod embodied in the just city. Now, as for the ἀρεταί and their existence and practice under Kronos, I think Plato is not here as close to his notion of the ὑῶν πολιτεία as Prof. von Fritz thinks. The very limited ἀρεταί, whose possible materialization in the Golden Age is discussed here by Plato, are spoken of in an ironical way which shows that man did not have in that period the possibility of attaining real spiritual perfection as a philosopher. It is indeed quite natural for Plato to approach the traditional description of the Golden Age with this alternative of a perfection of man as political being or philosopher. In a sense these two perfections are synthesized in the *Republic*. I take it that Plato's first great problem was the true πόλις and the realization of man's political ἀρεταί. But the Academy did not become the centre for a political reform of Greece, as Plato may or may not have envisaged its role originally. It became a school of philosophy. When Plato wrote the *Politikos* the development had already gone very far in that direction. Hence it is natural for him to ask whether the men of the golden age were likely to engage in philosophical inquiries. If political life and the realization of political values were denied to them it would still be—theoretically—possible that they might realize the values of a philosophical life. They have one essential prior condition for that, leisure (πολλὴ σχολή, 272 b 9).

*M. Waszink*: Mr. Grimal has observed that in the *Politikos* Plato deliberately ignores the historical point of view. I think this is a very important observation, and I wonder whether we are not a little losing sight of the point that, whereas Hesiod quite naturally brings in the notion of time and describes an evolution, Plato is rather treating various synchronic situations—for him

the systematic, not the historical, approach is always the natural thing.

*M. Solmsen*: It is indeed true that Plato does not at all concern himself with the historical relations between the Kronos Age and the present age—he is concerned with the perfect model and with the relations between the perfect model and the imperfect human conditions. In Hesiod the sequence in time matters but I should not call him a historian.

*M. Waszink*: I would not do that either. I only wanted to point out that Hesiod quite naturally takes time into account, whereas for Plato the purely systematic approach is, as usual, predominant in the *Politikos*.

*M. Kirk*: I wonder whether it is possible to detect a common conception in the period of Homer and Hesiod by relating the conditions of the Golden Age in Hesiod with those in the story of the Cyclopes in the ninth book of the *Odyssey*. I have the impression that it was the mere fact of the necessities of life being freely available that by itself eradicated human strife. At all events it is notable that, even though the Cyclopes are described as being without *θέμις*, they live among themselves apparently in peace. The only way in which their lack of *θέμις* is demonstrated, apart of course from the savage behaviour of Polyphemos to Odysseus, is in the cynical indifference shown by the other Cyclopes when Polyphemos says that he is in trouble. They are depicted as people who are *ἄγριοι* and *ἀθέμιστοι*, to be sure, but who have no particular social problems; and the thing that enables them to live as they do is precisely that food was *ἄφθορος* and that there was no question of *ἔργον*. It is *ἔργον* which immediately produces social tensions. Unfortunately when Hesiod comes to describe the Race of Silver—obviously with a good deal of degeneration from the Golden Race—he does not say anything specific about whether the earth still produced its fruits freely, but I would guess that this was no longer so. And I have already laid stress on the probability that with the Silver Race the elements of social tension had entered. Now if this distinction

is a possible one Plato certainly did not observe it precisely, because even in the passages of the *Laws* which we have been discussing he still emphasizes that the fruits of the earth are produced *αὐτόματα*—there is no need for men in this society to work. Yet they have to have kings and they have to have a constitution—in other words, in spite of the fact that the necessities of life are freely available without any necessity to work, Plato still thinks that the social tensions arise and that you have to have some kind of society. At all events Plato (like, I imagine, most of his contemporaries) used these myths very freely and he distorted them a good deal to suit the needs of his particular context. We should bear this in mind in connection with the question of the *ποιμένες*.

*M. Solmsen*: It should, however, be noted that in the passage of the *Laws* it is no longer regarded as self-evident that all things were there in abundance by themselves, as in Hesiod. They are there thanks to the God.

*M. Kirk*: An alternative explanation, to which I think I feel slightly more inclined, is that the production of these fruits of the earth, *ἄφθονά τε καὶ αὐτόματα*, was a well-known, in fact perhaps the best known, feature of the traditional Golden Age; and when Plato wants to mention the Golden Age and to develop other aspects of it he simply adds this to relate it to the common myth. When, in the next sentence (713 c 3), he says «the cause of these things is as follows», he is referring not so much to the *ἄφθονά τε καὶ αὐτόματα* as to the general concept *τῆς τῶν τότε μακαρίας ζωῆς*, for that is the point which he in fact develops in what follows.

*M. Solmsen*: It should also be mentioned that Homer, in his description of the life of the Cyclopes, speaks in a much more specific way about the absence of political life than Hesiod does in his description of the Golden Age. In the *Laws* (680 b) Plato himself quotes that passage of Homer and shows a particular interest in the statement that among the Cyclopes there are οὐτ' ἀγοραὶ βουλευφόροι οὔτε θέμιστες.

*M. La Penna*: Il mito dell'età dell'oro può rispondere ad esigenze diverse. Per lo più, come è ovvio, esso è la proiezione nel passato degli ideali del presente, e questi ideali si configurano secondo i bisogni e i problemi delle varie situazioni storiche: così è per Esiodo, così è per Platone nel IV delle *Leggi*. Platone proietta nell'età dell'oro il suo ideale di città bene ordinata, senza contrasti politici, senza lotte sociali; il contadino di Beozia vi mette soprattutto l'abbondanza. Ma anche Esiodo conosce discordie (cfr., per l'età d'argento, *Op.* 134 s.), benchè ignori, naturalmente, le tempeste sociali e politiche dei tempi di Teognide o di Platone; perciò è possibile che in 118 ἤσυχτοι si riferisca alla mancanza di discordie, mentre in 117 ἐθέλημοί si riferisce alla mancanza di coercizione da parte dei capi (che non esistono e di cui non c'è bisogno). Diverso è il caso del *Politico*. Qui Platone polemizza, più o meno esplicitamente, contro una concezione inferiore della vita umana, che si fa consistere solo nell'abbondanza dei beni materiali, nella facile soddisfazione dei bisogni. Ciò mi pare dimostrato ottimamente dal Prof. Solmsen.

Ho trovato particolarmente interessante il punto in cui il Solmsen accenna a rimanipolazioni del testo dovute a tendenze filosofiche o religiose. Uno studio di storia dei testi nell'antichità che esaminasse organicamente questi fenomeni, sarebbe desiderabile. Tra le manifestazioni di questo genere rientra la lezione che Platone dà di *Op.* 122 s. Credo col Verdenius che il testo dei manoscritti sia superiore: ἀλεξίκακοι è stato introdotto da qualcuno che voleva precisare la funzione dei δαίμονες secondo una concezione nuova, mentre non si concepisce perchè sarebbe stato eliminato.

*M. Solmsen*: I would say that in Book IV of the *Laws* Plato finds a way of amalgamating features of Hesiod's description of the just city with that of the Golden Age. As to the variant readings in *Op.* 122-123, it is impossible to say anything definite since our knowledge of the history of the text is too limited. The variant in 122 (ἀγνοί, ὑποχθόνιοι καλέονται Plato in the *Cratylus*; ἀγνοί ἐπιχθόνιοι τελέθουσιν Plato in the *Republic*) has the

advantage that there is no mention of Zeus (Διὸς μεγάλου διὰ βουλάς). In this description of the reign of Kronos, Zeus seems out of place.

*M. Verdenius*: When I made my remark on the fundamental difference between the rôles of the φύλακες in Hesiod and Plato, I was simply preparing a remark on this textual problem which now has been touched by Professor La Penna. I am fairly certain about the fact that the man who in 122 put ἀλεξίκακοι into the text instead of δαίμονές εἰσι was Plato himself, because this is an idea which harmonizes particularly well with his conception of the φύλακες as divine shepherds, as ποιμένες.

*M. Solmsen*: There is also the possibility that Plato may have known several forms of the text and may have chosen one which particularly appealed to him. I would not be inclined to assume a deliberate change of the text by Plato himself, because in the *Republic*, where we find the variant ἀλεξίκακοι, Plato had not yet developed the theory of the ποιμένες.

*M. Verdenius*: But even if Plato does not explicitly mention that notion in the *Republic*, it may still have been an idea which he always had, and so may have put into this Hesiodic text. It can, I think, be shown that the other variants are also arbitrary alterations made by Plato himself. For instance, καλέονται has been replaced by τελέθουσιν in the quotation in the *Republic*, because there Plato wants to point out that people who have died in war actually become such δαίμονες as the δαίμονες of the Golden Age.

*M. Solmsen*: That is perfectly possible indeed for τελέθουσιν but I wonder whether the same holds good for the variant ἀλεξίκακοι.

*M. Verdenius*: I quite agree that τελέθουσιν is perhaps a more deliberate change than ἀλεξίκακοι. As to ἀγνοί... καλέονται, I think we have here a reminiscence of the famous fragment from Pindar's θρῆνοι (*Fr.* 133 Snell) which is quoted by Plato in the *Meno* 81 b. In this fragment Pindar speaks of ἥρωες ἀγνοί and these ἥρωες in Plato's eyes were δαίμονες.

