

DEFINITION, UNITY OF VIRTUES, AND PLATO'S DEVELOPMENT

The study of the essential quality of Plato's thought *per se* gains more and more ground among contemporary Platonists. On the other side, the progress made by the sprachstatistik makes it no longer permissible to keep rearranging the order of the dialogues in search of the golden thread which will enable us to follow Plato's own development. Nevertheless, the attempts at a solution of this almost two hundred-year-old problem are ever renewed obscuring the understanding of Plato himself.

One may discern three basic lines of interpretation: one, assuming that Plato puts forward a doctrine through which he presents the components of his philosophical system¹; a second, attributing any real or alleged variation in Plato's thought to a development of Plato's own position²; finally, there is a third line of interpretation which discovers in Plato a source of concepts, arguments, myths, component parts of philosophical doctrines of others, which the interpreters treat for their own purposes, most of the times disregarding those of Plato.

The most heterogenous assumptions have been made, since the slightest variation of thought leaves Plato open to the most extreme conjectures of contemporary scholars. The absence of an idea from a dialogue is usually taken as a proof of its total absence from Plato's

1. This line of interpretation is well known to have originated with F. Schleiermacher (*Plato's Werke* I / 1, Berlin 1804), who based his theory on the assumption of a methodological arrangement by Plato of his thoughts, taken to be present in his mind from the very beginning.

2. K. Hermann (*Geschichte und System der platonischen Philosophie*, Heidelberg 1839) is the instigator of the development theory by the introduction of his contention that each dialogue depicts Plato's stage of thought at the time of its composition. This theory found one of its most influential opponents in P. Shorey (*The Unity of Plato's Thought*, Chicago 1903, and *What Plato Said*, Chicago 1933).

mind at the time. Particularly the presence or the absence of the theory of Ideas in the early dialogues has been the central question for deciding about a development or a non-development in Plato, and most scholars have taken their side in the fray¹.

I believe that many extreme contentions would have been avoided if some of Plato's interpreters were willing to consider three basic points: a) That Plato was a dramatist as well as a philosopher. b) That he did not formulate any complete philosophical system. c) That he had a literary output of fifty years.

In the present study, I intend to concentrate on two topics touching on Plato's ethics², on the definition and on the unity of virtues, in an

1. R. Robinson (*Plato's Earlier Dialectic*, Oxford 1953), who may be counted among the most fervent «evolutionists», concerning the genesis of the theory of Ideas maintains that Plato out of repeated failures to discover any particular essence, was led to introduce «an element not found in the early dialogues at all, namely reflection on essence in general...» (p. 53). Cf. H. Cherniss' review of Robinson's book in *AJP* 68 (1947) 133-46. W. Steidle (*Der Dialog Laches und Platons Verhältnis zu Athen in den Frühdialogen*, *MusHelv* 7, 1950, 129-46) tried to support a kind of different development, a political one, traceable, as this critic believes, from the *Apology* to the 7th *Letter*. Among the contemporary interpreters, G. Vlastos (*Platonic Studies*, Princeton 1973, 250 and notes 80, 81) seems to be in the same line of thought with Robinson, when he speaks of an early phase of Plato's career «when he might still have been wobbly on points of logic which he firms up later on». On the other side, D. Ross (*Plato's Theory of Ideas*, Oxford 1951) is among the recent scholars who deny an alleged development in Plato's thought. In the first eight chapters of his book he traces the theory of Ideas through Plato's dialogues, and one of his main conclusions in his «Retrospect» (pp. 225-45) is that no fundamental change of view was involved even in Plato's «later metaphysics». Cf. H. v. Arnim's similar conclusion fifty years earlier in *Platos Jugenddialoge und die Entstehungsgeschichte des «Phaidros»*, Leipzig 1914, III-IV. Cf. also W. Schulz's main thesis that the Socratic question about the «what is» prepared in Plato the vision of the Ideas (Das Problem der Aporie in den Jugenddialogen Platons in *Die Gegenwart der Griechen im neueren Denken*. Festschrift für H. G. Gadamer zum 60. Geburtstag. Tübingen 1960, 266 ff.). H. Erbse (Über Platons Methode in den sogenannten Jugenddialogen, *Hermes* 96, 1968, 21-40) carries the non-development theory a little too far by his conclusion that the writings of the period from the *Protagoras* to the *Republic*, beside their other purpose, are at the same time a source built up of soul instructing viewpoints «which follow the aim to enable the reader to understand the Ideas» (p. 39).

2. Among the major ethical topics are the so called Socratic paradoxes, the relation of virtue to the idea of the Good, the determination of the relation of virtue and happiness, the question of hedonism, etc. Some of them will be discussed in subsequent studies, as they are not within the scope of this one.

attempt to see whether and how far a critical examination of Plato's concept of these two topics supports the assumption of a development of his thought. Since no sure evidence can be given to various claims, I believe that support may and must come from the texts themselves. Therefore, in regard to method, this study will try to focus on the topics in question, based on a comparative study of representative passages from the dialogues. Thus, employing the textual examination as the safest way through which Plato *does* speak to us, I propose to turn to the Platonic writings without any predetermined notion and see to what direction they may point, and to what conclusions they may lead us.

A. THE PLATONIC DEFINITION

A careful examination of the definition¹ as we find it in the Platonic dialogues from the point of view of content and form offers a number of common traits that may be summed up as follows:

1. *The definition is a necessary precondition to any philosophical inquiry*

A comparative study of related passages may easily trace this characteristic from the *Protagoras* and the *Gorgias*, through the *Meno*, the *Republic*, the *Phaedrus*, and the *Theaetetus*, to the *Laws*². Although

1. The discussion of Aristotle's information (*Metaphysics* A. 987a30) about the adoption by Plato of the Socratic method of definition is not within the purpose of this study either. For a discussion of this passage, see the introduction and notes in Ross' edition.

2. Cf. *La.* 190b7-8: 'Αρ' οὖν ἡμῖν τοῦτο γ' ὑπάρχειν δεῖ, τὸ εἰδέναι ὅτι ποτ' ἔστιν ἀρετή; (Cf. *Hipp. Maj.* 286d. See also P. Friedländer, *Plato II. The Dialogues*. Transl. by H. Meyerhoff, New York and London 1964, 41); *Prot.* 360e8-361a2: ...οἶδα γὰρ ὅτι τούτου φανεροῦ γεγονένου μάλιστα ἂν κατάδηλον γένοιτο ἐκεῖνο περὶ οὗ... λόγον ἐκάτερος ἀπετείναμεν; *Gorg.* 448e3-4:... ἐγκωμιάζεις μὲν αὐτοῦ τὴν τέχνην ὥσπερ τινὸς φέροντος, ἥτις δὲ ἔστιν οὐκ ἀπεκρίνω, and 463c3-5: ...ἐγὼ δὲ αὐτῷ οὐκ ἀποκρινοῦμαι πρότερον εἴτε καλὸν εἴτε αἰσχρὸν ἡγοῦμαι εἶναι τὴν ῥητορικὴν πρὶν ἂν πρῶτον ἀποκρίνωμαι ὅτι ἔστιν; *Me.* 86d4-6: ...οὐκ ἂν ἐσκεψάμεθα πρότερον εἴτε διδασκτὸν εἴτε οὐ διδασκτὸν ἢ ἀρετὴ, πρὶν ὅτι ἔστιν πρῶτον ἐζητήσαμεν αὐτό. (Cf. also 71b2-4, 86d3-e1); *Rep.* 354b3-6: ...καὶ ἐγὼ μοι δοκῶ οὕτω, πρὶν δὲ τὸ πρῶτον ἐσκοποῦμεν εὐρεῖν, τὸ δίκαιον ὅτι ποτ' ἔστιν, ἀφέντος ἐκείνου ὀρμηθεῖν ἐπὶ τὸ σκέψασθαι περὶ αὐτοῦ... (On the *Thrasymachus*, cf. also Friedländer's comment, *op. cit.*, 65-66); *Phaedr.* 237b7-c1: Περὶ παντός, ὦ παῖ, μία ἀρχὴ τοῖς μέλλουσι καλῶς βουλεύεσθαι· εἰδέναι δεῖ περὶ οὗ ἂν ἢ ἡ βουλή. (See also in the same dialogue: *ὁμολογία* θέμενοι ὄρον at 237c8-d3, *εἰρηται τε καὶ ὦ*

one may notice external differences in the manner of stating the demand, there seems to be no essential change; on the contrary, the principle is stressed more emphatically in the *Laws*.

2. *Upon any attempt at a definition certain distinctions are demanded by relating the definiendum to the object or purpose of the inquiry*

This methodological principle may also be observed in many dialogues. A large number of examples can be found in the early dialogues *Laches*, *Charmides*, *Euthyphro*, *Protagoras*, *Gorgias*, as well as in the *Republic*, and the *Laws*¹.

We are not sufficiently supplied with evidence concerning the seriousness of the quest for a final definition in the aporetic dialogues. On the other side, confusion of seemingly related abstract ethical concepts was one of the most common obstacles in the way to any definition. Thus, one of the primary concerns of the Platonic Socrates was to insist on certain basic distinctions, trying at least to clarify misinterpreted notions². Even if a definition was not to be reached,

ρισται at 238d, and δ ἔστιν ὁρισθέν at 265d5-6); *Theaet.* 146e7-10: ...ὁ γὰρ ἀριθμησαὶ αὐτάς βουλόμενοι ἠρόμεθα ἀλλὰ γινῶναι ἐπιστήμην αὐτὸ ὅτι ποτ' ἔστιν; *Laws* 965d5-6: ...μὴ ἀνώμεν, πρὶν ἂν ἰκανῶς εἴπωμεν τί ποτ' ἔστιν εἰς δ βλεπτέον.

1. Cf. *La.* 192e1-2: "Ἴδωμεν δὴ, ἢ εἰς τί φρόνιμος; ἢ ἢ εἰς ἅπαντα καὶ τὰ μεγάλα καὶ τὰ μικρά; and further at 194e3-4: "Ἴθι δὴ, ἀντὶ εἰπέ, ὦ Νικία, ποία σοφία ἀνδρεία ἂν εἴη κατὰ τὸν σὸν λόγον; *Charm.* 165c4-6: Καὶ γὰρ, ἦν δ' ἐγώ, σκοπῶ. εἰ γὰρ δὴ γινώσκεις γε τί ἔστιν ἡ σωφροσύνη, δῆλον ὅτι ἐπιστήμη τις ἂν εἴη καὶ τιῶς. Cf. also 166b5-6; *Euthyphr.* 13d4: ἀλλὰ τίς δὴ θεῶν θεραπεία εἴη ἂν ἢ οσιότης; (Cf. 13e6-7. See also in *Alc. I* 124b3: τίνα ἀρετήν, 124e5: οἱ τί ἀγαθοί; notice also how in *Prot.* 311b-312c we are faced with a shower of questions in order to reach to the definition of σοφιστής: e.g., ὡς τίνοι ὄντι, ὡς τίς γενησόμενος, τί ἡγῆ εἶναι τὸν σοφιστήν. Then at 312d4-5: Ὅ δὲ σοφιστής τῶν τί σοφῶν; and at 312e4-5: τί δὴ ἔστιν τοῦτο περὶ οὗ αὐτός τε ἐπιστήμων ἔστιν ὁ σοφιστής καὶ τὸν μαθητὴν ποιεῖ; *Gorg.* 449d1-2: ἢ ῥητορικὴ περὶ τί τῶν ὄντων τυγχάνει οὔσα; (Cf. also in the same dialogue at 449e1: ποίους τούτους; at 451a6-7: ἢ περὶ τί ἐν λόγοις τὸ κύρος ἔχουσα ῥητορικὴ ἔστιν; at 453b8-c1: τίνα... τὴν πειθῶ τὴν ἀπὸ τῆς ῥητορικῆς καὶ περὶ τίνων, and at 451a8-9: ποίας δὴ πειθοῦς καὶ περὶ τί; see also Friedländer, *op. cit.*, II. *Rep.* 332d1: Εἴεν ἢ οὖν δὴ τίς τι ἀποδιδούσα τέχνη δικαιοσύνη ἂν καλοῖτο; to which cf. 505b8-10: οἱ τοῦτο ἠγοούμενοι οὐκ ἔχουσι δεῖξαι ἥτις φρόνησις, ἀλλ' ἀναγκάζονται τελευτῶντες τὴν τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ φάναι; finally, in the *Laws* 962a9-b2: εἰ τις τὸν σκοπὸν οἱ βλέπειν δεῖ τὸν πολιτικὸν φαῖναιτο, ἀγνοῶν, ἄρα ἄρχων μὲν πρῶτον δικαίως ἂν προσαγορεύοιτο, εἶτα σφῆξεν ἂν δυνατὸς εἴη τοῦτο οὗ τὸν σκοπὸν τὸ παρὰ πᾶν μηδ' εἰδείη; Cf. also 961e1-3, and 962b3-9.

2. For such distinctions besides the much discussed ones offered by the *Laches*, the *Protagoras*, and the *Gorgias*, cf. *Meno* 84ab, *Phaedo* 90c, *Republic* 538d, *Phaedrus* 237c, *Laws* 632e - 633a.

yet some progress towards it would have been made. This may account for the recurrence of this demand, which, however, appears unchanged through the dialogues.

3. *The definitions offered by Socrates himself are always epigrammatic model-definitions*

One may easily observe the validity of the above statement by a quick comparison of the illustration-like¹ definitions of *πηλός* as *γῆ ὄγροῶ φραθεισα πηλός ἄν εἶη* and of *ἥλιος* as *τὸ λαμπρότατόν ἐστι τῶν κατὰ τὸν οὐρανὸν ἰόντων περὶ γῆν* in the *Theaetetus*², of *σχῆμα* as *εἰς δὲ τὸ στερεὸν περιάγει, τοῦτ' εἶναι σχῆμα* in the *Meno*³, of *τάχος* or *ταχυτήτα* as *τὴν ἐν ὀλίγῳ χρόνῳ πολλὰ διαπραττομένην δύναμιν ταχυτήτα ἔγωγε καλῶ* in the *Laches*⁴.

The brief formulaic expression as well as the purpose that such definitions serve seem not to have undergone any change in the «mature» *Theaetetus*, where we have even two definitions of this type.

4. *Socrates' interlocutors usually offer an instance instead of a definition*

There is admittedly difficulty inherent particularly in the definition of philosophical concepts⁵. Therefore, the first attempts at a definition by the untrained interlocutors of Socrates quite often present the common error of trying to define a concept by offering one or more instances instead of an absolute definition. Socrates is ever on the alert, in order to check this tendency, not only in the dramatic *Laches*, *Euthyphro*, *Hippias Major*, but also in the *Theaetetus* when the question about the definition of *ἐπιστήμη* comes about: *Δοκεῖ τοίνυν μοι καὶ ἂ παρὰ Θεοδώρου ἄν τις μάθοι ἐπιστῆμαι εἶναι, γεωμετρία τε καὶ ἄς νυνδὴ σὺ διήλθες, καὶ αὖ σκντοτομική τε καὶ αἱ τῶν ἄλλων δημιουργῶν τέχναι,*

1. For the use of the word *παράδειγμα* in varying context, cf. *Rep.* 500e3-4, 592b2-3; *Parm.* 132d1-2; *Theaet.* 176e3ff.; *Polit.* 277d1-2; *Tim.* 28b1-2, 29b3-5, 48e5-49a1, and *Laws* 632e3-5.

2. Cf. *Theaet.* 147c3-6, and 208d1-3, respectively.

3. Cf. *Me.* 76a5-6; cf. also 75d7: *στερεοῦ πέρας σχῆμα εἶναι*.

4. Cf. *La.* 192b1-3.

5. For the difficulty involved in the act of defining, cf. the criticism of the absurdity of a definition in *Rep.* 430a. Cf. also *Laws* 626e-627ab on the same topic.

πᾶσαι τε καὶ ἐκάστη τούτων, οὐκ ἄλλο τι ἢ ἐπιστήμη εἶναι¹. However, is it not worthy of notice that this attitude is found unchanged in a work as late as the *Sophistes*², where Theaetetus, when asked for the definition of εἰδωλον, answers: Δῆλον ὅτι φήσομεν τὰ τε ἐν τοῖς ὕδασι καὶ τοῖς κατόπτροις εἰδωλα, ἔτι καὶ τὰ γεγραμμένα καὶ τὰ τετυπωμένα καὶ τ' ἄλλα ὅσα πον τοιαῦτ' ἔσθ' ἕτερα. It is the same type of approach employed by Meno when asked to define the nature of ἀρετή: he defines ἀνδρὸς ἀρετήν, γυναικὸς ἀρετήν, παιδὸς ἀρετήν, and many others, and is faced with Socrates' comment of having found συμῆρος ἀρετῶν³. Hippias, in the dialogue bearing his name, answers the invitation to define τὸ καλόν by παρθένος καλὴ καλόν⁴, and the young Euthyphro to the Socratic quest for the definition of εὐσεβές offers his personal conduct as an example: Λέγω τοίνυ ὅτι τὸ μὲν ὀσιόν ἐστιν ὅπερ ἐγὼ νῦν ποιῶ, τῷ ἀδικοῦντι ἢ περὶ φόνου ἢ περὶ ἱερῶν κλοπᾶς ἢ τι ἄλλο τῶν τοιούτων ἐξαμαρτάνοντι ἐπεξίεναι, εἴαντε πατήρ ὢν τυγχάνῃ εἴαντε μήτηρ εἴαντε ἄλλος ὀτισσοῦν, τὸ δὲ μὴ ἐπεξίεναι ἀνόσιον⁵. Going now back to the *Laches*, the general, in the first attempt at a definition of courage, offers only an instance of a courageous behavior: ...εἰ γάρ τις ἐθέλοι ἐν τῇ τάξει μένων ἀμύνεσθαι τοὺς πολεμίους καὶ μὴ φεύγει, εὖ ἴσθι ὅτι ἀνδρεῖος ἂν εἴῃ⁶.

One may easily reach the conclusion that the first attempts of the average interlocutors of Socrates to define an abstract concept share in common this trait, regardless of the time of the dialogues' composition. In all probability, this serves the dramatic or other purpose of certain dialogues, and appears as a steady element, whenever the situation calls for it, even if a lapse of twenty or thirty years may separate one dialogue from another.

5. *As a precondition of any complete definition the Platonic Socrates ever asks for τὸ διὰ πάντων ταῦτόν*

This concern of Socrates may be seen diachronically again from the *Laches* to the *Laws*. Thus, Socrates urges Laches: πάλιν οὖν πειρῶ

1. Cf. *Theaet.* 146c7-d2. Notice the friendly irony in Socrates' comment: γενναίως γε καὶ φιλοδώρως... ἐν αἰτηθείς πολλὰ δίδως at 146d3-4.

2. Cf. *Soph.* 239d6-8.

3. Cf. *Me.* 71e-72a.

4. Cf. *Hipp. Maj.* 287e4.

5. Cf. *Euthyph.* 5d8-e2.

6. Cf. *La.* 190e5-6.

εἰπεῖν ἀνδρείαν πρῶτον τί ὄν ἐν πᾶσι τούτοις ταῦτόν ἐστιν¹, and again: Πειρωῶ δὴ καὶ σὺ, ὦ Λάχης, τὴν ἀνδρείαν οὕτως εἰπεῖν τίς οὔσα δύναμις ἢ αὐτὴ ἐν ἡδονῇ καὶ ἐν λύπῃ καὶ ἐν ἄπασιν οἷς νυνδὴ ἐλέγομεν αὐτὴν εἶναι, ἔπειτα ἀνδρεία κέκληται; until Laches seems to understand this precondition: Δοκεῖ τοίνυν μοι καρτερία τις εἶναι τῆς ψυχῆς, εἰ τό γε διὰ πάντων περὶ ἀνδρείας πεφυκός δεῖ εἰπεῖν². In the case of Meno Socrates instructs him: Οὔτω δὴ καὶ περὶ τῶν ἀρετῶν κἄν εἰ πολλαὶ καὶ παντοδαπαὶ εἰσιν, ἐν γέ τι εἶδος ταῦτόν ἄπασαι ἔχουσιν δι' ὃ εἰσὶν ἀρεταί³. Does the primary importance attached to the διὰ πάντων πεφυκός end with the *Meno*? Since we are only summing up the main traits of the Platonic definition, let us go directly to the closing passages of the *Laws*, with the question whether Plato in his old age changes his position concerning the demand of διὰ πάντων ταῦτόν. Is it accidental that toward the finale of his last work we find it, maybe more stressed than anywhere else, as a *sine qua non* condition, without which no further quest in any direction is possible? Ἀναγκαστέον ἄρ', ὡς ἔοικεν, καὶ τοὺς τῆς θείας πολιτείας ἡμῶν φύλακας ἀκριβῶς ἰδεῖν πρῶτον τί ποτε διὰ πάντων τῶν τετάρτων ταῦτόν τυγχάνει⁴.

A brief comparison of a limited number of representative passages from the dialogues shows not only that the Platonic definitions share in common the above mentioned characteristics, but also, both from the point of view of form and content, they provide us with evidence that there is no development in Plato in this respect.

B. THE VIRTUES: THEIR NAMES, NUMBER, AND DEFINITION

An examination of related passages through the dialogues offers a variety of names for the virtues, the number of which varies as well. Thus, beside the four cardinal virtues, σοφία, ἀνδρεία, σωφροσύνη, and δικαιοσύνη, the doctrine of which is formulated for the first time in the *Republic*⁵, quite often *δσιότης* is found either replacing one of the

1. Cf. *La.* 191e10-11.

2. Cf. *La.* 192b5-c1. Cf. the δι' ὃ in *Prot.* 360c5; τὸ διὰ παντός ὁρθῶς ἔχον in *Alc. I* 108b6.

3. Cf. *Me.* 72c7-8, 74a9-10 (...τὴν δὲ μίαν, ἢ διὰ πάντων τούτων ἐστίν, οὐ δυνάμεθα ἀνευρεῖν), and 75a4-5 (οὐ μανθάνεις ὅτι ζητῶ τὸ ἐπὶ πᾶσι τούτοις ταῦτόν;).

4. Cf. *Laws* 965c9-d1.

5. Cf. *Rep.* 427e ff.

previous four or as a fifth virtue¹. Another virtue is sometimes numbered among the main ones *μεγαλοπρέπεια*², and two more, *εὐμαθία* and *μνήμη*, are also mentioned³. In addition to the previous, we find *ἐλευθερία* and *ἀλήθεια* in the *Phaedo*, described as part of *ψυχῆς κόσμος*⁴, and *ἐλευθεριότης*, among the virtues mentioned in the *Republic*⁵.

Let us now consider some questions raised by the variation in the names and in the number of the virtues in the dialogues. First, *does the limitation of the number of virtues to four appear for the first time in the Republic?* The answer in all probability is no, because: a) Already in the *Protagoras*, although *δσιότης* is mentioned several times along with either three or four main virtues, at the concluding part of the dialogue *δσιότης* is eliminated, and already the number is limited to four, as only *δικαιοσύνη*, *σωφροσύνη*, and *ἀνδρεία* are mentioned in relation to *ἐπιστήμη*⁶. b) In the *Symposium*, Agathon speaking *περὶ ἀρετῆς Ἐρωτος* refers only to the four cardinal virtues *δικαιοσύνη*, *σωφροσύνη*, *ἀνδρεία*, and *σοφία*⁷. Particularly when we read: *περὶ μὲν οὖν δικαιοσύνης καὶ σωφροσύνης καὶ ἀνδρείας τοῦ θεοῦ εἴρηται, περὶ δὲ σοφίας λέιπεται*⁸, the use of the word *λείπεται* justifies the assumption that

1. In *La.* 189b7-d8, and 199d7-8, *δσιότης* is mentioned beside *ἀνδρεία*, *σωφροσύνη*, and *δικαιοσύνη*; cf. the repeated references to *δσιότης* in the *Protagoras* (at 329c4-5, 330b3-6, 333b4-6, 349b1-2), where this virtue stands next to *ἐπιστήμη*, *δικαιοσύνη*, *ἀνδρεία*, and *σωφροσύνη* as a fifth virtue in two out of four cases. In *Gorg.* 307c1-2 *δσιος* appears next to *σώφρων*, *δίκαιος*, and *ἀνδρείος*, and in *Me.* 78d8-e1 *δσιότης* is next to *δικαιοσύνη* and *σωφροσύνη*. Concerning *δσιότης*, cf. also *Prot.* 331a ff., where this virtue is agreed to be closely associated to *δικαιοσύνη*. See also in *Euthyph.* 6d10-11 the demand for *ἐκεῖνο αὐτὸ τὸ εἶδος, ᾧ πάντα τὰ δσιὰ δσιὰ ἐστιν*, where the much - discussed first occurrence of the word *εἶδος*.

2. We first meet *μεγαλοπρέπεια* in *Me.* 73e7-74ab, as the fifth virtue next to the four cardinal ones, and at 88a7-8 along with five more virtues. Next, we find it twice in the *Republic* (at 402c2-4 and at 536a2-3).

3. In *Me.* 88a7-8 we have *εὐμαθία* and *μνήμη* along with *σωφροσύνη*, *δικαιοσύνη*, *ἀνδρεία*, and *μεγαλοπρέπεια*.

4. Cf. *Phaedo* 114b3-115a1, where we also find *σωφροσύνη* and *ἀνδρεία*.

5. Cf. *Rep.* 402c2-4, among *σωφροσύνη*, *ἀνδρεία*, and *μεγαλοπρέπεια*. See also in *Rep.* 518d9 ff.: *...αἱ μὲν τοίνυν ἄλλαι ἀρεταὶ καλούμεναι ψυχῆς κινδυνεύουσιν ἐγγύς τι εἶναι τοῦ σώματος — τῷ ὄντι γὰρ οὐκ ἐνούσαι πρότερον ὕστερον ἐμποιεῖσθαι ἔθεσιν καὶ ἀσκήσεσιν*. Also in *Laws* 709e-710, where the tyrant is described as one who should be *νέος*, *μνήμων*, *εὐμαθής*, *ἀνδρείος*, and *μεγαλοπρεπής*, we read about the *δημῳδῆς σωφροσύνη*, which should follow the previous qualifications.

6. Cf. *Prot.* 361a7-b3.

7. Cf. *Symp.* 196b ff.

8. Cf. *Symp.* 196d5.

the number four for the virtues was already consecrated by the time of writing of the *Symposium*, and does not mark a stage of Plato's thought reached only at the time of the *Republic*.

A second question related to our discussion is *whether, after the formulation of the definitions of the cardinal virtues in the Republic their number is limited to four steadily thereafter*. I believe that the answer here should be negative again: a) One can easily point to a passage following the one of the definitions¹ to find supporting evidence, since *μεγαλοπρέπεια* is mentioned next to *σωφροσύνη*, and *ἀνδρεία*². b) At this point, I would like to make an observation which, to the best of my knowledge, has not been made before: in the majority of the dialogues related to our topic, immediately after a number of names of virtues varying between three and six, we find steadily the following expressions: *Laches*:... *καὶ ἄλλα ἅττα τοιαῦτα*³; *Protagoras*: ...*καὶ πάντα ταῦτα*⁴; *Meno*: ... *καὶ ἄλλαι πάμπολλαι, ... ἢ ἄλλο τι μόνιον ἀρετῆς; ...καὶ πάντα τὰ τοιαῦτα*⁵. Now, examining the related passage of the *Republic* which precedes the definition of the cardinal virtues, we read: ...*καὶ ὅσα τούτων ἀδελφά*⁶. Is there any change after the crucial point (427e ff.) of the alleged consecration of the number four for the virtues? Is there anything that indicates a «development» that possibly made Plato alter his wording, and his steady reference to a larger number of individual virtues? There is no such indication in the text; on the contrary, after reference is made to *five* virtues, we read: ...*καὶ πάντα τὰ τῆς ἀρετῆς μέρη*⁷. What about the *Laws*? Is it accidental that at the aporetic end of Plato's last work no definite number is consecrated? ...*περὶ ἧς [ἀρετῆς] οὔτ' εἰ πολλά ἐστ' οὔτ' εἰ τέτταρα οὔθ' ὡς ἐν δυνατοὶ φράζειν ἐσόμεθα*⁸;

Based on the considerations made above, I would like to sum up my conclusions as follows: The so-called cardinal virtues are only the four predominant main virtues through the dialogues. The incorpora-

1. The quest for the definitions in the *Rep.* starts at 427e ff.

2. Cf. *Rep.* 536a2-3.

3. Cf. *La.* 198a8-9.

4. Cf. *Prot.* 329c4-5.

5. See *Me.* 74a4-5, 78d8-e1, and 88a7-8, respectively.

6. Cf. *Rep.* 402c2-4.

7. Cf. *Rep.* 536a2-3.

8. Cf. *Laws* 965e1-2.

tion of their definition into the plan of the *Republic* gives the impression that their number was fixed in Plato's mind as from that time only. However, the evidence we have from earlier dialogues, as well as from the *Republic* itself, and from the *Laws*, leaves no room for assuming such a change; on the contrary, Plato's attitude ever to make allowance for a larger number of virtues points to a non-development in this respect. Particularly the steady appearance of certain expressions, after the naming of various virtues, forms strong supporting evidence for a thread of thought kept unbroken from the *Laches* to the *Laws*.

C. THE DEFINITION OF VIRTUES

The Socratic quest for a definition occupies a central place mainly in a number of early dialogues known also as «definition - seeking». The search after a definition may be traced from the *Laches*, the *Charmides*, and the *Thrasymachus*, three quests for the definition of ἀνδρεία, of σωφροσύνη, and of δικαιοσύνη respectively, to the *Lysis* and the *Euthyphro*, both discussions on the nature of φιλία the former, and of δσιότης the latter. Likewise, the *Protagoras* stresses the necessity of definition of ἀρετή as a precondition of its teachability, the *Hippias Major* looks for the definition of καλόν. Even in later dialogues, the nature of ἀρετή is sought in the *Meno*, and that of ἐπιστήμη in the *Theaetetus*.

The Platonic Socrates gives primary importance, indeed, to the necessity of a definition. Nevertheless, in all the forementioned dialogues we reach either to incomplete definitions or to a restatement of the original demand. Then we come to the time of composition of the *Republic*, where we find the definitions of the four cardinal virtues, and this constitutes for many scholars the «solution» to the *aporia* of the early dialogues.

Aiming at an examination of the question whether such a claim is justifiable, I propose to go quickly through the incomplete definitions of some of the early dialogues: In the *Laches*, we have two attempts at a definition of ἀνδρεία: a) καρτερία τις τῆς ψυχῆς, and b) ἐπιστήμη δεινῶν τε καὶ θαρραλέων¹. In the *Charmides*, we have the follow-

1. See *La.* 192b9, and 196d1-2. Cf. similar views on courage in other pre-*Republic* Platonic works: *Prot.* 359a ff., 360d., *Gorg.* 495cd; *Phaedo* 68cd. Cf. also the definition of courage in Xen. *Mem.* 4.6.11, 3.9.1-3; Aristotle *Ethics* III, 1115a 6, *Rhet.* A. 1366b 11; Thuc. 2.40.30.

ing incomplete definitions of *σωφροσύνη*: a) *ἡσυχιότης τις*, b) *αἰδώς ἢ σωφροσύνη*, c) *τὸ τὰ ἑαυτοῦ πράττειν*, and d) *ἑαυτῆς τε καὶ τῶν ἄλλων ἐπιστημῶν ἐπιστήμη*¹. Finally, in the *Thrasymachus*, the aporetic first book of the *Republic*, we have at least three attempts at a definition of *δίκαιον* (plus several modifications of unsuccessful ones): a) *...ἀληθῆ τε λέγειν, καὶ ἂν λάβῃ τις ἀποδιδόναι* b) *τὸ τὰ ὀφειλόμενα ἐκάστῳ ἀποδιδόναι* (modified first into *τὸ τοὺς φίλους εἶποιεῖν καὶ τοὺς ἐχθροὺς κακῶς*, and further into *τὸν μὲν φίλον ἀγαθὸν ὄντα εἶποιεῖν, τὸν δ' ἐχθρὸν κακὸν ὄντα βλάπτειν*), and c) *τὸ τοῦ κρείττου συμμέρον*².

Now in the fourth book of the *Republic*, we find the definition of *ἀνδρεία* formulated as follows: *τὴν δὴ τοιαύτην δύναμιν καὶ σωτηρίαν διὰ παντός δόξης ὀρθῆς τε καὶ νομίμου δεινῶν τε πέρι καὶ μὴ ἀνδρείαν ἔρωγε καλῶ...*³; in the same book the definition of *σωφροσύνη* is found in the passage: *ὥστε ὀρθότατ' ἂν φαίμεν ταύτην τὴν ὁμόνοιαν σωφροσύνην εἶναι, χεῖρονός τε καὶ ἀμείνονος κατὰ φύσιν συμφωνίαν ὀπότερον δεῖ ἄρχειν...*⁴; finally, the definition of *δικαιοσύνη* is given in the following context: *...ἀλλὰ τῷ ὄντι τὰ οἰκεία εἶθέμενοι καὶ ἄρξαντα αὐτὸν αὐτοῦ καὶ κοσμήσαντα καὶ φίλον γενόμενον ἑαυτῷ καὶ συναρμόσαντα τρία ὄντα... πάντα ταῦτα συνδήσαντα καὶ παντάπασιν ἓνα γενόμενον ἐκ πολλῶν, σῶφρονά καὶ ἡρμοσμένον, οὕτω δὴ πράττειν ἤδη...*⁵.

Before we examine the question of whether and to what degree the definitions of the main virtues as we find them in the *Republic* are indeed the answers to the inconclusive end of the aporetic dialogues, let us give priority to another question: *does Plato really wish to reach to a definition in the aporetic dialogues but he is unable to achieve it?* In other words: was Plato in *aporia* himself? Only after

1. Cf. *Charm.* 159b5, 160e4-5, 161b6, 166e6.

2. See *Rep.* 331d2-3, 331e3, 332d7, 335a9-10, 338c2, respectively.

3. Cf. *Rep.* 430b2-4; cf. also the definition of *ἀνδρείος* at *Rep.* 442b11-c3.

4. Cf. *Rep.* 432a6-9; for the definition of *σώφρων*, see *Rep.* 442c10-d1.

5. Cf. *Rep.* 443d3-e2. To the previous, cf. the definition of justice at 433e12-434a1: *Καὶ ταύτη ἄρα πῆ ἢ τοῦ οἰκείου τε καὶ ἑαυτοῦ ἕξις τε καὶ πράξις δικαιοσύνη ἂν ὁμολογοῖτο*. Notice how the political meaning of *δικαιοσύνη* often joins it together with *σωφροσύνη* and the distinction between them is sometimes hard to make. Thus, on *ἑαυτοῦ πράττειν*, cf. *Apol.* 33a; *Alc. I.* 127ab; *Gorg.* 526c; *Rep.* 370a, 400e 406e, 423d, 433b, 441de, 443bc, 496d, 550a, 586e; *Phaedr.* 247a; *Polit.* 307e; *Tim.* 72a. Notice also in *Rep.* 433ab, 441de, 443c-e the repetition of the correspondence between *δίκαιος ἀνὴρ*, *δικαία πολιτεία*, and *δικαιοσύνη* itself. Concerning the definition of the fourth virtue, *σοφία*, we find it in *Rep.* 443e6-7 as: *...σοφίαν τὴν ἐπιστατοῦσαν ταύτῃ τῇ πράξει* [scil. *τῇ δικαίᾳ καὶ καλῇ*] *ἐπιστήμη*.

this consideration we may proceed to the question immediately related to our topic, that is whether the definitions of virtues as they are given in the *Republic* form the solution to the *aporia* of the early dialogues. In the case of a positive answer, this may point to a progress, that is an advanced stage in Plato's «growth», when he had discovered all the answers.

A thorough study of the aporetic dialogues¹ offered me a chance to make some considerations and reach to a number of conclusions concerning their purpose. It seems to me that the purpose of these dialogues should not be sought in the achievement or not of a final definition². Other purposes may be discerned in the early dialogues. One of them possibly is that the Platonic Socrates aims mainly at a serious consideration of certain concepts, in which case a considerable progress concerning their nature achieved through the dialogues, may be a worthwhile result. It is the direction toward which he points that matters, that is the essence of ἀρετή. On the other side, Plato gradually advances in the early dialogues the notion that the virtues are various expressions of an ultimate knowledge of the Good³. For as long as we do not possess a knowledge of what this Good is, the *aporia* is inevitable. Among the primary purposes of the aporetic dialogues one may also mention: the application of the Socratic method of conducting a philosophical investigation, and the pointing out of some basic methodological principles. On the other side, we should not forget that quite often one of the obvious purposes of some of the early dialogues is the attempt to eliminate all possible confusions of a concept with others, only apparently related to it, before undertaking its definition seriously. If the above points are taken into consideration, they exclude the alleged personal *aporia*⁴ of Plato himself at the time of

1. The occasion for such a study was given when writing my book, *A Study of Plato's «Laches»*, Thessaloniki 1983 (Annex to the *EEThess.* No. 37).

2. The question of where the limitations of a final definition of the individual virtues lie will be discussed later in this study, in relation to the topic of the unity of virtues.

3. For the idea of the Good, see Shorey, *Unity*, 17-18 and notes, where he expresses some important views on this concept in a concise manner. Cf. also *La.* 195c-e; *Charm.* 174d; *Euthed.* 291c, 292b. On the notion that a virtue by hypothesis must be καλὸν καγαθόν, cf. *La.* 192c, 193d; *Prot.* 349e; *Me.* 87d; *Hipp. Maj.* 284d; *Rep.* 335d.

4. On this point, I agree with Schulz, *op cit.*, 262, although his study does not find me in agreement in other respects.

composition of the early dialogues. At a time when he was treating in a masterly way some quite important complicated topics it seems highly improbable to have been in *aporia* himself concerning some quite elementary concepts.

Let us now return to the definitions of the virtues as they appear in the *Republic*¹. This central work admittedly ties together many threads, and, in relation to our topic, it seems to offer the answer to the incomplete definitions of some of Plato's aporetic dialogues. Disregarding for the moment the question whether Plato was unable to formulate these definitions already at the age of thirty five or forty, when in all probability he was composing the aporetic dialogues, let us consider another question: *do the definitions of the cardinal virtues of the Republic appear again?* Here the supporting evidence should be sought in the texts again. A careful examination of the dialogues shows not only that, after they serve their purpose in the scheme of the *Republic*, the definitions of the virtues do not appear again in this dialogue, but also that there is no textual evidence that they are ever used again by Plato². Even in the closing part of the *Laws*, against the fact that Plato returns to the dramatic form and the topics of the early dialogues, he seems to show no belief in the value of definition, and no final definition appears in his voluminous last work³. If the absence of the definitions of virtues in the dialogues preceding the *Republic* allows the inference that a development in Plato's thought took place at the time they appeared in the *Republic*, how can their disappearance be explained? Moreover, how can those who assume a development in Plato account for the so called «problem of the *Laws*», that is his return to the aporetic style of the early dialogues⁴?

On the other side, it cannot be plausibly supported by the text evidence that the incomplete definitions of *ἀνδρεία*, *σωφροσύνη*, and *δικαιοσύνη*⁵, find their corresponding solution in the *Republic*. Although

1. Cf. p. 341 *supra*.

2. It is worthy of notice that even in the *Republic* Plato considers the definitions only a sketch; cf. in *Rep.* 504d6-7 ...καὶ αὐτῶν τούτων οὐχ ὑπογραφήν δεῖ ὥσπερ νῦν θεάσασθαι.

3. Notice the aporetic wording and imagery of *Laws* 633c9-d2: *πότερον ἀπλῶς οὕτως εἶναι πρὸς φόβους καὶ λύπας διαμάχην μόνον, ἢ καὶ πρὸς πόθους τε καὶ ἡδονάς καὶ τινὰς δεινὰς θωπείας κολακικὰς...*; cf. *La.* 191d.

4. Cf. *Laws* 965c9-d6.

5. Cf. p. 340 *supra*.

the Platonic Socrates insists on the necessity of a definition, in all probability, the definition is not an end for the early works, and should be seen within the context and the purpose of the *arete* - dialogues. Likewise, one should always have in mind when reading the definitions of the cardinal virtues in the *Republic* that they are adopted for the needs and purposes of a reformed state¹. Therefore, they should be seen within their context and not as giving an answer to the *aporia* of the early dialogues. They are describing the «longer way» to be followed by the *ἀρχοῦντες* of the *Republic*, the type of training that will prepare them to understand the ultimate Good². Therefore, it is not justifiable to attribute the existence of formulated definitions in the *Republic* to a development of Plato's thought. After all, it is not hard to find textual support for the view that many of the allegedly «late» views of the *Republic* and of the *Laws* are present in the early dialogues as well, in different contexts³.

D. THE UNITY OF VIRTUES THROUGH THE DIALOGUES AND PLATO'S DEVELOPMENT

In the concluding part of this study the main thesis that I shall try to prove is that the unity of Plato's thought finds strong supporting evidence in his return in the *Laws* to many notions about the virtues and their unity, held by him already in the early dialogues as well as in the *Republic*⁴.

The major ethical question of the unity of virtues seems to have occupied Plato seriously since the beginning of his literary career:

1. In the *Laches*, Socrates suggests: *μη...περὶ ὅλης ἀρετῆς εὐθέως σκοπώμεθα... ἀλλὰ μέρος τινὸς περὶ πρῶτον...*; and further: *τί οὖν ἂν προελοί-*

1. E.g., *δικαιοσύνη*, in *Rep.* 443d3-e2, as the fulfilment of its own function by each faculty of the soul and class in society, answers such a need.

2. Cf. *Rep.* 463aff., 521d; *Laws* 964a ff. A virtue by hypothesis is *καλὸν κἀγαθόν*, and possibly the inability to prove it leads to the failure of the definitions of the early dialogues. Cf. *La.* 192c, 193d; *Prot.* 349e; *Hipp. Maj.* 284; *Rep.* 332, 333. Cf. also p. 342, and n. 3, *supra*.

3. Cf. the studies of Shorey, Ross, Erbse, in relation to the theory of Ideas, the Idea of Good, etc. (pp. 332, n. 1, *supra*).

4. For a discussion of the relation of the parts to the whole of virtue, as well as for the presence of the notion of the unity of virtues in several Platonic dialogues, see Passaloglou, *op. cit.*, 102-109.

μεθα τῶν τῆς ἀρετῆς μερῶν;¹. Thus, we are introduced, though tentatively, to the part-whole relation of the individual virtues to the idea of virtue. The unity of virtues is clearly implied further in the same dialogue: Οὐκοῦν καὶ σὺ τοῦτο ἀπεκρίνω ὡς μόριον, ὄντων δὲ καὶ ἄλλων μερῶν, ἃ σύμπαντα ἀρετὴ κέκληται;². When the attempt at a definition of courage by Nicias fails, as his definition of the part ἀνδρεία is dissolved into the whole ἀρετή, the unity of virtues, especially in the sense that each one presupposes all of them, is suggested as follows: ...ἀπολείπειν ἂν τι ὁ τοιοῦτος ἀρετῆς, εἴπερ εἰδείη τά τε ἀγαθὰ πάντα καὶ παντάπασιν...; καὶ τοῦτον οἶει ἂν σὺ ἐνδεᾶ εἶναι σωφροσύνης ἢ δικαιοσύνης τε καὶ ὁσιότητος, ...ἐπισταμέω ὁρθῶς προσομιλεῖν...; finally, the unity thesis is clearly stated: οὐκ ἄρα... μόριον ἀρετῆς ἂν εἴη τὸ νῦν σοι λεγόμενον, ἀλλὰ σύμπασα ἀρετῆ³.

2. In the *Protagoras*, Socrates refers to the notion of the «parts» of virtue trying to make the sophist choose one out of two alternatives: ἔν μὲν τί ἐστιν ἡ ἀρετή, μόρια δὲ αὐτῆς ἐστιν ἡ δικαιοσύνη...ἢ ταῦτ' ἐστίν... πάντα ὀνόματα τοῦ αὐτοῦ εἰὸς ὄντος;⁴. Further, he sums up Protagoras' option as follows ...ἔφησθα... οὐκ ὀνόματα ἐπὶ ἐνὶ εἶναι, ἀλλὰ ἕκαστον ἰδίῳ πράγματι... ἐπιχειῖσθαι...⁵. In the sequence, restating what kind of parts Protagoras accepted the individual virtues to be, Socrates says: [ἔφησθα]... οὐχ ὡς τὰ τοῦ χρυσοῦ μόρια ὁμοιά ἐστιν ἀλλήλοις καὶ τῷ ὄλῳ οὗ μόριά ἐστιν, ἀλλ' ὡς τὰ τοῦ προσώπου μόρια καὶ τῷ ὄλῳ οὗ μόριά ἐστιν καὶ ἀλλήλοις ἁνόμοια...⁶.

3. In the related passage of the *Gorgias*, Socrates states the conclusion: ...ἀνάγκη... τὸν σώφρονα... δίκαιον ὄντα καὶ ἀνδρεῖον καὶ ὄσιον ἀγαθὸν ἄνδρα εἶναι τελέως...⁷. Throughout this passage, the notion that he who possesses one virtue possesses them all, and should therefore be good in the absolute sense, is presented as a *sine qua non* condition, fulfilled by the virtuous man⁸.

1. Cf. *La.* 190c8-10, 190d3.

2. Cf. *La.* 198a4-5.

3. See *La.* 199d4-e1, and 199e3-4.

4. Cf. *Prot.* 329cd.

5. Cf. *Prot.* 349b1-c6.

6. Cf. *Prot.* 349c2-5.

7. Cf. *Gorg.* 507c.

8. The same notion is expressed in the *Laches* (199d4-9). The related passages in the *Gorgias* and the *Laches* answer positively the question asked in the *Protagoras* 329e2-4: πότερον... μεταλαμβάνουσιν... οἱ μὲν ἄλλο, οἱ δὲ ἄλλο, ἢ ἀνάγκη εἶναι περὶ τις ἐν λάβῃ, ἅπαντα ἔχειν;

4. I would like to bring the *Meno* as additional supporting evidence to my already expressed thesis: namely, that it is the dialogues' context and purpose that decides the manner and length of treatment of a given topic, and not the date of composition of a dialogue and the alleged development of the philosopher's views. The *Meno* offers a number of passages related to the unity of virtues. Thus, we read: *κἄν εἰ πολλαὶ καὶ παντοδαπαὶ εἰσιν, ἔν γέ τι εἶδος ταυτὸν ἅπασαι ἔχουσιν δι' ὃ εἰσὶν ἀρεταί;*¹ and further: *πολλὰς αὖ ἠρώκαμεν ἀρετὰς μίαν ζητοῦντες... τὴν δὲ μίαν... οὐ δυνάμεθα ἀνευρεῖν*². Pointing ever to the direction of unity Socrates complains: *ὅτι ἐμοῦ δεηθέντος ὄλον εἶπεῖν τὴν ἀρετὴν, ...πᾶσαν... φῆς προᾶξιν ἀρετὴν εἶναι, ...ὥσπερ εἰρηκῶς ὅτι ἀρετὴ ἐστὶν τὸ ὄλον καὶ ἤδη γνωσομένον ἐμοῦ, καὶ ἐὰν σὺ κατακερματίζῃς αὐτὴν κατὰ μέρη;*³ a little further, he restates his demand for the whole of virtue as follows: *ἀλλ' οἷε τινὰ εἰδέναι μέρη ἀρετῆς ὅτι ἐστίν, αὐτὴν μὴ εἰδόντα;*⁴.

Socrates' main objection is not addressed against the notion of «parts» itself, as against the idea of trying to define them before one defines the «whole». The same dialectical difficulty is implied in the *Laches* when the «part» merges into the «whole»⁵.

5. Although the *Republic* is undoubtedly «the chief witness to the unity of Plato's thought»⁶ in many respects, the doctrine of the unity of virtues is advanced in it in a less conspicuous way than in the *Meno*, and is less emphatically stressed than in many of the early dialogues. It is generally agreed that the unity of virtues in the *Republic* is to be sought in the direction of the Good⁷. In Book IV, it is assumed that the sum of virtue is good *τελέως*⁸, and that the rightly founded state should have the four main virtues, which are subsequently defined. Further, what is said about the state is restated in terms of the three classes of citizens. The unity of virtues thesis is to be sought mainly in the definition of *δικαιοσύνη*: *...ἀλλὰ τῷ ὄντι τὰ οἰ-*

1. Cf. *Me.* 72c6-8.

2. Cf. *Me.* 74a7-10.

3. Cf. *Me.* 79b7-c3.

4. Cf. *Me.* 79c8-9.

5. Cf. *La.* 199e3-4.

6. Cf. Shorey, *Unity*, 78.

7. Cf. p. 342, n. 3, *supra*.

8. Cf. in *Rep.* 427e7-11: *οἶμαι ἡμῶν τὴν πόλιν εἶπερ ὀρθῶς ᾤκισται, τελέως ἀγαθὴν εἶναι.*

κεῖα εὖ θέμενον καὶ ἄρξαντα αὐτὸν αὐτοῦ καὶ κοσμήσαντα καὶ φίλον γενόμενον ἑαντῷ καὶ συναρμόσαντα τρία ὄντα... συνδήσαντα καὶ παντάπασιν ἕνα γενόμενον ἐκ πολλῶν, σώφρονα καὶ ἡρμοσμένον, οὕτω δὴ πράττειν ἤδη...¹. It is posited as a precondition that each person in whom the several parts perform their own duty will be a just man: ...καὶ ἡμῶν ἕκαστος, ὅταν ἂν τὰ αὐτοῦ ἕκαστον τῶν ἐν αὐτῷ πράττη, οὕτως δίκαιός τε ἔστι καὶ τὰ αὐτοῦ πράττων².

The unity of virtues thesis is found in the very core of the central part of the *Republic*. The repeated greater emphasis given to this topic in the earlier *Meno* is a proof that no development thesis may be plausibly supported: it is the subject and the purpose of the *Meno* that requires the greater stress laid on the parts of virtue and their unity in it. Likewise, it is the purpose of the *Republic* to concentrate *περὶ τὴν ἐντός προᾶξιν* that requires the discreet treatment of the unity of virtues of Book IV.

6. It is widely acknowledged that Plato altered mood and style in his last dialogue, the *Laws*, something that gave birth to Lucian's proverbial «colder than Plato's *Laws*». Afterall, it is only natural that in his old age Plato might have grown weary of the style of his earlier dialogues. However, a very brief study of some passages from the first and the twelfth book, which seem to form a frame for the other ten books in-between, shows an astonishing resemblance to the treatment of some of the ethical, and metaphysical³, problems of the early dialogues and of the *Republic*.

In Book I of the *Laws* a first reference is made to the excellence of possessing *σύμπασαν ἀρετήν* in warfare⁴. A little further the Athenian, speaking of the ancient law-givers' attitude in relation to justice, makes a clear hint to the unity of virtues⁵: ...Ὡσπερ τό τε ἀληθὲς οἴμαι καὶ τὸ δίκαιον ὑπέρο γε θείας διαλεγόμενους λέγειν, οὐχ ὡς πρὸς ἀρετῆς τι

1. Cf. *Rep.* 443d3-e2.

2. Cf. *Rep.* 441d12-e2.

3. J. Burnet (*Platonism*, Berkeley 1928, 119), and H. Müller (*Studien* [XX³⁰], 97) contend that there is no trace of the doctrine of Ideas in the *Laws*. For opposite views, see H. Cherniss, *The Riddle of the Early Academy*, Berkeley and L. A. 1945, 60, 82f., and in *Gnomon* XXV (1953) 375.

4. Cf. *Laws* 629ab; also 630a8-b3.

5. Cf. *Laws* 630d9-c3.

μόριον, καὶ ταῦτα τὸ φαυλότατον, ἐτίθει βλέπων, ἀλλὰ πρὸς πᾶσαν ἀρετήν¹. He considers it ὀρθόν to begin ἀπ' ἀρετῆς, from virtue itself². In book III, we have also one quite clear reference to the one virtue, though they are four: ...τὸ δὲ ἐμὸν ἔλεγον ὅτι τοῦτο μὲν πρὸς μίαν ἀρετὴν οὐ σὼν τεττάρων κελεύοι τίθεσθαι τοὺς νόμους...³. In the same book there is a quite analytical discussion about the parts of virtue that are four, presupposing one another, beginning and ending by the conclusion that σωφροσύνη is a precondition πάσης ἀρετῆς⁴; and a discussion about the distribution of honors, where again priority is given to the goods of soul, the virtues⁵. Finally, in Book IV, the Athenian stresses that he has not agreed that the laws should aim at a part and not at the whole of virtue⁶.

At the concluding part of Book XII, and after so many books of continuous legislation, the work suddenly breaks up and Plato's thought is cast in the dialogue form of his early writings. What about the content of his thought? Is there any evidence of any change in Plato's positions, concerning the major ethical question of the unity of virtues or does he maintain the same views as in the early works and the *Republic*? If we prove that the latter is the case, then we may support with a high degree of possibility the following view: the fact that such topics cannot be treated in a rigid non-dramatic discourse may account for Plato's return to the aporetic form in the last pages of the *Laws*. This may offer a plausible explanation to some evolutionists who are puzzled by the «problem of the *Laws*».

In Book XII, somehow above the body of the custodians Plato places the «nocturnal council»⁷, the «anchor» and «salvation» of the

1. For reference to parts of virtue in the *Laws*, cf. 532c, 633a, 696b, 963. Cf. also 626, and 709e ff.

2. Cf. 631a3-4: τὸ γὰρ ἀπ' ἀρετῆς ἄρχεσθαι, λέγοντα ὡς ἐτίθει ταύτης ἕνεκα τοὺς νόμους, ὀρθόν. Cf. *Euthed.* 280b ff. to *Laws* 631c5-d1 on the two kinds of ἀγαθά, the human and the divine. Among the divine ones, we have the four cardinal virtues, φρόνησις, σωφροσύνη, ἀνδρεία, and δικαιοσύνη, with φρόνησις called τὸ ἡγεμονοῦν τῶν θεῶν ἀγαθῶν. Cf. the same stress on the priority of φρόνησις in *Laws* 688b1-4.

3. Cf. *Laws* 688a6-7.

4. Cf. *Laws* 696a-d.

5. Cf. *Laws* 697b.

6. Cf. *Laws* 705d8-e1: ...τὸ δὲ πρὸς μέρος ἀλλ' οὐ πρὸς πᾶσαν σχεδόν, οὐ πάνυ συνεχώρουν.

7. Cf. *Laws* 961a ff. For the Nocturnal Council, and the *Laws*, see G. R. Mor-

ship of the state, which in its moral pursuits has one single goal, the knowledge of the political σκοπός. All of a sudden, we have the impression that we are back to Book I, or even to the spirit of the early dialogues: the laws should always look to the one, which was agreed that is called ἀρετή, and this ἀρετή was formerly said to be four, with νοῦν ἡγεμόνα¹. Further, we meet the notion of the one that is four, and the four that are one: *Οἷον ὅτε τέτταρα ἐφήσαμεν ἀρετῆς εἶδη γεγονέναι, δῆλον ὡς ἐν ἑκαστον ἀνάγκη φάναι, τεττάρων γε ὄντων... Καὶ μὴν ἐν γε ἅπαντα ταῦτα προσαγορεύομεν. ἀνδρείαν γάρ φαμεν ἀρετὴν εἶναι, καὶ τὴν φρόνησιν ἀρετὴν, καὶ τὰ δύο τᾶλλα, ὡς ὄντως ὄντα οὐ πολλὰ ἀλλ' ἐν τοῦτο μόνον, ἀρετὴν². In the sequence, we find more notions that we are familiar with from the early dialogues: it is easy to show how the virtues are many, hard to point to the one in the many: *Ἴτι μὲν τοίνυν διαφέρετον αὐτοῖν τούτω ἰὼ δύο καὶ δὴ ὄνόματα ἐλαβέτην καὶ τᾶλλα, οὐδὲν χαλεπὸν εἰπεῖν ἢ δὲ ἐν ἀμφοῖν ἐπωνομάσαμεν, ἀρετὴν, καὶ τοῖς ἄλλοις, οὐκ εὐπετέες ἔτι³. A little further in the text, the unity of virtues is clearly stated: *Ἴτι μὲν τοίνυν ἐστὸν διαφόρων καὶ δύο, σὺν παρ' ἐμοῦ ἀπείληφας τῷ λόγῳ ἢ δὲ ἐν καὶ ταῦτόν, σὺν πάλιν ἀπόδος ἐμοί. διανοοῦ δὲ ὡς ἐρῶν καὶ ὅπη τέτταρα ὄντα ἐν ἐστι, καὶ ἐμὲ δὲ ἀξίου, σοῦ δείξαντος ὡς ἐν, πάλιν ὅπη τέτταρα⁴. Finally, the necessity for the custodians to know with precision τὸ διὰ πάντων ταῦτόν as a precondition of any definition or of any expression of view about individuality or unity is stressed. Without it, we cannot even discuss multiplicity or unity of virtues: *...Ἀναγκαστέον... καὶ τοὺς τῆς θείας πολιτείας ἡμῖν φύλακας ἀκριβῶς ἰδεῖν πρῶτον τί ποτε διὰ πάντων τῶν τεττάρων ταῦτόν τυγχάνει, ὃ δὴ φαμεν ἐν τε ἀνδρεία καὶ σωφροσύνη καὶ δικαιοσύνη καὶ ἐν φρονήσει ἐν ὄν, ἀρετὴν ἐνὶ δικαίως ἂν ὀνόματι προσαγορεύεσθαι. τοῦτο, ...μὴ ἀνώμεν, πρὶν ἂν ἰκανῶς εἴπωμεν τί ποτ' ἔστιν εἰς ὃ βλέπτεον, εἴτε ὡς ἐν εἴτε ὡς ὅλον εἴτε ἀμφοτέρω εἴτε ὅπως ποτὲ πέφυκεν. ἢ τούτου διαφρηγόντος ἡμᾶς, οἴομεθά ποτε ἡμῖν ἰκανῶς ἔξειν τὰ πρὸς ἀρετὴν περὶ ἧς οὐτ' εἰ πολλὰ ἐστ' οὐτ' εἰ τέτταρα οὐθ' ὡς ἐν δυνατοὶ φράζειν ἐσό-****

row, *The Nocturnal Council in Plato's Laws in AfGP X LII/3 (1960) 229ff.*, and his book *Plato's Cretan City*, Princeton, 1960. Cf. also P. Shorey, *Plato's Laws and the Unity of Plato's Thought in CP 9 (1914) 345-69*.

1. Cf. *Laws* 963a2-8: *...πρὸς γὰρ ἐν ἔφαμεν δεῖν αἰεὶ πάνθ' ἡμῖν τὰ τῶν νόμων βλέποντ' εἶναι, τοῦτο δ' ἀρετὴν που συνεχωροῦμεν ἅπαν ὀρθῶς λέγεσθαι... Τὴν δὲ γε ἀρετὴν τέτταρα ἔθεμέν που... Νοῦν δὲ γε πάντων τούτων ἡγεμόνα...*

2. Cf. *Laws* 963c5-d2.

3. Cf. *Laws* 963d4-7.

4. Cf. *Laws* 964a1-5.

μεθᾶ;¹. Thus, the last part of Plato's last work, Book XII, forms a frame not only with the opening part of the same work, Book I, but also with some of the first products of his thought. This sort of «ring composition» is additional evidence supplied by the texts for the unity of Plato's thought.

In the present study, based on the textual evidence, I have attempted to test the validity of two claims: a) That the *aporia* related to the early dialogues is part of a predetermined plan, present in Plato's mind from the very beginning. b) That Plato only reached to the solution of certain ethical and other questions (among which the definitions, and the unity of virtues) only at the time of the composition of the *Republic*.

Before I proceed to a recapitulation of my conclusions on the specific ethical topics examined in this study, I would like to enumerate some general observations offered by the texts, which apply to the specific topics as well:

a) There seems to be nothing in support of the view that some «late» notions were absent from Plato's mind in his thirties, when he was composing some of the aporetic dialogues. On the contrary, there is textual evidence that the component parts of many «later» theories existed already in many works of Plato's early and middle creative period.

b) Although minor changes, or even some contradictions, are to be expected in a literary output of fifty years, their existence in Plato's work does not necessarily imply serious changes in his thought, and should not be overstressed.

c) We may say that we do not have any reason to doubt Plato's ability to have some steady concepts and leading thoughts from the very beginning. On the other side, this is not incompatible with the view that in a literary career extending over half a century his ideas must have taken a more final shape. Unfortunately, we are not sufficiently informed about the time they were given full formation in his mind,

1. Cf. *Laws* 965a9-e2. For similar expressions on the unity of virtues in the late dialogues, cf. *Soph.* 240a4-6: ...Τὸ διὰ πάντων τούτων ἃ πολλὰ εἰπὼν ἠξίωσας ἐνὶ προσεπειν ὀνόματι φθεγξάμενος εἰδωλον ἐπὶ πᾶσιν ὡς ἐν ὄν. Cf. also *Phileb.* 18e: ...πῶς ἔστιν ἐν καὶ πολλὰ αὐτῶν ἐκάτερον;

or the reasons they were treated with a varying degree of emphasis in the dialogues.

d) It is true that some topics required a brief and dramatic treatment, whereas some others a longer and more dogmatic one. We may say that Plato had a preference for the former when younger, and for the latter when older. However, this is only an indication of the types of subjects he chose to treat, not of his development.

e) In general, it is not justifiable to maintain that Plato worked according to a rigid and harmoniously arranged model - plan, slowly executed in fifty years. We may speak of a common spirit in the dialogues, and of a plan in a very broad sense. On the other side, much less can we speak of a development, and of a gradual, or of a sudden discovery of certain ethical or metaphysical doctrines.

In this study, the comparative examination of a number of representative passages related to the definitions, and to the unity of virtues has shown: a) That the Platonic definitions in general share in common at least five characteristic elements. b) That the definitions of the cardinal virtues, as formulated in the *Republic*, fit the context and the purpose of this great synthetic work; they do not offer sufficient evidence that they give the solution to the incomplete definitions of the early dialogues, and, therefore, they cannot be a proof of a development of Plato's thought. c) That the notion of the unity of virtues, which runs through the dialogues, remains basically «unchanged» from the *Laches* to the *Laws*, and justifies the contention that Plato's views on this topic were formulated at an early stage in his career.

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