

DOI: 10.31857/S032103910017522-7

## ANAXAGORAS AND PLATO: FROM NATURAL SCIENCE TO SOCRATIC HUMANISM

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I wish to offer some considerations that may add to a preponderance of evidence for those who wish to see the dramatic date of Plato's *Republic* as 429 B.C. It is not my purpose to argue at length for the dramatic date of 429 along traditional lines, but rather to illustrate that Plato sees the *Republic* as marking the passing of the old natural science conception of philosophy represented by Anaxagoras, to the dawning of a new era of humanist philosophy that he is embarking on, marked by the transition from *Republic* I to *Republic* II. I believe that the considerations which follow add a significant and different dimension in support of this claim. The first part of the article looks at the fact that Pericles and Anaxagoras die in or around the year that Plato was born, suggesting that Plato sees his birth as ushering in a new philosophical era. I then examine Plato's assessment of Anaxagoras' philosophy as a physicalist theory that is left wanting in the face of Socrates' ethical inquiry. Finally, I address three types of symbolism in the *Republic*, namely what is symbolically implied by the structural movement from the Moon to the Sun, the contrast between the family of Cephalus and the family of Plato, and the battles that took place in the Piraeus that brought the Peloponnesian war to a close end.

*Keywords:* Socrates, Anaxagoras, Plato's philosophy, Peloponnesian War, Bendis

## АНАКСАГОР И ПЛАТОН: ОТ ЕСТЕСТВЕННЫХ НАУК К СОКРАТИЧЕСКОМУ ГУМАНИЗМУ

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This article emerged from a presentation at the 20<sup>th</sup> Annual *Philosophy in Assos Conference* in Assos, Turkey, 2020. The author wishes to thank the anonymous referees from *Vestnik Drevney Istorii* for their insightful and helpful comments.

В статье предлагаются некоторые дополнительные доказательства в пользу того, что временем действия в платоновском «Государстве» следует считать 429 г. до н.э. Моя цель состоит не в том, чтобы пространно обосновывать эту дату в соответствии с традиционными взглядами, но скорее в том, чтобы показать, что сам Платон рассматривает «Государство» как маркер перехода от старой естественнонаучной концепции философии, представленной Анаксагором, к новой эпохе гуманистической философии, в которую он вступает и которая отмечена переходом от первой книги «Государства» ко второй. Я полагаю, что соображения, выдвинутые в статье, послужат новым значимым аргументом в поддержку этого утверждения. В первой части статьи рассматривается тот факт, что Перикл и Анаксагор умирают примерно в год рождения Платона, что позволяет предположить, что Платон воспринимает свое рождение как начало новой философской эры. Затем я исследую оценку Платоном философии Анаксагора как физикалистской теории, которая оказывается несостоятельной перед лицом этических изысканий Сократа. Наконец, я обращаюсь к трем типам символики в «Государстве», а именно к тому, что символически подразумевается под структурным движением от Луны к Солнцу, контрастом между семьей Кефала и семьей Платона и происходившими в Пирее битвами, которые положили конец Пелопоннесской войне.

*Ключевые слова:* Сократ, Анаксагор, философия Платона, Пелопоннесская война, Бендида

For well over a century, scholars have attempted to come to a conclusion regarding the definitive dramatic date of Plato's *Republic*. While it is not my intention to undertake a detailed review of all this scholarly debate here, I do wish to offer some considerations that may add to a preponderance of evidence for those who wish to see the date as 429 B.C. These considerations are of two kinds. One significant factor that is often overlooked with regard to a dramatic date of 429 for the *Republic* is that it is very close to the date of the death of Pericles and Anaxagoras and to the birth of Plato. A second significant factor worthy of remark is that while there has been much focus on the date for the dramatic setting, fixed for good reasons at the date of the inaugural festival of Bendis, less attention has been paid to *why* Plato chose this unusual setting. In what follows, I wish to argue that Plato sees the *Republic* as marking the passing of the old natural science conception of philosophy represented by Anaxagoras, to the dawning of a new era of humanist philosophy that he is embarking on, marked by the transition from *Republic* I to *Republic* II. Again, while it is not my purpose to argue at length for the dramatic date of 429 along traditional lines, I believe that the considerations which follow add a significant and different dimension in support of that date.

Andre Laks has remarked in a way both obvious yet profound, that the idea of Presocratic philosophy, perhaps initiated by Nietzsche, and certainly cemented by Diels-Kranz and John Burnet, would simply have made no sense at the time when Anaxagoras was active<sup>1</sup>. Anaxagoras represents the last generation that did not know Socrates' philosophical activity, and indeed saw philosophical activity as something radically different to what philosophy would become through Socrates, or perhaps more precisely, through Plato's employment of Socrates as philosophy's great sage.

<sup>1</sup> Laks 2018, ix *et passim*.

We should remember that at the time of Socrates' trial, for the most part philosophy was characterized as an inquiry into things "in the sky and below the earth" (Plat. *Apol.* 19b)<sup>2</sup>. It is with Plato's writings that Socrates becomes the champion of a new conception of philosophy, one which embraces ethical humanism, something which previously seemed to be associated in Greek culture more with the tradition of the Seven Sages. This distancing of Socrates from Anaxagoras in the *Apology* is echoed in the *Phaedo*, where Socrates dismisses Anaxagoras' philosophy, since while Anaxagoras claimed that mind ordered all things for the best, his natural science gave only physicalist accounts of why things are as they are (97c–98d). By contrast, Socrates wants to know that his actions are ethically for the best. The location of his bones and body might explain why he is sitting in jail from a physical point of view, but there is a deeper, ethical reason, not a physical one for why what Socrates is doing is best. We would do well to recall that Anaxagoras is reputed to have faced charges of impiety, about which I have more to say below<sup>3</sup>. Is it a mere coincidence that Plato chooses a foreign moon festival as the occasion of his new constructive philosophy in the *Republic*? *Republic* I represents the familiar aporetic methodology of Socrates, one that is transcended by that same Socrates in a constructive mode that seeks not the moon, but the sun, not the weak light but its source, not the shadows but their origin. Is it merely a coincidence that Plato, who was born in or around the year when Anaxagoras died, is announcing in the *Republic* the passing of the old naturalist philosophies, and the arrival of a new ethical-metaphysical philosophy with him as its champion and Socrates as its herald? I don't think so. The Piraeus, governed on the occasion of the *Republic*'s conversation by the foreign goddess of the moon, multiplicity and midwifery, represents the multiplicity of ideas and aspersions of the democratic sentiment that it was famous for. Truth, however, is not a democracy. With Plato's Athenian brothers, the quest for a single-minded, unitary true light of truth begins in earnest. The true light of Apollo – "a-pollon" – means not many, and is a Pythagorean and Neoplatonic symbol for a singular unitary metaphysical first principle – "the One" of Plotinus. The movement past the moonlight and into the sunlight of a unitary, Apollonian perspective is the movement that Plato embraces in the *Republic*. What follows are the details that substantiate these broad claims.

#### 1. TIMELINES

What we know about the life of Anaxagoras is somewhat disputed, but by all accounts he was born in Clazomenae around 499, and died in Lampsacus (Lapseki in Canakkale) around 428 or 427. He went to Athens around 480 according to some sources, and around 465 according to others<sup>4</sup>. In other words, he arrived to Athens around the time that Socrates was born, or in his youth. During his time there, he was reputed to have consorted and shared intellectual ideas with the Athenian statesman Pericles and his mistress Aspasia, who herself was reputed by some sources to have been tried for impiety, although again this fact has been disputed. It is not implausible that Anaxagoras was tried for impiety, presumably for claiming that the moon was not a god but an inhabited

<sup>2</sup> Unless otherwise stated, English translations of Plato are from Cooper 1997.

<sup>3</sup> Boedeker 2007, 61.

<sup>4</sup> Boedeker 2007, 61.

planet like earth, and that the sun was a burning rock that was the source of the moon's light; it is even less implausible that he had such a reputation in the court of public opinion. While Dover speculates that the trial may have been a doxographical fabrication, Meijer is less skeptical<sup>5</sup>. Dover surveys a number of competing, inconclusive and incommensurate accounts, but the fact remains that something significant happened to Anaxagoras related to his philosophical claims. Given that this happened roughly just before Plato was born, it was something that Plato knew about, but about which he did not have firsthand information himself. In what follows, I will argue that Anaxagoras symbolizes for Plato an old school of philosophical thinking akin to natural science that Plato sees Socrates eclipsing.

Given that he died in Lampsacus around 427, and that some sources tell us that his pre-trial incarceration had left him in a terrible mental and physical condition, it is likely that Anaxagoras' time in Lampsacus was brief; thus it is not unreasonable to suggest that his trial took place around 429<sup>6</sup>. Both Verlinsky and Planeaux argue convincingly for this date as the dramatic date of the *Republic*, showing that there is no prosopographical impossibility regarding the co-presence of the interlocutors at this date; however we would have to accept that Plato's mother lived to be 100 years old and that Glaucon and Adeimantus were much older than other reliable sources claim<sup>7</sup>. This is hardly the place to review the detailed and masterful work of Verlinsky or Planeaux, but I would argue that 429 concurs with another set of considerations, which connect Plato's use of prosopography and symbolism in the *Republic* more deeply, and add different supporting evidence to the claims of Planeaux and Verlinsky. Consider this remark by Planeaux: "The opening of Plato's *Republic* unequivocally describes a singular historical event"<sup>8</sup>. This is quite correct, but to my mind no-one has explored *why* Plato chose this singular historical event for his great work.

I want to suggest that we consider the setting of the *Republic* against the backdrop of Anaxagoras' claims that the moon's light was merely a reflection of the light of the sun. The date of the conversation that forms the *Republic* is the date of the first festival of Bendis in the Piraeus, the Thracian goddess of the moon, identified and equated with Artemis Mounicyia among Attic Greeks (Plar. *Rep.* 327a)<sup>9</sup>. However, there is confusion over what year this festival took place. It has been theorized that Bendis was given official state status as a goddess by the Athenians in order to please the Thracian immigrants living in the Piraeus; diplomatically this was a way of seeking stronger support for Athens from Thrace in the Peloponnesian War<sup>10</sup>.

Inscriptions found near the temple of Bendis in the Piraeus, giving permission to hold public festivals for Bendis in the month of Thargelion, are inconclusive. According to Janouchová the festival can be understood as being approved in either 429 or 413:

<sup>5</sup> Dover 1976; Meijer 1981.

<sup>6</sup> But see Robinson 1929, 180 who notes speculation of an earlier date. Mansfeld 1979, 39 too puts the date of the supposed trial much earlier but notes the growing consensus that it took place sometime after 431.

<sup>7</sup> Planeaux 2020, but see his earlier Planeaux 2000; Verlinsky 2014, 158.

<sup>8</sup> Planeaux 2020, 1.

<sup>9</sup> On the identification of Artemis and Bendis, see Janouchová 2013, 101.

<sup>10</sup> Janouchová 2013, 96; Planeaux 2000.

The introduction is mostly agreed to happen in 430/29 BC, but there is ongoing discussion about the introduction date of Bendideia festival, that according to available sources happened in 413/2 BC (based on the text of *IG I*. 3. 136). But the most plausible is that in 413 BC was Bendis officially incorporated into Athenian state's religion, as a reward for the service and support of the Thracian troops in the Sicilian expedition<sup>11</sup>.

This is why the dramatic date, of the *Republic* – set on the date of the inaugural Bendis festival – is disputed. Planeaux has observed the following:

The issues include 1) whether Athens imported Bendis' entire celebration with a single act or added various events to an initial celebration at different times and 2) whether or not Bendis' 'official state' cults were founded at the time the festival made its first appearance in Attica<sup>12</sup>.

To my mind it is rather doubtful that Plato himself would have had such detailed information about the initiation of and innovations to the festival. I believe that the introduction of the festival at 429 coinciding as it does with the trial of Anaxagoras, adds to a preponderance of evidence that Plato chose that year for the *Republic*'s dramatic date. I am arguing that Plato is using structural symbolism in the *Republic* so as to bring to mind Anaxagoras' claims about the moon. We should also bear in mind that 429 is the year in which Pericles died in the pandemic<sup>13</sup>.

There are important years that stand out in the collective memory of a society, and 429, marking as it does the trial of Anaxagoras and the death of Pericles, seems to be a momentous year in Athenian history. Moreover, given that Plato was born in 427, it is as if Plato is alluding in *Republic I*, through his use of its characters and their ideologies, the ideas that he had inherited from the previous generation. 427 is the year of the death of Anaxagoras and the birth of Plato, and the contrast that I will illustrate below between Socrates and Anaxagoras shows Socrates to be the bridge between philosophy understood as natural science and philosophy understood as ethical inquiry. Moreover, *Republic II* represents a marked movement away from Socratic *aporia* to Platonic constructivism. That constructivism involves the mature input and co-operation of Plato's brothers Glaucon and Adeimantus.

If we follow Nails on the ages of Glaucon and Adeimantus, the interlocutors of *Republic II* would not have been old enough to partake in the discussion of *Republic I* in 429 – Adeimantus would have been roughly 3 years old, Glaucon roughly 16<sup>14</sup>. With *Republic II*, we have a discussion with a new generation, and the dramatic dating takes secondary importance to this symbolism. What are we to make of the absence of any significant input from the initial interlocutors of *Republic I* in the subsequent books? My thought is that shifting to Glaucon and Adeimantus as the primary interlocutors in the constructive part of the *Republic* is more important to Plato than chronological accuracy. The *Republic*'s conversation is supposed to take place in one night, yet there is a break between *Republic I* and *Republic II* – the duration of which is neither stated nor explained. Plato famously employs such strange memory framings, in, for example, the *Theaetetus* and the *Phaedo*. The inconsistencies in dramatic date between *Republic I* and *Republic II* has contributed to the idea that *Republic I* was a separate dialogue called the *Thrasymachus*, later employed as a preface to the *Republic* as a whole<sup>15</sup>.

<sup>11</sup> Janouchová 2013, 97, n 4.

<sup>12</sup> Planeaux 2000, 165.

<sup>13</sup> Samons 2007, 14.

<sup>14</sup> Nails 2002, 2 and 155.

<sup>15</sup> Bowe 2007, 249.

However, because of the structural continuities for which I will argue in what follows, I think it served Plato's purposes to situate the initial discussion in 429, and to see the change in interlocutors between *Republic* I and II as a metaphorical indication of the dawning of a new discourse for a new generation, emerging from the ashes of the Peloponnesian War. Setting the initial date of the *Republic* at a foreign moon festival against the backdrop of the trial of the old school foreign moon theorist Anaxagoras makes perfect sense, but in order to make this convincing, I will explore the connections between Socrates' trial for impiety and the trial of Anaxagoras, what I think the moon symbolism means in the *Republic*, and why it makes sense to say that Plato has Anaxagoras in his mind when he employs certain structural symbolism in the *Republic*.

## 2. ANAXAGORAS IN THE *APOLOGY* AND *PHAEDO*

The figure of Anaxagoras casts a long shadow over the trial of Socrates for several reasons, one explicit and two implicit. We should remember that Anaxagoras was reputed to have been tried for impiety, quite possibly for saying that the moon and the sun were not divine, but simply rocks in the sky. First and quite explicitly at his own trial, Socrates claims that he has never investigated "things beneath the earth and in the sky," the stock claim against all philosophers (Plat. *Apol.* 19b–d; 23d). When Socrates comes to question his accuser Meletus, Meletus does indeed think of Socrates as that kind of philosopher, claiming that Socrates does not believe that the sun and the moon are gods: "he says that the sun is a stone and the moon earth" (*Apol.* 26d).

Socrates' rejoinder is that these are the theories of Anaxagoras, whose book anyone can purchase for a drachma<sup>16</sup>. So explicitly, Socrates denies that he does the kind of philosophy that Anaxagoras does. Implicitly, two other ideas emerge. First, if we ask ourselves a simple question, "What was the practice of philosophy before Socrates?" the simple answer is that it was natural science, not ethics. Socrates denies that he is a philosopher in the sense of philosophy that would have been current at the time. A little later in the *Apology*, however, Socrates says that he will never stop doing philosophy, which he identifies with trying to understand human goodness accompanied by exhortation to the same (29d–30a.). It is at this moment in literature that philosophy changes, via the contrast with Anaxagoras, from an investigation into the things beneath the earth and in the heavens, to the things in the soul, from physics to ethics. Aristotle also attests to Socrates' concern with the ethical and his disinterest in natural science in the *Metaphysics* (987a32–987b4)<sup>17</sup>:

For having in his youth first become familiar with Cratylus and the Heraclitean doctrines (that all sensible things are forever in a state of flux) <...> these views [Plato] held even in later years. Socrates, however, was busying himself about ethical matters and neglecting the world of nature as a whole but seeking the universal in these ethical matters, and fixed thought for the first time on definitions.

<sup>16</sup> This does raise an interesting problem. If Anaxagoras was tried for impiety and banished or self-exiled, why is his book so readily available and referred to by Socrates as a book that seems quite acceptable to read? Unless of course, in the 30 years since the reputed trial, Anaxagoras was vindicated in the court of public opinion.

<sup>17</sup> Translation according to Barnes 1984.



More evidence for this perspective can be found when Socrates mentions Anaxagoras in his prison cell on the day of his execution. At *Phaedo* (97b) Socrates recounts how he heard a man reading from a book of Anaxagoras about how mind orders all things. Socrates goes on to say that this pleased him, since he assumed that if mind causes and arranges all things, there would be a way to use reason to determine the best course of action in life. Socrates' hopes were quickly dashed, however, for what followed the illustrious introduction of mind in Anaxagoras' book were merely physical theories of natural science (*Phaed.* 98c–99a):

And it seemed to me it was very much as if one should say that Socrates does with intelligence whatever he does, and then, in trying to give the causes of the particular thing I do, should first say that I am now sitting here because my body is composed of bones and sinews <...> For by the Dog, I fancy these bones and sinews of mine would have been in Megara or Boeotia long ago <...> if I did not think it was better and nobler to endure any penalty that the city may inflict rather than to escape and run away.

My claim is that, starting with Socrates, philosophy is transformed into a discussion about what is nobler and better, and not about the things beneath the earth and in the heavens. At *Greater Hippias* (281c) we see even more support for this view. There Anaxagoras is counted among the earlier generation of thinkers who stayed away from ethical and political matters, since they were unable to put their ideas into practice: “People say the opposite of what happened to you happened to Anaxagoras: he inherited a large sum, but lost everything through neglect – there was so little intelligence [*nous*] in his wisdom” (283b). While Socrates too claims at his trial that he was never engaged in politics as a practical enterprise, it is through his trial that he becomes one of the most important political thinkers in history.

A second implicit point can be gleaned about the shadow that Anaxagoras and his friends cast over the *Apology*. According to some sources, not only was Anaxagoras charged with impiety, but also Aspasia, the Milesian mistress of Pericles. Anaxagoras is reported to have spent a great deal of time in their household and, according to some, also consorted with Socrates there<sup>18</sup>. Plato goes so far as to suggest in the *Phaedrus* and the *First Alcibiades* that Pericles' natural abilities were enhanced by instruction from Anaxagoras.

Consider this exchange between Socrates and Alcibiades (*Alcib.* I. 118c):

SOCRATES: There are only a few exceptions, among them, perhaps, your guardian, Pericles.

ALCIBIADES: Yes, Socrates, and people do say that he didn't acquire his expertise all by himself; he kept company with many experts like Pythocles and Anaxagoras.

Consider then *Phaedrus* (270a):

All the great arts require endless talk and ethereal speculation about nature: This seems to be what gives them their lofty point of view and universal applicability. That's just what Pericles mastered – besides having natural ability. He came across Anaxagoras, who was just that sort of man, got his full dose of ethereal speculation, and understood the nature of mind and mindlessness [*anoias*] – just the subject on which Anaxagoras had the most to say. From this, I think, he drew for the art of rhetoric what was useful to it.

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<sup>18</sup> Nails 2004, 24 observes that Socrates disavows having known Anaxagoras in the *Apology* but this is unfounded.

There is some scholarly debate regarding whether the trial of Aspasia for impiety was real or fictional, but in the account of the Greek and Egyptian writer Athenaeus, Pericles attempted to persuade the jury to spare his mistress by weeping and begging for mercy (XIII, 589):

Antisthenes, the pupil of Socrates, tells us that Pericles, being in love with Aspasia, used to kiss her twice every day, once when he entered her house, and once when he left it. And when she was impeached for impiety, he himself spoke in her behalf, and shed more tears for her sake than he did when his own property and his own life were imperiled<sup>19</sup>.

Pericles' emotional pleas are in stark contrast to Socrates' own remarks in the *Apology* (34c), that he will not weep and cry in an attempt to win the sympathy of the jurors:

Perhaps someone among you may be offended when he remembers his own conduct, if he, even in a case of less importance than this, begged and besought the judges with many tears, and brought forward his children to arouse compassion <...> whereas I will do none of these things.

Could it be that the impiety trial of Aspasia, friend of Anaxagoras, who was tutor to Pericles and taught him eloquence, is in the back of Socrates' mind here? Pericles, like Anaxagoras, did not employ reason, but rather appealed to emotion. Plato is, I would argue, fond of drawing such contrasts between Socrates and others. Recall that Cephalus in the *Republic* (331b) believes that wealth has made him virtuous, since it allows him to pay his debts:

Wealth can do a lot to save us from having to cheat or deceive someone against our will and from having to depart for that other place in fear because we owe sacrifice to a god or money to a person. It has many other uses, but, benefit for benefit, I'd say that this is how it is most useful to a man of any understanding.

How strange, if not insulting, to say this to Socrates, who died poor, but in the words of Plato was "the best and wisest and most righteous" (*Phaed.* 118a). It is to the *Republic* then, with its myriad of dualities and contrasts to which I now turn.

### 3. THE MOON AND THE *REPUBLIC*

When we approach the *Republic* contextually and as a work of literature, we naturally ask questions about setting and character, and most simply at the outset about the time and place. We can ask what Plato's motivation is for setting the dialogue in the Piraeus, especially since Socrates rarely leaves Athens, and why it takes place during the festival of Bendis. Socrates has no real connection to this foreign goddess, yet he claims that he went to the Piraeus for the purpose of observing this festival (*Rep.* 327a). In order to address these literary questions, I will examine several symbolic elements that Plato employs in the *Republic*. These are:

- a. The symbolic use of Artemis/Bendis and Apollo, and the implicit use of Athena.
- b. The symbolic use of two sets of brothers as Socrates interlocutors, namely Polemarchus and Lysias in *Republic* I, and Glaucon and Adeimantus in *Republic* II.
- c. The battles in the Piraeus between democracy and tyranny that ended the Peloponnesian War.

#### 3.1. Artemis/Bendis, Athena and Apollo

Why the festival of Bendis? Bendis is, as I have mentioned, the Thracian goddess of the moon and the hunt, just as the Athenian and Ephesian Artemis was. As Artemis has a twin brother Apollo, Bendis has a twin brother Deloptes. Thus, in addition to diplomatic

<sup>19</sup> Translation according to Yonge 1854.



reasons for allowing the worship of Bendis in Piraeus, worshipping her would enlist the help of her brother the healing god Deloptes, and, given the pandemic of 430–429, the Athenians needed all the help that they could get<sup>20</sup>. The Athenians had no difficulty in adopting Bendis, given her similarity to Artemis, although they would have seen Bendis as a lesser “barbarian” version of their more civilized moon goddess. Indeed, as Grote tells us, her temple was joined to the temple of Artemis in the Piraeus<sup>21</sup>. Here is what Proclus says (Proclus. *In Rep.* I. 18. 16–22):

As for the Panathenaic festival, I mean the Lesser, which come after the Bendideia, and had as reason for the feast Athena. Well, the one and the other are the daughters of Zeus, both are virgins, then you add that both are ‘bearers of light’, although Bendis as the one who brings to light the invisible principles of nature, while Athena as the one who gives intellectual light to the souls ... and also as the one who dispels the darkness, whose presence prevents souls to see what is the divine reality and what is the human. Now, since these are the characteristic properties of both, it is clear that Bendis is the guardian of becoming and presides over the births of the principles that belong to the becoming ....

Verlinsky and O’Meara rightly point out that Proclus was mistaken about the temporal proximity of the Bendideia to the Panathenaea<sup>22</sup>, but the significance of his remarks that both Artemis and Athena are goddesses of light stands; the light of Artemis is a physical light, reflected in the world, much as the moon reflects the light of the sun in Anaxagoras’ theory. By contrast, Athena represents bringing intellectual light to souls<sup>23</sup>. Moreover, in commenting on the difference between Hera and Artemis in Homer, Proclus tells us the following (*In Rep.* I. 95):

The opposition of Hera and Artemis represents the bi-partition of the earthly souls, of which some are rational and some irrational, some separable and some inseparable, some supranatural and some natural, Hera is the cause of the better souls whereas Artemis delivers and brings to light the less worthy souls<sup>24</sup>.

<sup>20</sup> Ferguson 1948, 157–158; cf. Planeaux 2000, 83.

<sup>21</sup> Grote 1907, 240.

<sup>22</sup> Verlinsky 2014, 178; O’Meara 2017, 17–18; cf. Adam 1902, 1.

<sup>23</sup> This is admittedly a minor point, and while this interpretation of Athena can be found in Neoplatonic interpretations, it is perhaps less clear that it is true of Plato. However, in the *Cratylus* (407a–b) Plato says the following: “The ancients seem to have had the same belief about Athena as the interpreters of Homer have now; for most of these, in commenting on the poet, say that he represents Athena as mind and intellect; and the maker of names seems to have had a similar conception of her, and indeed he gives her the still higher title of ‘divine intelligence’”. Moreover, the following is worth considering. In his *Commentary on the First Book of Euclid’s Elements* (I. X. 29–30) Proclus claims that “Plato himself clearly affirms that mathematics purifies and elevates the soul, like Homer’s Athena dispersing the mist from the intellectual light of the understanding, a light ‘more worthy of preservation than ten thousand bodily eyes,’ and thus dispenses Athena’s gifts as well as those of Hermes”. The reference is to *Odyssey* (XIII. 189–352), “where Athena disperses the mist from the eyes of Odysseus so that he recognizes his native island” (Morrow 1970, 25). Proclus’ observation echoes the remark of Socrates in *Alcibiades II* (150d–e) that (at *Il.* V. 127) “Homer relates how Athena removed the mist from the eyes of Diomedes, that he might well discern both god and man, so you too must first have the mist removed which now enwraps your soul, and then you will be ready to receive the means whereby you will discern both evil and good”. Proclus again references Athena’s ability to remove the “mist” that obscures the distinction between the human and the divine in his *Commentary on Plato’s Republic* I. 18. 25–26; cf. Rangos 2000, 65.

<sup>24</sup> A much more extensive treatment of Proclus’ views on Artemis can be found in Rangos 2000.

If Bendis/Artemis governs the evening of *Republic* I, then Plato implies that the discussions among foreigners constitute only weak reflections of the truth, and none of the intellectual light of Athena. The intellectual light of Athena will be pursued by children of the city named for her, Plato's brothers Glaucon and Adeimantus. Contrast this with the discussions of *Republic* I which are pursued by Socrates and foreigners under the governance of a foreign and false light – Bendis. If we ask why they are abandoned for Plato's brothers in *Republic* II, it is because Plato wants to indicate a shift from false physical light to true intellectual light. In this regard, we might do well to consider that Plato's Athenian brothers begin a new procession. On the 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> of the month which bears its name, the Thargelion festival occurs. The 6<sup>th</sup> was for Artemis, and the 7<sup>th</sup> was for Apollo. The 6<sup>th</sup> was a day of purification, rooted traditionally in the attempt to purify the plague mentioned at Hom. *Il.* I. 314 (recall that Pericles also dies in a plague). In the Artemisian purification festival, two ugly and poor men (Socrates is often described this way) were used as scapegoats before the following day's offering to Apollo. These men were fed at the state's expense, which is oddly the suggested punishment raised by Socrates at his trial (*Apol.* 36e). The scapegoats in older times were thought to have been subject to stoning and death, and recall that the prisoners in the Cave Allegory in *Republic* VII wish to kill the escapee who comes to "purify" their views. In short, my suggestion is that Socrates in *Republic* I is the ugly purifying scapegoat of Artemisian light, who seeks, through negative *elenchos*, to move the festival to the Apollonian task of offerings taken up by the handsome Glaucon and Adeimantus, whose own procession culminates when Glaucon cries out "By Apollo!" at *Republic* 509c, the grand metaphysical conclusion of the Sun Allegory<sup>25</sup>. We have moved from the weak foreign light of Bendis in *Republic* I to the native Athenian light of Apollo in *Republic* VI. If we allow that Plato sacrifices prosopography for symbolism to achieve his goals, we can see that both historical elements (*Republic* I) and symbolic elements (*Republic* I – VI) are at play. This is perhaps why there is so much confusion over the dramatic date of the dialogue.

The *Republic*, as I have written elsewhere, is an ascent from the weak light of the weak version of Artemis/Bendis to the shining source of her light – Apollo<sup>26</sup>. Apollo represents unity and formal knowledge, whereas Bendis represents multiplicity and physical knowledge. Plato's *Republic* ascends from the Piraeus to the allegory of the Sun, which explains a principle that is so powerful that it is said to be ἐπέκεινα τῆς

<sup>25</sup> καὶ ὁ Γλαῦκων μάλα γελοίως, Ἄπολλον, ἔφη (Plat. *Rep.* 509c) has been variously and awkwardly translated. I would suggest "And Glaucon, exclaimed 'By Apollo!' with great comic zeal," following Adam 1902, 62, who suggests that the comic zeal here is similar to the phrase at *Rep.* 506d – προθυμούμενος δὲ ἀσχημονῶν γέλωτα ὀφλήσω – "In my eagerness I may become a laughing stock". Shorey 1935, 107 notes that excess of zeal seemed comical to the Greeks. So in other words, Plato's intention may simply be that Glaucon is making a joke about the sun by employing the phrase "by Apollo" in such a zealous way, but the sun metaphor itself certainly does contrast with the dialogue's beginning at the festival of the moon goddess Bendis, given that we know that Apollo's identification with the sun is emerging in the 5<sup>th</sup> century B.C. Moreover, if we ask why Glaucon is represented as comically zealous, it suggests that Plato may be subtly indicating that he is implying such an identification, despite the fact that indeed it does tend towards the mystical idea of the Good being ἐπέκεινα τῆς οὐσίας, for which see Yount 2014, 4–6, who is commenting on Bowe 2003, 19.

<sup>26</sup> Bowe 2007, 260.

οὐσίαζ – “beyond being” (*Rep.* 509b). To this statement Glaucon replies “Apollon” – “by Apollo” – which both Plutarch and Plotinus tell us is the symbol of unity – that which is “not many” or “A-pollon” (Plut. *Mor.* 357; Plot. *Enn.* 5. 5. 6)<sup>27</sup>. While these are later interpretations, they have their roots in Pythagoreanism, and interestingly enough, at *Cratylus* 405c, Socrates refers to the Thessalian use of the word “Aploun” which refers to Apollo’s single-mindedness and truthfulness – qualities which are said to be identical.

In sum – why the Bendideia? It is a moon festival of weak foreign knowledge, multifaceted opinion and physical light, ascending to the single-minded, truthful light of Apollo, pursued by Plato’s kith and kin, true Athenian sons, in Athens that saw Apollo as its ancestral progenitor<sup>28</sup>. Again, according to what I think is the most likely date of the inaugural Bendideia, Anaxagoras was supposedly tried in or around the same year, Plato was born in or around the same year, and it is not at all unlikely that *Republic* I also has this dramatic date. This fits nicely with Socrates’ remarks that while the foreigner Anaxagoras claims that mind orders all, his explanations are physicalist. His light is the light of the old generation of thinkers, the physical light of Bendis, and not the new intellectual light of Athena’s pupils, Socrates, Glaucon and Adeimantus.

### 3.2. *Two Brotherhoods*

We may now look further into why Plato changes interlocutors between *Republic* I and II, and why the interlocutors have little to say in *Republic* II–X. In the first instance it is useful to know something about the foreigners of *Republic* I, keeping in mind that Glaucon and Adeimantus are true Athenian citizens and Plato’s own brothers. The *Republic* takes place at the home of Polemarchus, his father Cephalus and his brother Lysias. All were Syracusan foreign residents living in the Piraeus at the invitation of

<sup>27</sup> Again, this calls upon later Neoplatonic symbolism; however, the association of Apollo with wisdom, light and vision is clear enough from the way that Plato presents the allegories of the sun and cave, as well as the oracular role played by Apollo at Delphi and Didyma. While the cult of Apollo was well established long before Plato’s time, we only see a blending of the aspects of Helios and Apollo in the 5<sup>th</sup> century, where, as Hoffman 1963, 120 long ago remarked, Phidias’ Helios displays fully ensconced Apollonian features in the Parthenon’s pediment. Plato himself closely associates Helios and Apollo in *Laws* (946c), which suggests that he is party to the emergence of Apollo as associated with the sun in his time. This is consistent with various Athenian oaths sworn to Apollo, Athena and Zeus, in which Apollo is identified with the sun (see Bilić 2021). Burkert 1985, 73 observes that “for Roscher it was still ‘one of the most certain facts of mythology’ that Apollo was a sun god.” Burkert also points to the skepticism of Farnell 2010, 136 yet even he admits that the idea of Apollo “is usually connected with the conception of him as a solar god: and this is conventionally assumed to have been his aboriginal character. This view, which prevailed in antiquity, is still dominant in handbooks and monographs, and is accepted by ordinary Greek scholarship as an article of faith”. Bilić 2021 has argued insightfully and persuasively that the approach of scholars like Farnell and others to remove oriental mysticism from Greek studies results in the explaining away of a great deal of evidence for the identification of Apollo with the sun god in iconography, religion, tradition, political oaths, and philosophical allegoresis. Perhaps most notable from the point of view of Plato’s philosophical orientation is the testimony of Menander that Parmenides of Elea identifies Apollo with the sun in a *Hymn to Apollo* that is no longer extant; cf. Menander Rhetor. *On Epideictic Speeches*. R3 in Laks and Most 2016, 90–91.

<sup>28</sup> Bilić 2021, 20.

Pericles<sup>29</sup>; they owned a weapons factory there, producing swords and shields for Athens during the Peloponnesian War. Their ideas are democratic, and indeed they were supporters of the democracy, and desired to have full Athenian citizenship. Polemarchus bought property in Athens, despite having a residence in the foreign quarter of the Piraeus, and Lysias was unsuccessfully nominated for citizenship after the war<sup>30</sup>. The reason for Lysias' nomination is significant. His brother Polemarchus was executed by the Thirty Tyrants, and his property seized, while Lysias himself escaped to Megara where he lent considerable support to the resistance to the Spartan sponsored tyranny, a resistance that eventually overthrew the tyranny and restored democracy in 403. Many of the details of what happened to Lysias' family are preserved in his *Against Eratosthenes*<sup>31</sup>. Ironically, Lysias, one of the ten great orators in Ancient Greece, says absolutely nothing while sitting at the table that night in the Piraeus with Polemarchus and the others. He is present but remains silent. However, in the *Clitophon*, Socrates says that he overheard Clitophon telling Lysias that he preferred Thrasymachus to Socrates (406a). The other foreigner present at dinner who does say a lot is the famous Thrasymachus of Chalcedon, who opts for a position akin to tyranny. In short, the positions entertained by Socrates in *Republic* I are those of supporters of democracy and dictatorship respectively, and both of them leave Socrates and Plato's brothers dissatisfied. When the constructive part of the *Republic* gets going in Book II, Socrates literally abandons discussion of tyranny and democracy – the positions of the foreign interlocutors, in order to embark upon a new, Athenian intellectual political inquiry. Plato leaves behind shadows of the truth, and enemy camps of the Piraeus. To show why this is significant, I now turn my attention to those two enemy camps – those of the democrats and tyrants – and their two specific historical battles in the Piraeus that brought the Peloponnesian War to a close.

### 3.3. Two Battles

Symbolically, Socrates puts discussions with foreigners about democracy and tyranny to rest in *Republic* I, before he embarks on a quest for a new kind of intellectualist government with his Athenian brothers in *Republic* II. More can be said about this. In 403 B.C. those rebel resistance forces supported by Lysias drove the army of the Tyranny of the Thirty down into the Piraeus, where a decisive battle was fought on the Hill of Mounicyia – the very hill where the Thracians had erected a sanctuary of Bendis next to the Temple of Artemis. As Xenophon (*Hell.* 2. 4. 11.) testifies:

And the men from the city, when they came to the market-place of Hippodamus, first formed themselves in line of battle, so that they filled the road which leads to the temple of Artemis of Mounicyia and the sanctuary of Bendis.

It was in this battle that Plato's uncle Critias was killed. One very last battle, fought not far away in the Piraeus, resulted in a face saving victory for the Spartans, but led to reconciliation talks, whereby the democracy in Athens was restored. Within four years of the restored democracy, Plato's friend Socrates was tried and executed for impiety, the same charge that was reputed to have been brought against Anaxagoras 30 years before.

<sup>29</sup> Verlinsky 2014, 159.

<sup>30</sup> Verlinsky 2014, 159.

<sup>31</sup> Lamb 1930.

Perhaps one could excuse Plato for having little sympathy with the fighting factions of democracy and tyranny. The Tyranny of the Thirty destroyed his relatives Critias and Charmides, and the democracy executed his hero Socrates. Both tyranny and democracy are regarded by Plato as materialistic privations – as Bendidean light, not Athenian light. The dismissal of foreign interlocutors and belligerents from the discussion of Plato’s intellectual *kallipolis* is symbolized both by the evening – that of the Bendis festival – and by the location – not far from the site of the historic conflicts between democracy and tyranny on the Hill of Mounicyia. As the Piraeus saw the end of the Peloponnesian war, only to restore an anti-intellectualist democracy, one that had little patience for Anaxagoras or Socrates, Plato symbolically dispenses with both tyranny and democracy at the end of *Republic* I, and seeks the intellectual light of Athena with Plato’s Athenian brothers, starting with *Republic* II.

#### CONCLUSION

In or around 429 B.C. Anaxagoras was reputed to have been tried for religious impiety for claiming that the moon was not a goddess. His claims that mind orders all things are rejected by Socrates as falling back into natural science, and this rejection highlights the metamorphosis of philosophy that Socrates represents. Philosophy’s purview is no longer simply natural science – it is first and foremost the pursuit of ethical and of psychological health. Plato imagines a conversation at the festival of the moon in or around 429 B.C., a conversation governed by a foreign goddess at the home of foreign residents, who argue in physical, not intellectual terms, much as the moon goddess represents physical as opposed to intellectual light. Plato employs the foreign moon imagery against the backdrop of Anaxagoras’ understanding of the moon to envision an intellectual ascent from weak imitative light of Bendis, to its true intellectual source, the sun god Apollo. Anaxagoras’ trial and his death occur around the same time as Plato’s birth, and the old generation of natural science vs the new generation of ethical inquiry is highlighted in Plato’s writing.

Anaxagoras’ theory of the moon, *Republic* I’s foreign interlocutors, the foreign moon festival, and his subsequent trial all provide significant symbolic points of departure for one of the greatest literary achievements of all time – that masterpiece of literature and philosophy known as the *Republic*. Anaxagoras represents the last of those great Presocratic thinkers – natural scientists – and he represents that era just before Plato’s own intellectual adulthood with which Plato remains fascinated throughout his life – the time of the Peloponnesian War, whose many fascinating actors Plato preserves for us in the Technicolor of his dialogues.

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