

SOME PASSAGES IN PLATO'S LAWS (IV AND V)

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(1) In a most solemn address (*Legg.* 4, 715 e 7ff.) the law-giver reminds the citizens that God controls beginning, middle and end; next turning to *Dike*, God's constant companion, he finds in her train those who will achieve εὐδαιμονία because they are in a healthy state of mind. Unlike them, ὁ δέ τις ἐξαρθεὶς ὑπὸ μεγαλαυχίας, ἢ χρήμασιν ἐπαιρόμενος ἢ τιμαῖς ἢ καὶ σώματος εὐμορφία ἅμα νεόττη καὶ ἀνοία φλέγεται τὴν ψυχὴν μεθ' ὕβρεως... (716 a 4-7) and (relying on himself) σκιρτᾷ ταραττων πάντα ἅμα (b 2) until he meets his punishment. How are we to construe the five datives between μεγαλαυχίας and φλέγεται? ἢ χρήμασι calls for one or several additional causes of the man's arrogance. ἢ τιμαῖς ἢ καὶ σώματος εὐμορφία would seem the minimum, but some editors and translators, notably E.B. England, E. des Places and R.G. Bury¹⁾ (if I understand each of them correctly) add the remaining two datives, without worrying whether the words left, φλέγεται...μεθ' ὕβρεως, suffice to describe the resulting condition of a soul. Actually μεθ' welcomes, even if it does not positively insist on, a partner, and this partner would best appear in the dative case; for, as Wilamowitz à propos φλέγεσθαι observed: "Das Feuer oder das Licht ist immer von dem entzündet, was in dem Dativ dabei

1) Burnet's punctuation, i.e. the commas before ἢ χρήμασιν and before ἢ καὶ σώματος..., puzzles me. E.B. England, *The Laws of Plato* (Manchester 1921) (*ad* 716 a 5) argues for the same construction that R.G. Bury (LCL 1926) and E. des Places (Budé 1951) indicate by their rendering.

steht."²⁾ LSJ, s.v. φλέγω, provides this verb in our passage with two datives: νεότητι καὶ ἀνοίᾳ φλέγεται τὴν ψυχὴν, ἄμα being left out in the cold. How then are we to adjudicate the conflicting claims of ἐπαιρόμενος and φλέγεται?

My answer would be that three datives: χρήμασιν, τιμαῖς, εὐμορφίᾳ indicate things to be proud of, that νεότης is acceptable as companion of εὐμορφίᾳ but that no one is likely to pride himself on ἀνοία in the same sense as he prides himself on wealth, honors, good looks and youthfulness.³⁾ However, as description of a person's state of mind or soul ἀνοία associates readily with ὕβρις. Between two datives a καὶ could easily creep in but the text is better and clearer without it: ἢ χρήμασιν ἐπαιρόμενος ἢ τιμαῖς ἢ καὶ σώματος εὐμορφίᾳ ἄμα νεότητι [καὶ] ἀνοίᾳ φλέγεται τὴν ψυχὴν μεθ' ὕβρεως.

(2) In the new city the first and highest honor is reserved for the gods; yet not many people honor them in the right way. The question τίς...πρᾶξις φίλη καὶ ἀκόλουθος θεῶ; (4.716 c 1) gives rise to an extended regulation not only of worship but also of conduct toward kinsmen, fellow citizens, strangers, etc. When the subject of "honor" is taken up again (5.726ff.) we learn what is second in the hierarchy, ...τὴν αὐτοῦ ψυχὴν μετὰ θεοῦς...τιμᾶν δεῖν λέγων δευτέραν ὀρθῶς παρακελεύομαι (726 a 6). But again τιμᾶ δ' ὡς ἔπος εἶπεῖν ἡμῶν οὐδεὶς ὀρθῶς, δοκεῖ δέ. Self-praise, self-indulgence, concern about one's life in situations where it should not be valued so highly, are some of the mistakes people commit without realizing that each of them inflicts dishonor on the soul. At the end of this disquisition (728 c 9ff.) Plato emphasizes once more the unique importance of soul which, he repeats, δεύτερον ἐτάχθη τιμῇ (d 3), then continues τὸ δὲ τρίτον, πᾶς ἂν τοῦτο γε νοήσειεν, τὴν τοῦ

2) Pindaros (Berlin 1922) 411 n., where he comments on *N.* 10.2 and *I.* 7.23. It can hardly matter that in these passages the datives are not pejorative.

3) Note that of the datives associated with the verb ἐπαίρεισθαι at *Resp.* 434 b 1 and 608 b 5ff. none is comparable to ἀνοίᾳ.

σώματος εἶναι κατὰ φύσιν τιμὴν. The procedure which he at this point suggests, τὰς δ' αὖ τιμὰς δεῖ σκοπεῖν, καὶ τούτων τίνες ἀληθεῖς καὶ ὅσαι κίβδηλοι (d 4ff.), parallels what he has done first for the gods, then for the soul. Applied to the body, it shows that neither the beautiful nor the strong nor the swift kind is truly τίμιον (d 7ff.). In view of the parallel procedure for gods, soul and body, I suggest that Plato wrote at 728 d 5 τὰς δ' αὖ τιμὰς δεῖ σκοπεῖν καὶ τούτου (rather than τούτων), τίνες ἀληθεῖς καὶ ὅσαι κίβδηλοι.

(3) In the subject of human motivations the Laws go their own way. Pleasure and pain are recognized as powerful influences on human conduct. A beautiful passage in Book 1 (636 d 7ff.) sets the tone for much that follows: δύο γὰρ αὐται πηγαὶ (scil. ἡδονὴ and λύπη) μεθεῖνται φύσει ρεῖν, ὧν ὁ μὲν ἀρυτόμενος ὄθεν τε δεῖ καὶ ὀπότε καὶ ὀπόσον εὐδαιμονεῖ, ... ὁ δὲ ἀνεπιστημόνως ἅμα καὶ ἐκτός τῶν καιρῶν τάναντία ἂν ἐκείνῳ ζῶη. We do well to bear this thought in mind when we read in Book 5 (733 a 9ff.) a sequence of observations concerning human reactions which help Plato to lay the ground for a κρίσις or σύγκρισις βίων. If ἡδοῦναι καὶ λυπαῖναι are the ἀνθρώπειον μάλιστα from which the mortal creature (ἀνάγκη) ἀτεχνῶς οἷον ἐξηρηθησαί τε καὶ ἐκκρεμάμενον εἶναι... (732 e 4ff.), the right manner of "tasting" (γεύεσθαι) these experiences is all important (733 a 4-6).⁴⁾

In what follows, Plato works his way to the "right manner" (I incorporate the changes which I think are necessary): ἡ δὲ ὀρθότης τίς; τοῦτο ἤδη παρὰ τοῦ λόγου χρὴ λαμβάνοντα σκοπεῖν. εἴτε οὕτως ἡμῖν κατὰ φύσιν πέφυκεν εἴτε ἄλλως [παρὰ φύσιν], βίον χρὴ παρὰ βίον ἡδίω καὶ λυπηρότερον ὧδε σκοπεῖν· ἡδονὴν βουλόμεθα ἡμῖν εἶναι, λύπην δὲ οὐθ' αἰρούμεθα οὕτε βουλόμεθα. τὸ δὲ μηδέτερον ἀντὶ μὲν ἡδονῆς οὐ βουλόμεθα, λύπης δὲ ἀλλάττεσθαι βουλόμεθα. λύπην δ' ἐλάττω μετὰ μείζονος ἡδονῆς βουλόμεθα, ἡδονὴν δ' ἐλάττω μετὰ μείζονος λύπης

4) See also, e.g., 2.653 a f. I cannot here deal with Plato's attitude to ἡδονὴ and hedonism. Suffice it to say that the argument in Book 5 results in finding greater ἡδονὴ on the side of the excellences (733 e 3 - 734 e 2).

οὐ βουλόμεθα. ἴσα δὲ ἀντὶ ἴσων ἐκάτερα τούτων οὐχ ὡς βουλόμεθα <οὐδ' ὡς οὐ βουλόμεθα> ἔχοιμεν ἄν διασαφεῖν (733 a 6-b 6). This passage, it should be realized, is not yet the actual examination or comparison of human βίῳι;⁵⁾ rather it leads us to the threshold of the intended comparison which begins a few lines later (c 2: ἐν ᾧ μὲν βίῳι ἔνεστι πολλά ἐκάτερα...).

I gather from E.B. England's commentary that the expression ἄλλως παρὰ φύσιν (733 a 8) caused misgivings in the 19th century. More recently toleration has prevailed. I do not see how the expression could be justified as a pleonasm; nor can I accept England's own defense of παρὰ φύσιν as an explanation of ἄλλως, a suggestion which would strike me as improbable even if ἄλλως were = ἐναντίως.⁶⁾

What prompted me to add four words in the last sentence quoted (733 b 5) was a strong feeling that after so much moving back and forth between βουλόμεθα and οὐ βουλόμεθα a mere οὐχ ὡς βουλόμεθα could not be adequate. The content as well as the form of the reasoning (i.e. the λόγος a 6) so far deployed suggest for this situation a statement of our inability to decide between "yes" and "no". Still I would not have trusted my feeling, if the sequel in Plato's text had not provided support. For in the next two sentences—longish sentences which need not be written out—Plato introduces complicating factors. Both pleasure and pain are apt to vary in magnitude, diversity and intensity (σφοδρότης). All such variations must be taken into account, yet the basic point of view remains the same and as soon as

5) For this reason and because it would introduce an unexpected and (in the context) pointless thought it is not possible to understand ἴσα ἀντὶ ἴσων as comparing one state of equal balance with another. Trevor Saunders (*BICS Suppl.* 28, London 1972, 24ff.) recommends this interpretation because ἀντὶ is commonly used for exchange. This, I admit, is the meaning in b 2. Still "set over against" is a sufficiently well attested meaning of ἀντὶ (see *Resp.* 331 b; *Phil.* 63 c; *Legg.* 705 b) to which LSJ is fairer than Ast's *Lexicon Platonicum*. England's reference (*ad c* 7) to b 1 is a mistake. A presence of both emotions in equal strength is not the same as the absence of both.

6) Cf. also the use of κατὰ φύσιν in 734 a 8f. in a sentence which sums up the comparison of opposite βίῳις.

Plato actually begins to look at and considers the pleasure and pain present in different types of lives, he finds a decisive ὑπερβάλλειν in all instances but one: ἐν ᾧ δ' αὖ βίῃ ἰσορροπεῖ, καθάπερ ἐν τοῖς πρόσθεν δεῖ διανοεῖσθαι· τὸν ἰσορροπον βίον ὡς τῶν μὲν ὑπερβαλλόντων τῷ φίλῳ ἡμῖν βουλόμεθα, τῶν δ' αὖ τοῖς ἐχθροῖς οὐ βουλόμεθα (733 c 6-d 2). ἰσορροπεῖ evidently corresponds to ἴσα ἀντὶ ἴσων of b 5, although now that matters have become more complicated, the simple equality of b 5 is replaced by a subtle balance: in some respects pleasures outweigh the pains; in others the latter are stronger. If in this situation we react by a βουλόμεθα as well as by an οὐ βουλόμεθα, we are evidently just as stymied here (at c 7) as we were in the identical situation at b 5, and the necessity of adding the negative clause in b 5 is proved by its presence in d 1.⁷⁾

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7) Despite the invaluable help provided by Saunders' *Bibliography on Plato's Laws* (New York 1976), which covers the period between 1920 and 1970, I do not know whether or not others have suggested my remedy for 732 c 1: γελώπων τε εἴργεσθαι χρὴ τῶν ἐξαισίων καὶ δακρύων...καὶ ὄλωσ (ὅλην Mss.) περιχάρειαν πᾶσαν ἀποκρυπτόμενον καὶ περιωδυνίαν εὐσημονεῖν πειρᾶσθαι... About the two clauses immediately following I feel hopeless even if κατὰ τε εὐπραγίας...καὶ κατ' ἀτυχίας (Badham for κατὰ τύχας) is written. (I do not understand how L.A. Post, *TAPA* 61, 1930, 40, construes the passage.)