

THEOLOGY AND RELATIVE DATES OF THE *TIMAEUS* AND THE *STATESMAN*: SOME CONSIDERATIONS *

According both to the stylometry data and the content, the *Statesman* and the *Timaeus* – *Critias* belong to the third and the latest group of Plato's dialogues. Some stylometric tests assign the earliest place in this group to the *Timaeus*, in the following order: *Timaeus* – *Critias*; *Sophist* – *Statesman*; *Philebus*; *Laws*.¹ Yet, most scholars today prefer the order *Sophist* – *Statesman*; *Philebus*; *Timaeus* – *Critias*; (*Philebus*); *Laws*.² The

* This paper develops some of the proposals I made in my "The Cosmic Cycle in the *Statesman* Myth, parts I-II", *Hyperboreus* 14: 2 (2008) 57–86; 15: 2 (2009) 221–250. My special thanks go to Natalie Tchernetska for her help and suggestions.

¹ L. Brandwood, *The Chronology of Plato's Dialogues* (Cambridge 1990, repr. 2009) 250 and idem, "Stylometry and Chronology", in R. Kraut (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Plato* (Cambridge 1992) 113 f.; for a balanced survey of the debate provoked by G. E. L. Owen's ("The Place of the *Timaeus* in Plato's Dialogues", *CQ* ns. 3 [1953] 79–95) assigning the *Timaeus* to the group of middle dialogues (before the *Parmenides* and thus before the *Statesman*), see D. J. Zeyl (tr.), *Plato, Timaeus* (Indianapolis – Cambridge 2000) XVI–XX; see, *ibid.*, p. XX: "The high degree of hiatus avoidance which the *Timaeus* shares with the four admittedly late dialogues has been reestablished as a firm indication of its lateness, not to be explained away by the dialogue's special character, and while the clausulae criterion on which Owen relied might justify placing the *Timaeus* before the *Sophist* and *Statesman*, it falls far short of justifying its placement, crucial for Owen's case, before the *Parmenides* and *Theaetetus*". T. M. Robinson, *Plato's Psychology*, 2nd ed. with a new introduction, Phoenix Supplement 8 (Toronto 1995; 1st ed. 1970) XIII–XV, with reference to the current state of stylometric studies withdraws his earlier allegiance to Owen's theory, but keeps the dating of the *Statesman* after the *Timaeus*.

² Thus, C. Kahn, "The Place of the *Statesman* in Plato's Later Work," in C. J. Rowe (ed.), *Reading the Statesman: Proceedings of the III Symposium Platonicum* (Sankt Augustine 1995) 49–60, while sceptical about establishing chronological sequence within the group of late dialogues by stylometry, not only proposes to treat them all as contemporary, but accepts the 'traditional order' for convenience (p. 51), viz. *Soph.*, *Polit.*, *Phileb.*, *Tim.* – *Cri*, *Leg.* Also Michael Erler, *Platon, Grundriss der Geschichte der Philosophie: Die Philosophie der Antike II/2* (Basel 2007) 262 f., mentions stylometric data in favour of an earlier date of the *Timaeus*, but places it cautiously between 357–347 BC and retains the traditional order *Statesman* – *Timaeus*. A relative position of the *Philebus* is not relevant to the argument of this paper, but nothing prevents to place it after the *Statesman*, before or at the same time as the *Laws*.

main reason for this preference seems to be, apart from influence of the old scholarship³ and the scepticism about stylometry,⁴ the fact that the *Critias*, which is the sequel of the *Timaeus*, remained uncompleted and that another planned sequel, the *Hermocrates*, was not written at all, which gives us an impression that Plato worked on this group close to the end of his life.⁵ Another consideration is that the *Statesman* thematically and dramatically continues the *Parmenides* and the *Sophist*, and the *Parmenides* certainly belongs to the end of the middle period, i. e. it is earlier than the *Timaeus*. But the triad *Parmenides* – *Sophist* – *Statesman* was meant to be completed by an additional dialogue, *Philosopher* (see *Soph.* 217 a), which also was not written. Moreover, the *Sophist*, according to stylometry, might be later than the *Timaeus*. It is thus entirely possible that Plato worked on two series simultaneously, and the *Statesman* can be later than the *Timaeus*, possibly also later than the uncompleted *Critias*.⁶

Given that stylometric data favour for the *Timaeus* a date earlier than that for the *Statesman*, and that no substantial counter-argument based on

³ This view goes back to the unanimous consensus of the mid-20th century, see comparative tables in W. D. Ross, *Plato's Theory of Ideas* (Oxford 1951, corr. repr. 1953) 2.

⁴ While the division of dialogues into three chronological groups on stylistic grounds is entirely reliable (see C. Kahn, "On Platonic Chronology," in J. Annas and C. J. Rowe [eds.], *New Perspectives on Plato, Modern and Ancient* [Cambridge, Mass. – London 2002] 93–128), there is much scepticism about further attempts to use stylometric methods for establishing the exact sequence within each group, because of discrepancy of results produced by applying different stylometric criteria to the dialogues of the late group (see P. Keyser, "Stylometric Method and the Chronology of Plato's Works", *BMCR* 3.1 [1992] 58–74; C. M. Young, "Plato and Computer Dating", *OSAPh* 12 [1994] 227–250, esp. p. 244–247, 250; Ch. Kahn, *op. cit.*, 94 f.). I would suggest that this discrepancy points out that the dialogues were written in multiple work sessions separated in time, which applies not only to the two unfinished series just mentioned, but also to the uncompleted *Laws*, to the revision of theory of Forms, which began with criticism of the *Parmenides* but never took a definitive shape, and a draft exposition of a new metaphysical teaching in the lecture *On the Good*, which also belongs to the late period.

⁵ See, e. g., J. Skemp, *A Translation of the Politicus of Plato with Introductory Essays and Footnotes* (London 1952) 14 and 17.

⁶ David Sedley, *Creationism and its Critics in Antiquity*, Sather Classical Lectures vol. 66 (Berkeley etc. 2007) 96, assumes that the *Timaeus* was written about 350 B. C., shortly before Plato's death in 347. He suggests that Plato first intended to write a trilogy (since the general prelude points out to the topic not only of the *Timaeus*, but also of the *Critias* and *Hermocrates*, which is unusual), but abandoned this idea and decided to publish the first part under the title *Timaeus*. This attractive suggestion is compatible with an earlier date of the *Timaeus*, which I defend: Plato might have realised earlier than in the last years that he would not have enough time to finish the trilogy because of the growing work amount and his preoccupation with other projects.

the contents has been put forward so far, I would like to point out some positive evidence in favour of this chronological sequence.⁷

The *Timaeus* and the *Statesman* not only belong to the late group. They also, together with the *Philebus* and the *Laws*, two other indisputable members of this group, are the only Plato's dialogues where both divine cosmic principles, the Demiurge and the World Soul, are present.⁸ All four dialogues suggest that the Demiurge (or the Cosmic Reason)⁹ withdraws after completing his creative work and puts the World Soul in charge of the movement of the universe.¹⁰ Since the World Soul appears for the first time in the *Phaedrus*, the dialogue of the late middle period, where it is uncreated, unlike in both the *Timaeus* and the *Statesman* where it is created by the Demiurge, there is a good deal of certainty that the idea of two protagonists of the cosmic drama was elaborated only in the later period, after the *Phaedrus*.¹¹

⁷ I cannot discuss here intertextual links that C. Gill, "Plato and Politics, the *Critias* and the *Politicus*", *Phronesis* 24 (1979) 148–167, uses for his argument, directed primarily against Owen, in favour of an earlier date of the *Statesman* (before the *Critias* and, by implication, before the *Timaeus*). Although I agree that Owen's dating of the *Timaeus* – *Critias* as contemporary to the *Republic* is untenable (see n.1), I believe that these links are meaningful also in the case of the opposite chronological relation of the *Timaeus* and the *Statesman*. At the same time I would not rule out that the *Statesman*, being later than the *Timaeus*, is earlier than *Timaeus'* uncompleted sequel.

⁸ There are no hints at two supreme cosmic forces before these late dialogues, but there are occasional references to the god as the creator of the universe or parts thereof, in the earlier dialogues, of the middle (*Rep.* 400 a 5 – b 7; 530 a 3–7, *Crat.* 99 c–d) and of the beginning of the late period (*Soph.* 265 c 3–5); cf. Ross (n. 3) 127; 235. The most important anticipation of the creationist teaching of the *Timaeus* appears in the 'middle' *Phaedo* in a form of the query Socrates addresses to Anaxagoras, who does not show how his cosmic νοῦς maintained the order in the universe in the best possible way; still, in the *Phaedo* are no hints at the Demiurge figure.

⁹ The identity of the Cosmic Reason, νοῦς, with the Creator of the universe is clear from the *Phil.* 26 e 1–27 c 1 (see esp. 27 b 1–2), 28 e 3, and *Leg.* XII. 966 e 2–4, see S. Menn, "Aristotle and Plato on God as the Nous and as the Good", *Review of Metaphysics* 45 (1992) 543–573, at 555 f. The Demiurge is not identified directly with νοῦς in the *Statesman*. It is less clear whether the *Timaeus* implies this identity, as Menn believes: on the one hand, the creation results are called τὰ διὰ νοῦ δεδημιούργημένα (*Tim.* 47 e 4), but they include both creations of the Demiurge and those of lesser gods. It seems more likely that in the *Timaeus* νοῦς plays only the role of the highest kind of rationality (or virtue, according to Menn), which the Demiurge possesses, but also, in the descending order, the gods, the World Soul, and the man (36 d 7 ff.; 51 e).

¹⁰ In the *Philebus* and in the *Laws* the withdrawal of the Demiurge is not mentioned explicitly, but he clearly is not engaged in the actual rule of the universe, see my paper (n. *) Pt. 2, 48 with nn. 74, 76.

¹¹ By dating the *Phaedrus* within the middle period, in accordance with the prevailing view, I disagree with T. M. Robinson, *Plato's Psychology* (n. 1) 132–139, one

There is a further particularity the *Statesman* and the *Timaeus* share: only these two dialogues are explicit about the creation, only they depict the state of chaotic matter from which the universe had been created, the Demiurge's withdrawal after completing of creation and his entrusting the universe movement to the intelligent World Soul.¹² However, there is an important difference in the views on the universe further destiny between the two dialogues.

It is more convenient to begin with the *Statesman*. In the theoretical part, which precedes the myth, it is argued that nothing corporeal can keep its movement eternally: only the most divine essences (which are incorporeal) can do so, more exactly only the Ruler of all moved things, i. e. the Demiurge.¹³ The universe, which is created to the closest possible

of few proponents of the view that I defend, namely that both divine forces and their respective cosmic roles should be understood literally in the *Timaeus* and the *Statesman*, and that the *Statesman* contains further development of the teaching of the *Timaeus*. Robinson's later date for the *Phaedrus* is based on the difference of its teaching of soul from the *Timaeus* and the *Statesman*, and closeness to the *Laws*: he argues that in the *Phaedrus* and the *Laws* soul (in general, not the World Soul, as he thinks) is depicted as self-moving and, for this reason, as necessarily eternal and non-contingent, while in the *Timaeus* (also, implicitly, in the *Statesman*) the eternity of all souls, including the World Soul, depends on the Demiurge (p. 133, cf. 149, 161). In fact, both the *Timaeus* and the *Statesman* depict the World Soul as perennially self-moving (see for the *Statesman* n. 14), even if supported by the Demiurge; the reasoning in the *Laws*, on which Robinson relies (X. 895 e 1 – 896 c 8), attests that soul possesses self-movement, and that for this reason it is the ultimate cause of every movement, and, as such, is prior to body in the cosmic order, but prior only in the order of generation (896 c 1–2, cf. XII. 997 d 6–7). Soul of the *Laws* is thus generated exactly as in the *Timaeus* and in the *Statesman*, where it is created by the Demiurge (cf. G. Vlastos, "Creation in the *Timaeus*: Is it a Fiction?" [1965], in *Studies in Greek Philosophy* II [Princeton 1995] 265–279, at 275 ff.; cf. F. Karfik, *Die Besetzung des Kosmos: Untersuchungen zur Kosmologie, Seelenlehre und Theologie in Platons Phaidon und Timaios*, Beiträge zur Altertumskunde 199 [München – Leipzig 2004] 236); moreover, its goodness and rationality in the *Laws* depends entirely on the cosmic Reason (897 b 1–4), as it is dependent on the Demiurge in the *Statesman*. Thus far the *Timaeus*, the *Statesman* and the *Laws* agree that soul is self-moving, generated and subordinated to the higher divine instance of the Demiurge against the *Phaedrus* with its eternal soul and absence of any cosmic principle superior to soul. *Phaedrus'* theory would be thus a first attempt to maintain soul as the cosmic principle of movement, later modified by dividing it into the Demiurge and the World Soul.

¹² Strictly speaking, this rational moving principle is referred to as the soul in the *Timaeus* only; but according to the *Statesman*, the universe is a living being endowed with reason by the Demiurge (269 c 1–3), therefore on this point the agreement of the two dialogues is beyond doubt. See my paper (n. *) Pt. 2, 246–248, in favour of similarity of the *Statesman* and the *Timaeus* on the role of the Demiurge and the World Soul.

¹³ The notion of the eternal self-movement of the Demiurge which, as Robinson (n. 1) 133 points out, appears in the *Pol.* 269 e 5 f. as a novelty in comparison with

approximation to the Demiurge perfection, but is corporeal, thus possesses the circular movement in place (it corresponds maximally to the eternal movement of its creator), and the ability of reversing it, as the minimal possible declination of its inherent movement.¹⁴

This should explain how the universe in some periods of its existence moves with the help and under the guidance of the Demiurge, and in other periods is left by him to move autonomously. The following myth (270 b – 274 e 2) depicts one of such reversals to the rotation opposite to the current one (i. e. the East – West rotation), which occurs when the Demiurge returns to his cosmic steer. He turns the universe to the opposite direction (i. e. the West – East), destroys the previous mankind, stops the process of sexual reproduction and creates human beings from the ashes of the dead of the previous era, who live backwards from old age to childhood and then disappear without physical death, according to the total rejuvenation of the universe. When this process is completed and all souls that had lived their previous lives in the opposite direction have redeemed their sins and

the *Timaeus*, has the counterpart in the *Laws* in the eternal circular movement of the cosmic Reason (897 c 4 – 898 b 8), see Karfik (n. 11) 242–244. Karfik (p. 195) shows that in the *Timaeus* all assertions about circular movement of reason refer to reason as a property of the soul – the World Soul, astral or human souls, but not to the Demiurge. It seems that the idea of the circular movement of the Demiurge (= Cosmic Reason) in the *Statesman* and the *Laws* develops the idea of the circular movement as the property both of the human reason and the universe (but not of the Demiurge) in the *Timaeus*.

¹⁴ διὸ τὴν ἀνακύκλησιν εἴληχεν, ὅτι σμικροτάτην τῆς αὐτοῦ κινήσεως παράλλαξιν (269 e 3–5). Against D. Robinson, “The New Oxford Text of Plato’s *Statesman*: Editor’s Comments”, in Rowe (n. 2) 42–45 and the new Oxford Plato, who suspect that the opposite movement, which has been allotted to the universe, cannot be called the universe’s *own* movement, I retain the mss. reading αὐτοῦ; cf. C. J. Rowe (ed.), *Plato: Statesman with Translation and Commentary* (Warminster 1995) 188 ad loc., who rightly points out that the movement in question is the circular movement in general, not the movement in a certain direction; this is clear from 269 e 2 f. and e 5 f.; the reversal is the minimal declination from it, but after it the universe still keeps its *own* movement (see 270 a 6). However, I disagree with Rowe who takes this statement as provisional, and claims that the universe’s proper movement is controlled by the Demiurge and should be in the direction of the Demiurge’s era (Rowe believes that the universe’s return to its ‘own accustomed course’ 273 a 6 implies its rotation in our era in the same direction as in the divine era, see *contra* my paper [n. *] Pt. 2, 222–224). In fact, it is maintained consistently that the movement in both directions is the universe’s *own* movement: the Demiurge only accompanies the universe and supports its movement (τοτὲ μὲν αὐτὸς ὁ θεὸς συμποδηγεῖ πορεύμενον καὶ συγκυκλεῖ, τοτὲ δὲ ἀνῆκεν, 269 c 4 f.; ὅπ’ ἄλλης συμποδηγεῖσθαι θείας αἰτίας, 270 a 3 f.), without substituting the universe as its moving cause. Thus, the solution of the *aporia* at 269 e 7 – 270 a 1 is not that the universe in one period moves itself and in the other is moved by the Demiurge, but that it moves itself perennially – in the first case autonomously, and in the second with the Demiurge’s help.

attained the initial blessedness, the Demiurge leaves the steer. The universe, under the influence of the chaotic matter, turns to the opposite East – West movement, producing at this moment the shaking, which destroys most living beings, while the remaining develop from childhood to old age, in accordance with the new direction of cosmic movement. Generation from the earth equally stops, since there are no longer any divine forces to accomplish it. Human beings, now reproducing sexually, have to struggle with severe climate and fierce animals. Our civilisation develops in response to these difficulties, autonomously, but with the help of the lesser gods' teaching, who still remain in our universe albeit at a distance. As for the universe, it puts itself in order after the initial turbulences, due to recollection of the teaching of its cosmic father, and then, for a continuous time it keeps itself and its inhabitants in the best order, imitating the Demiurge rule. Only later, gradually forgetting the Demiurge teaching, it falls to all kinds of physical and moral evil, which it passes on to its inhabitants, and on the verge of total destruction (at the end of our or similar era) it is saved by a new advent of the Demiurge, who again reverts the universe, destroys the degraded mankind, creates a new mankind from ashes, restores the universe's initial perfection and so on.¹⁵

By contrast, in the *Timaeus* are no traces of this eventual degradation of the universe and of its inevitable concomitant – two cosmic eras. Moreover, there are certain indications that this idea is not omitted because of the different subject, but rather because it did not occur to Plato or was abandoned for some reason. To start with, nothing predicts the eventual degradation of the World Soul.¹⁶ On the contrary, the undisturbed rational life is explicitly ensured for the universe perennially (36 e 4–5). The further reversals not only are not mentioned – they cannot be easily built into the scenario of the *Timaeus*: from the beginning, the Demiurge conveys to the universe revolutions from left to right (36 c), i. e. in its nowadays East – West direction, as it is seen from the fact that from the beginning the planets move in the opposite direction.¹⁷

¹⁵ For a detailed defense of this interpretation see my paper (n. *).

¹⁶ Against harmonising attempts, like that of L. Robin and F. M. Cornford, who found that the World Soul in the *Timaeus* is liable to irrational impulses and doomed to decline as in the *Statesman*, see M. Meldrum, "Plato and the APXH KAKΩN", *JHS* 70 (1950) 65–74, at 68 with n. 24, and Cherniss (see further n. 32).

¹⁷ Because of the generalisation at 53 b 2, – such is the state of matter, whenever the god is not present ($\pi\alpha\tau\alpha\pi\alpha\sigma\gamma\mu\eta\delta\iota\alpha\kappa\epsilon\iota\mu\epsilon\nu\alpha\omega\sigma\pi\epsilon\rho\epsilon\iota\kappa\delta\gamma\epsilon\chi\epsilon\iota\eta\alpha\delta\pi\eta\tau\iota\eta\omega\gamma\theta\epsilon\omega\zeta$) – J. Kerschensteiner, *Platon und der Orient* (Stuttgart 1945) 103, and recently T. K. Johansen, *Plato's Natural Philosophy: A Study of the Timaeus – Critias* (Cambridge 2004) 90 believe that here direct interventions of the Demiurge are implied, like in the *Statesman*, according to Kerschensteiner, or as a perpetual creative act, according to Johansen. However, given that in the *Timaeus* the Demiurge

A possible way of harmonising the two accounts would be by admitting creation as an exception: in the beginning, the universe, still perfect by itself, does not need any divine era and moves from East to West, but later, as it degrades, the Demiurge returns and reverts it to the West – East rotation, in order to restore the universe living forces, thus initiating alternation of eras, as in the *Statesman*. This option might have been used by Plato in order to make the scenario of the *Statesman* compatible with the *Timaeus*, if the former was written later, as I argue. However, it could not have been implied when he was writing the *Timaeus*: according to the *Timaeus* – *Critias*, our contemporary world is the *immediate* sequel of the act of creation; after the Demiurge has created the soul of the universe and the intelligent part of human souls, he withdraws and puts the lesser gods in charge of creating bodies and mortal parts of the souls (*Tim.* 41 b 7 – c 6; 42 d 5 – e 3) and also of further care of human beings (41 d 1–3); accordingly, in the *Critias*, the gods distribute lands between themselves at the dawn of *our* era; and Athena and Hephaistos create and take care of Athenians (109 d 1–2). On the contrary, according to the *Statesman*, the immediate prelude to our universe is the age of Cronus, *viz.* the era of the rule of the Demiurge; our ancestors are not created by the gods but are descendants of the last generation of the divine era. Understandably, our era begins not with the distribution of lands between the gods, since this distribution already existed in Cronus' era, but with distancing of the gods from the mortals. Thus there are considerable differences between outlooks of two dialogues, both in cosmic and human dimensions of the universe history: according to the *Timaeus* and *Critias*, we live in the era that immediately follows the creation of the universe, according to the *Statesman*, in one of the numerous eras of the universe's autonomous existence, separated by at least several reversals from the act of creation.

There were various attempts to play down the difference between the stable universe of the *Timaeus* and its dramatic development in the *Statesman*, which, despite its succinctness and, occasionally, irony, strongly reminds apocalyptic vision. The most widespread attempt is to take the reversals and alternating phases of the latter dialogue as metaphoric. The issue is related to the debate whether the creation of the universe in the *Timaeus* should be interpreted as literal¹⁸ or only as a metaphor for the

withdraws after the creation and the universe does *not* return to its initial state, it is quite certain that the iterative form of the subordinate clause is conditioned simply by the probabilistic character of the whole statement (*εἰκός*); on the other hand, Plato could have found attractive to use this iterative form of probability while depicting in the *Statesman* the disturbing influence on the universe of its matter *whenever* the Demiurge withdraws.

¹⁸ Apart from the classical paper of Vlastos (n. 11) 265–279, see two important recent contributions, Zeyl (n. 1) XX–XXV; Sedley (n. 6) 98–107.

permanent divine rule and the presence of chaos as an equally permanent factor.¹⁹ The anti-literalists tend to interpret the myth of the *Statesman* also metaphorically,²⁰ but even R. Mohr, who argued cogently that the description of the act of creation in the *Statesman* is redundant for the theory of alternating phases and thus implies that Plato is committed to the literal understanding of the initial creation, at the same assumes time that reversals should *not* be understood literally.²¹ Many scholars simply ignore the myth of the *Statesman* in their accounts of Plato's cosmology.²²

In my view, there is no conclusive evidence against the literal understanding of the creation.²³ But provided that creation is to be taken literally and that Plato's universe has the temporal beginning, there are good reasons to take the reversals of the universe and periodic interventions of the Demiurge as literal to the same extent.

By contrast, the proponents of the opposite interpretation, namely, that the myth of the *Statesman* represents allegorically, in a form of alternating phases of the cosmic cycle, the coexistence of the forces of chaos and order in *our* universe as it is described in the *Timaeus*,²⁴ do not succeed in this allegorical reading, for in fact the pre-cosmic chaos and the autonomous phases of the *Statesman* correspond entirely to the pre-cosmic chaos and to our universe of the *Timaeus*, while the phase of the Demiurge has no correspondence in the *Timaeus* at all.²⁵ Two scenarios are incompatible and cannot be reconciled plausibly on the metaphoric level. Moreover, the allegoric interpretation of the reversals removes the significant function of the Demiurge as the perennial support of the universe's permanent

¹⁹ The most important anti-literalists are H. Cherniss, *Aristotle's Criticism of Plato and Academy I* (Baltimore 1944) 425–431; L. Tarán, "The Creation Myth in Plato's *Timaeus*", in: J. Anton, G. Kustas (eds.), *Essays in Ancient Philosophy* (Albany 1971) 372–407; M. Baltes, "Τέγονεν (Platon, *Tim.* 28 B 7). Ist die Welt real entstanden oder nicht?" [1996], in: idem, *Διανοήματα: Kleine Schriften zu Platon und zum Platonismus* (Stuttgart – Leipzig 1999) 303–325.

²⁰ As, e. g. J. Dillon, "The Neoplatonic Exegesis of the *Statesman* Myth", in C. J. Rowe (n. 2) 373 f.

²¹ R. D. Mohr, *God and Forms in Plato* (Parmenides Publishing 2005) 213–215.

²² As most recently, Karfik (n. 11) and Johansen (n. 17).

²³ For a balanced view on literal interpretation of the creationist story of the *Timaeus*, see Sedley (n. 6) 98–107.

²⁴ This harmonisation, which goes back to Proclus and Simplicius, has been defended by Cornford, Festugière and Cherniss. See *contra* the cogent remarks of Skemp (n. 5) 89, who, however, believes that the retrograde phase is introduced for the 'didactic purpose' only, since it is absurd from the point of view of Plato's cosmology; it is not clear for me what he means.

²⁵ On the fundamental similarity of the autonomous phase in the *Statesman* to Plato's standard view of our universe see my paper (n. *) Pt. 2, 233–250.

movement, carefully argued for in the preliminary part of the *Statesman* myth and never put to doubt, let alone refuted.

If, on the contrary, Plato intended the temporal act of creation to be understood literally, it is reasonable to take literally the reversals of the universe, depicted entirely in the same theoretical frame. In that case the reversals become meaningful as a vivid demonstration of the universe's dependence on its creator, both in physical and moral realm, and the scenario of inevitable degradation of our universe, with the triumphant victory of the god over evil at the end, becomes, instead of an allegory, a prophecy. My sympathy is decisively with this latter option,²⁶ but without engaging further in the debate between literalists and anti-literalists, I will try to show that, first, the dramatic scenario of the *Statesman* was a modification of the *Timaeus*, not *vice versa*, and, second, that the vision of the universe of the *Laws*, Plato's last dialogue, is more in agreement with the *Statesman* than with the *Timaeus*. This suggests, I believe, both that the *Timaeus* is earlier than the *Statesman*, and that the reversals and the interventions of the Demiurge are to be understood literally. But even if this does not convince stubborn anti-literalists, I hope to show that Plato's movement from the stable universe and non-corruptible World Soul of the *Timaeus* in direction of dramatisation was consistent.

Let us start with the *Timaeus*, which does not mention either global degradation or its concomitant the reversals of the universe. It is pointed out that the universe, having being created destructible *per se*, cannot be destructed by any force apart from the Demiurge himself, who, however, does not want the universe destruction because of its goodness, neither destruction of the lesser gods who are also destructible *per se* (32 c 2–4, cf. 38 b 6–7; 41 a 7–8). In the *Statesman*, the Demiurge by his direct intervention saves the universe at the verge of destruction. The universe thus is as destructible *per se* as in the *Timaeus*, but its dependence on the god is rendered more dramatically.

Moreover, there is a further specific point in this difference. The Demiurge in the *Timaeus* undertakes the whole set of measures to provide indestructibility of the universe, such as protection from diseases and old age (e.g. he uses the whole mass of physical matter to prevent the attacks of 'hot'

²⁶ For literal interpretation cf. H. Herter, "Gott und die Welt bei Platon: Eine Studie zum Mythos des *Politikos*" (1958), in his *Kleine Schriften* (Munich 1975) 316–329, see 318 f.; 327–329 (he cites at p. 325 n. 33 a few earlier proponents of this view) and Robinson (n. 1) 132–139, together with his recent paper, "The Myth of the *Statesman* and Some Cosmological Implications" (2005), in idem, *Logos and Cosmos: Studies in Greek Philosophy* (Sankt Augustine 2008) 148–162; Robinson's view of the development of Plato's cosmic outlook from the *Timaeus* and the *Statesman* is different from mine, but I agree with him on a number of important points.

and ‘cold’ from outside, ἔνα ὄλον ὄλων ἐξ ἀπάντων τέλεον καὶ ἀγήρων καὶ ἄνοσον, 33 a 7). But the *Statesman*, which equally treats aging as a real peril to the universe’s integrity, does not see its cause in *external* influences: the internal degradation of its soul, which is not envisaged in the *Timaeus*, produces the whole set of evils, including diseases and old age (273 c 6 – e 1).

What do these differences imply for the relative chronology of two dialogues? Does the *Timaeus* tacitly omits the perils that endanger the whole structure of the universe or, *vice versa*, the *Statesman* introduces the perils, for which no protection and no interventions of the Demiurge to confront them were envisaged in the *Timaeus*? The latter option, i. e. that in the *Statesman* Plato creates a new, more dramatic scenario to demonstrate the universe’s total dependence on the goodness of the Demiurge, seems to be more plausible. Not only an introduction of more effective details *ceteris paribus* is more probable than a tacit removal of them, but also there are visible signs that Plato, while introducing new elements, carefully avoids contradictions with the general frame of the *Timaeus*.

The treatment of the primordial chaos in both dialogues points to the same strategy: according to the *Timaeus*, chaos has been put in order by the Demiurge and does not endanger the structure of the universe any longer; in the *Statesman*, on the contrary, it is a cause of the reversal of the universe, and later of the growing oblivion of the Demiurge’s teaching and of gradual degradation. Moreover, just here are two special indications that the *Statesman* implies the *Timaeus* as already known, not *vice versa*. The primeval state of chaotic matter is depicted in the *Timaeus* as the permanent shaking, σεισμός (52 e 51 ff.); there is no hint that this process influences the universe after the act of creation. This shaking is not mentioned in the description of the primeval chaos in the *Statesman*; but when the Demiurge leaves the steer, the universe produces the ‘great shaking’ (σεισμὸν πολύν, 273 a 3) *under the influence of its material component*. It is more plausible that here Plato uses the metaphysic frame of the *Timaeus* for dramatization not envisaged in that dialogue than that the ‘shaking’ was transformed from a single catastrophic event into a general metaphysical process in the *Timaeus*, with the simultaneous removal from the stage of this event.²⁷

²⁷ It is not a place here to discuss the view, which is opposite to mine, of A. Gregory, *Plato’s Philosophy of Science* (London 2000) 101, that Plato moves progressively from the concept of the irregular cosmos in the *Republic* and the *Statesman* to that of the regular one in the *Timaeus*, the *Philebus* and the *Laws*. I can only notice *contra* that evidence from the *Laws* (see further) on instability of the cosmos does not contradict the *Statesman* myth; that the *Timaeus* admits deviations of the planets from their orbits (22 c–d, thus broadly agreeing with the *Republic* on irregularity of their motion), while the *Statesman* does not imply any irregularities in planetary motions, in spite of the universe’s reversals, in agreement with the defense of their regular motion in the *Laws* (VII. 821 b – 822 c).

Again, according to the *Statesman* 273 b 3 – d 4, the Demiurge saves the universe from sinking to the primeval chaos, which is referred to as the unlimited abyss of unlikeness, εἰς τὸν τῆς ἀνομοιότητος ἄπειρον ὅντα πόντον δύνη. The ‘unlikeness’, obscure by itself, becomes clear from the detailed depiction of the primeval chaos in the *Timaeus*, with its proto-particulars of future elements, which have no real qualities but only ‘traces’ of them (53 b 1–5).²⁸

Thus far, both the similarity between the *Timaeus* and the *Statesman* and their divergences are strongly in favour of the option that Plato builds in the latter on the basis of the former. I would now turn to the *Laws*, whose differences in this matter from the *Timaeus* were recognised a long time ago. It is worth recalling that in the *Laws* interlocutors are less sophisticated than in the *Timaeus* and *Statesman*, moreover, the *Laws* addresses the audience whose interests are primarily ethical and political. Nevertheless, the cosmic metaphysics of the *Laws* is much the same: the soul as the oldest of all things and the ultimate cause of movement (X. 896 d – 897 b 4) is carefully distinguished from the νοῦς, which is called ‘the god’ (897 b 1–2) and ‘one who has set the universe in order’ (XII. 966 e 2–e 4). This creative cosmic reason rules in the universe not directly, but only as far as the soul (or souls) follows it, thus according to the withdrawal of the Demiurge after the act of creation, like in the *Statesman* and *Timaeus*.²⁹

As for the universe ruled by the soul according to the *Laws*, of primary importance is the argument of the Athenian Stranger (AS) of the gods’ existence in the book X. Previously, the AS has made his interlocutors agree that the soul has a capacity of self-movement; for this reason it is the cause of movement and of generation and perishing of all things, and thus is the source of the first movement and generation, and is prior to body in the order of generation (895 e 10 – 896 c 2). It follows that reasoning,

²⁸ Mohr (n. 21) 165 n. 35 pertinently compares διὰ δὲ τὸ μήθ’ ὁμοίων δυνάμεων μῆτε ἰσορρόπων ἐμπίμπλασθαι κατ’ οὐδὲν αὐτῆς ἰσορροπεῖν, *Tim.* 52 e with ἀνομοιότης of the *Statesman*, but leaves open the question whether the *Statesman* adumbrates the chaos description in the *Timaeus* or, *vice versa*, hints at it retrospectively. However, taken the obscurity of the *Statesman* versus the clarity of the *Timaeus* on this point, the latter option seems to be preferable.

²⁹ Cf. my paper (n. *) Pt. 2, 248 with n. 76. It should be said that Cherniss (n. 19) 607, who argues that the act of creation should be taken metaphorically, believes nevertheless that the Demiurge is a ‘symbol of intelligent causes’, the ability or the state of the soul, and thus should not be regarded as a ‘mythical double of the World Soul’ (idem, [Rev.] A.-J. Festugière, *La Révélation d’Hermès Trismégiste II: Le Dieu Cosmique*, Paris 1949, *Gnomon* 22 [1950] 207). I side with S. Menn, *Plato on the God as Nous* (Carbondale – Edwardsville, Ill. 1995), who argues that the Demiurge (or the Nous) represents not only the type of causality different from the World Soul but also the separate and single entity in Plato’s later dialogues.

wishes and all other psychic states are also prior to bodies, their dimensions and physical strength. At the same time, granted that the soul is the cause of all things, it is necessary to admit that the soul is the ultimate cause of *all* opposites, ‘good and bad, fine and shameful, just and unjust’. Hence it follows that the soul rules the heavens either (ΑΘ. Ψυχὴν δὴ διοικοῦσαν καὶ ἐνοικοῦσαν ἐν ἄπασιν τοῖς πάντῃ κινουμένοις μῶν οὐ καὶ τὸν οὐρανὸν ἀνάγκη διοικεῖν φάναι; ΚΛ. Τί μήν; 896 c 5 – e 2).

For this reason, argues further the AS, it is necessary to infer that there are at least two souls *that rule the heavens*, the beneficent and its opposite (δυοῖν μέν γέ που ἔλαττον μηδὲν τιθῶμεν, τῆς τε εὐεργέτιδος καὶ τῆς τάναντία δυναμένης ἔξεργαζεσθαι, 896 e 4–6). The meaning of this remarkable inference is made explicit in the following sentence: the soul drives ‘*everything* in the heavens, on earth and in the sea’ through rational, appetitive and affective movements, which are of opposite kinds, the right and wrong; these primary motions, overtaking the ‘secondary’ movements of bodies, produce all kinds of physical changes, such as growth and decay, separation and combination, and the processes that follow. The soul, with the help of these processes, directs *everything* right and happily or oppositely, depending on whether it follows the reason or submits to folly (νοῦν μὲν προσλαβοῦσα ἀεὶ θεὸν ὄρθως θεοῖς, ὄρθα καὶ εὐδαιμονα παιδαγωγεῖ πάντα, ἀνοίᾳ δὲ συγγενούμενη πάντα αὖτάναντία τούτοις ἀπεργάζεται, 897 b 1–4).

The AS immediately asks, which soul rules the heavens, the earth and the universe revolutions. The only way to answer this question is by verifying whether psychic movements of the ruling soul are similar to the movements of the Reason. Indeed, among the ten possible types of movement the circular movement on the spot is the most similar to the Reason movements.³⁰ Now, provided that all is revolved by soul, it is necessary to admit that the soul is in charge of heavens rotations; and, as Kleinias now states, it would be impious to think otherwise than that all is revolved by the soul (or several souls), which possesses the complete virtue (897 b 7 – c 5).

There has been a long debate on how to understand this acceptance of several souls that rule the universe, whether this contradicts the next inference (i.e. that the universe is ruled by the intelligent soul), and how the teaching of the *Laws* fits with the *Timaeus*, which accepts only the single World Soul.³¹ The debate is settled in so far as the argument of the *Laws* does not imply any substantially evil soul that disputes the dominance over the

³⁰ See further the discussion in R. Mayhew (tr.), *Plato, Laws 10* (Oxford 2008) 140–146.

³¹ See a survey in Robinson (n. 1) 145–151, and for recent work Mayhew (n. 30).

universe,³² i. e. that the single world soul of the *Timaeus* is not abandoned in favour of a new concept. Yet it is difficult to explain the previous statement (896 e 4–6), that one should assume at least two souls ruling the *heavens*.

There were numerous attempts to solve this difficulty, which cannot be discussed here. Instead, I would concentrate on what seems to be more certain and propose that the *Statesman* myth at least helps to solve some difficulties. The AS states unambiguously that we must admit at least several souls that rule the heavens (896 d 10 – e 2),³³ and expands this by depicting a soul that moves ‘everything in the heavens, on earth and in the sea’ (896 e 8–9) with its eventually opposite features. It is beyond doubt that in both statements he refers to the soul that rules the whole universe,³⁴ and that the provisional assertion that there are several souls is now replaced by a more precise statement that there is one and the same soul, which rules the universe and which is open to choice between the obedience to the divine reason or deviance from it. This choice is not mentioned in the *Timaeus* but it corresponds to the process of degradation of the World Soul in the *Statesman*.³⁵

The regularity of heavenly revolutions further proves that this is the best soul of all that exist, since it drives the universe by the movement

³² Attributing to Plato the dualistic concept of two souls that are struggling for the dominance in the universe by Plutarch and some modern scholars was rejected particularly by Cherniss; he proved convincingly that the *Laws* did not imply the existence of *substantially* evil soul ([Rev.] Festugière [n. 29] 208 n. 2; “The Sources of Evil According to Plato”, *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society* 98 [1954] 26 f. with notes).

³³ It makes untenable an attempt of Karfik (n. 11) 236–241 to ascribe evil to human souls only and thus to harmonise this reasoning with the teaching of the *Timaeus*.

³⁴ There were attempts to interpret ‘the soul’ of the second statement as the collective designation of all totality of souls of the universe and thus to distinguish it from the World Soul (notably, Robinson [n. 1] 152 f. and, most recently, G. L. Carone, *Plato’s Cosmology and Its Ethical Dimension* [Cambridge 2005] 172–174), but the argument strongly suggests that the soul that rules the heavens is identical to the soul that rules all physical processes in the universe through psychic motions. It is true that in the *Timaeus* the World Soul is in charge of the heavenly movement only, but in the *Statesman*, where it is *primarily* in charge of heavenly revolutions, it appears to influence both physic and moral state of all living beings (273 b 3 – c 2, d 1–4).

³⁵ Cherniss who maintained correctly that the *Timaeus* did not imply a possibility of the World Soul yielding to irrational processes, in his attempt to harmonise the reasoning in the *Laws* X with the teaching of the *Timaeus*, denied (against the direct sense of the passage in question) that the *Laws* admitted this possibility (see above n. 32); simply ignoring the myth of the *Statesman* as having no literal significance). Equally Carone (n. 34) 175, denying that the World Soul of the *Laws* can follow unreason because this would be incompatible with the *Timaeus* and the *Philebus*, easily dismisses the myth of the *Statesman* as ‘flirting’ with ‘the idea of different cosmic cycles’.

that approximates maximally the movement of reason (898 a).³⁶ Still, the previous statement about the dichotomy of the soul that rules the heavens and the manifests signs of good and evil in the universe is not denied (cf. *Epin.* XII. 988 d 1–e 4, where this dichotomy is maintained on the account of the whole universe).³⁷ For this reason I resist the solution proposed by Cherniss, namely that the worse or ignorant souls are implied, which do *not* rule the heavens (although they produce physical evil in the whole universe and not only in the human realm).³⁸ But Plato never assumes any soul responsible for the order in the heavens, apart from the gods (and they are not subordinate to fault) and the World Soul. It thus remains to admit that in spite of all substantial goodness the World Soul is not integral, but rather it experiences internal struggle between following the reason or deviating from it, as stated earlier. Its inherent goodness, although sufficient enough to be manifest in the regularity of heavenly motions, is not altogether perfect as to exclude evil even in the heavenly realm. One might guess that these faults are even more visible in the lower strata of the universe.³⁹ This picture, despite the less technical language of the *Laws* strongly reminds us of the *Statesman* with its perfectly intelligent world soul, which perennially retains its regular circular movement, maximally approaching the perfect motion of the Demiurge, yet submitted to degradation, reversals and turbulences.

³⁶ The *Laws* remarkably coincide with the *Statesman* in that the Demiurge possesses the permanent rotational movement, teaching not mentioned in the *Timaeus*, see above n. 13.

³⁷ Against the attempts of the scholars of the 1930–1940s to attribute to Plato the dualistic view of the two opposite struggling divinities, the tendency that prevails today is to remove the dichotomy as only a provisional hypothesis in favour of an unqualified optimistic outlook, which seems to me to run to another extreme. Thus, Mayhew (n. 30) 186, although he does not think that the evil cosmic soul is merely hypothetical, infers (p. 138) from the final part of the argument (897 b 7 – 898 c 9) that it does not exist; if I understand him correctly he treats the reference to the evil soul as an appeal to emotions; this tendency to minimise the scope of cosmic evil is even more typical for Carone (n. 34).

³⁸ Cherniss (n. 29) 208 n. 2 with n. 2; (n. 32) 26 with n. 32. It remains unclear for me what souls Cherniss has in view. The passages he refers to (*Leg.* 904 b–e; 906 b) deal with wicked human souls.

³⁹ It is difficult to say what disturbances are implied; it is certain only that evil in the universe, according both to the *Laws* (see 897 a 5–9) and the *Statesman*, is not physical destruction or physical suffering as such (e. g. both partial cataclysms caused by the gods that destroy degraded civilisations, *Tim.* 22 d 6 ff. and the destruction of the whole degraded mankind by the Demiurge in the *Statesman*), but rather erratic processes effected by folly and accompanying moral defects of soul, such as the universe's youthful disobedience to the god, which produces turbulences of the whole cosmos, or its senile forgetfulness of his teaching with illnesses and moral evils, according to the *Statesman*.

These results in the *Laws* are further reassumed in the argument against those who believe that the unjust can appease the gods with sacrifices and offerings. The gods are compared to charioteers, generals, doctors, shepherds and captains who face extraordinary dangers. All these examples are used by Plato elsewhere as a simile of virtuous and competent rulers, who exercise their power not for their own gain, but for the sake of subordinates. What is unusual is the dramatism of the image: with the reference to the previous discussion the AS reminds that the universe is full both of good and evil; there is the ‘*deathless battle*’ between them, in which the mortals who struggle on the side of the good will have the gods and *daimones* as their allies (*Leg.* 906 a 2–7):

ἐπειδὴ γὰρ συγκεχωρήκαμεν ἡμῖν αὐτοῖς εἶναι μὲν τὸν οὐρανὸν πολλῶν μεστὸν ἀγαθῶν, εἶναι δὲ καὶ τῶν ἐναντίων, πλειόνων δὲ τῶν μή, μάχη δῆ, φαμέν, ἀθάνατος ἐσθ’ ἡ τοιαύτη καὶ φυλακῆς θαυμαστῆς δεομένη, σύμμαχοι δὲ ἡμῖν θεοί τε ἄμα καὶ δαίμονες, ἡμεῖς δ’ αὖτις θεῶν καὶ δαιμόνων.⁴⁰

In this battle, according to the next part of this reasoning, the humans win or lose the field, depending on whether they follow reason, the cause of justice and temperance, or yield to folly, which produces injustice and hubris. The gods fully possess reason and virtues, in which we partake only imperfectly.

It is beyond doubt that the struggle between good and evil depicted here penetrates the whole universe, from the heavens to the human realm.⁴¹ Accordingly, gods are allies in the struggle not only with moral but also with physical evil (cf. the *Statesman* with its equal treatment of both evils and their cure by the Demiurge). Thus, although the choice we must make

⁴⁰ Most scholars prefer to interpret πλειόνων δὲ τῶν μή as the things that are not good, viz. evils (e. g. E. B. England [ed.] *The Laws of Plato* [Manchester – London 1921] II, 500 against Stallbaum, who understands them as the things which are *not* bad); Stallbaum, in my view, might have been right in interpreting them as things which are neither good nor bad, i. e. open to transformation in both directions; the struggle would be then for attracting them on the side of each party.

⁴¹ Apart from the οὐρανός notice that the individual πλεονεξία and the injustice in the society are viewed identically to their biological counterparts – individual disease and endemics, 906 c 1–6 (Carone’s attempt [n. 34], 186, to show that the human beings, for Plato, are responsible for these physical evils, is founded on the misuse of the argument at 900 e 6: here the gods were acquitted of evil, but humans were not made responsible for all evil in the universe, as she puts it). Moreover, the image of commanders implies that the gods and *daimones* are themselves involved in the battle, thus even if the gods’ primary concern is goodness of mortals, it does not mean that they work only as moral paradigms; Plato assumes that the gods are active in the physical realm, see above n. 38 and my paper (n. *), Pt. 2, 241–242.

may be called a moral one, it is only a part of the collision between good and evil, which goes through the whole structure of the universe and embraces all its aspects, moral, physical and biological. This gives an important counterpart to the all-penetrating bifurcation of the soul, as it was previously represented.⁴² This picture does not amount directly to inevitable yielding of the universe to evil, as in the *Statesman*, but is much closer to it than to the stable rule of the cosmic soul in the *Timaeus*.

I turn now to other hints at these cosmic changes in the *Laws*. According to the reasoning on the divine standard for the future state (IV. 713 a-b), the cataclysms and destructions of states described in the III book (676 b – 677 a) are preceded by the age of Cronus, the rule of the divine *daimones*, which the rule of law should imitate. There is no indication that the era of Cronus is separated from our era by a catastrophe on the cosmic scale, as in the *Statesman*. Note, however, that the era of Cronus in the *Laws* modifies substantially the view of the *Timaeus* – *Critias*, according to which our era follows directly the act of creation, and is much closer to the view of the *Statesman*, according to which our era is preceded by one of the eras of Demiurge's interventions, viz. not immediately by his creative act.⁴³

There is another relevant passage in the *Laws* (VI. 782 a-c). The AS refers to numerous rises and destructions of civilisations by cataclysms he has discussed earlier (III 676 b-c). Now he adds that it is necessary to assume various changes in the modes of lives that accompanied these alternations of order and disorder, and, together with them, changes in modes of eating and drinking, as well as changes of climate in which the living beings experienced various metamorphoses. For example, the tradition

⁴² Even if $\pi\lambda\varepsiloni\omega\omega\delta\tau\omega\mu\eta$ means the prevalence of evils (see above n. 40), no need to infer that it weakens this statement and that it is valid only for the human realm but not for the whole universe, as Carone (n. 34) 184 argues; Mayhew (n. 30) 186, who is inclined to endorse her view, asks how the evil can possibly outnumber the good in the entire cosmos, which is ruled by the good soul? My tentative answer (see above) is that the good soul rules directly the heavens only and that even there its goodness is not perfect; the prevalence of evil in the universe would be compatible to the diagnostic of the *Statesman*. Both scholars rely on *Republic* II. 379 c, according to which bad things outnumber good things considerably *among the humans* and the god is responsible only for the good things. Even if Plato had not changed this view since, this statement would not imply that prevalence of bad things is restricted to the realm of human actions: the good things for which god is responsible are surely not only and not primarily morally good actions, but rather the whole spectre of good things in the universe.

⁴³ Since the *Timaeus – Critias* not only do not imply the Demiurge interventions but also rule out his direct reign in the beginning of the contemporary era I find hopeless the attempts to harmonise the picture of prehistory in these dialogues with the *Statesman*, such as H. Herter, “Urathen der Ideal Staat” (1969), in idem, *Kleine Schriften* (Munich 1975) 302 f., who mentions the predecessors of this view.

about the gifts of Demeter, Cora and Triptolemos implies that there existed once a pre-agricultural stage, the traces of human sacrifices point towards sporadic cannibalism, whereas the tradition of vegetarian offerings, on the contrary, recalls the age of abstinence from animal meat.

The pre-agricultural age of cannibalism cannot be identified with the age after destructions by recurrent cataclysms, as described in the book III, since that state of things was primitive, but not totally uncivilized: the flood survivors are shepherds who have enough food from cattle breeding and hunting and practice two crafts, modelling and plaiting (III. 678 e 10 – 679 b 3).⁴⁴ The description in the book VI fits better the period after the end of Cronus' era, as described in the *Statesman*, with its totally uncivilised state and the lack of vegetable food, which would have destroyed the humankind if it were not for the divine teaching of agriculture.⁴⁵ The otherwise strange reference to various metamorphoses of living beings, not only humans, which accompany climate changes (στροφὰς ὥρῶν παντοίας, ἐν αἷς τὰ ζῷα μεταβάλλειν αὐτῶν παμπληθεῖς μεταβολὰς εἰκός), is understandable if it implies the end of the era of Cronus according to the *Statesman* with its transformation of the climate (*Pol.* 274 c 1–2, for ὥρα in the meaning 'climate' cf. 272 a 6), the shift from generation from the earth to sexual reproduction and the end of peaceful coexistence of human beings and animals). The age of abstinence from animal meat and sacrifices in the *Laws* would imply, accordingly, the preceding age of Cronus.

There is a further indication in the *Laws* of the totally uncivilised state of the humankind: the crafts of modelling and plaiting were given by the god only once, and are preserved intact through cataclysms, helping to survive in absence of other tools of civilisation (III. 679 a–b). It is plausible to locate this singular gift and, accordingly, the singular uncivilised era, in the age following Cronus' era, before the contemporary era with its partial cataclysms and partial destructions followed by new developments with their predominantly but not exclusively human inventions (see 677 d, 680 e 6–681 a 3). Thus the alternating eras of the divine rule and the autonomy of the *Statesman* remains Plato's view at the time when he wrote

⁴⁴ K. Schöpsdau (Platon, *Nomoi (Gesetze)* I: Buch I–III (Göttingen 1998) 364 rightly finds it difficult to harmonize the depiction of the post-cataclysmic way of life in *Leg.* III with the wildness and cannibalism of *Leg.* VI. 782 a–b.

⁴⁵ L. Campbell (ed.), *The Sophistes and Politicus of Plato* (Oxford 1867) 64, pointed to this passage from the *Laws* as relevant for the doctrine of cosmic periods in the *Statesman*. As far as I can see, this observation went unnoticed. According to K. Schöpsdau (Platon, *Nomoi (Gesetze)*, Buch IV–VI [Göttingen 2003] 484), the cannibalism of *Leg.* VI. 782 a–b precedes the vegetarian Orphic life which started thanks to the gods gift; however, this contradicts the statement that the human beings converted to cannibalism during climate changes.

his last dialogue, the *Laws*. Accordingly, we can suppose that the view of the *Timaeus* and the *Critias* that our era follows directly the act of creation was later modified by the theory of cosmic reversals of the *Statesman*. This gave the vision of the *Laws*, in which the recurrent partial cataclysms on a lesser scale of the *Timaeus* – *Critias* are combined with superior cosmic rhythm of the two alternating eras of the *Statesman*.

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Стилометрические исследования единодушно относят платоновские *Тимей* и *Политик* к третьей, последней по времени группе диалогов. Несмотря на ряд показателей, предполагающих более позднее положение *Политика* внутри этой группы, в большинстве современных работ он, вслед за консенсусом ученых первой половины XX в., продолжает рассматриваться как предшествующий по времени *Тимею*. В статье приводятся аргументы в пользу того, что трактовка темы творения мира Демиургом предполагает более раннюю датировку *Тимея*. Кроме того, циклическая смена божественных и автономных эр в существовании космоса и связанная с ней тема постепенной деградации разумной Мировой Души и неизбежного возвращения Демиурга на помочь своему творению в *Политике*, противоречащие картине стабильного космоса в *Тимее*, находят, как доказывает автор, отражение в нескольких пассажах *Законов*, неоспоримо наиболее позднего из произведений Платона. Таким образом, есть основания полагать, что *Политик* вносит корректизы в космологию *Тимея* и что концепция непоколебимой прочности божественного творения была дополнена позднее положением о необходимости регулярного вмешательства Демиурга ради спасения мира и обновления человечества.