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## THE NOBLE VIRTUE OF ΣΩΦΡΟΣΥΝΗ: HISTORICAL NOTES ON THE *MINOS* AND PLATO'S *LAWS*\*

*Abstract:* The paper deals with the problems of (A) the date, authenticity and structure of the *Minos*, and (B) of its topical elements, centred on the mid-fourth century aristocratic, as well as complex, notion of sophrosyne. Various controversial aspect of the *Minos* can be understood in the light of parallel passages from Plato's *Laws*.

I. To begin with the summary of my view on the problems of the chronology and authenticity of the *Minos* – problems that have been treated, admirably and with somewhat different conclusions, by Professors L. Brisson and Chr. Rowe during the recent International Colloquium on that dialogue (*Collegium Politicum*; Université de Fribourg [Suisse]; February 2-3, 2007).

Let me say it at once, my article deals with the *Minos* and the *Laws* as two dialogues published more or less simultaneously, during the late 350's or early 340's but not by the same author<sup>1</sup>. (The publication of the *Laws* – complete or in part – did not postulate, of course, the existence of its manuscript tradition in a definitive form). The shorter dialogue, sporadically rather naïve, will have been composed by a pupil of Plato as a sort of variation on certain related themes (notably, Minoan histories, law-making, self-control, Athenian-Crossian relations, defects of democracy) found in or alluded to, with

<sup>1</sup> S. Dušanić, *History and Politics in Plato's "Laws"* (in Serbian with an English summary). Belgrade 1990, 80 f. (where I insist upon the argument from similarity between the *Minos* and the *Hipparchus*, itself datable c. 355 BC with a satisfactory precision and confidence) et passim. For a similar view on the problem of the chronology, G. R. Morrow, *Plato's Cretan City. A Historical Interpretation of the Laws*, Princeton 1960, 35-39 et passim, and Chr. Rowe (*Collegium Politicum*, Fribourg [Suisse], February 2007). The problem of authenticity: C. W. Müller, *Die Kurzdialoge der Appendix Platonica*, München 1975, 155-187 et passim; Morrow and Dušanić, locc. citt. (with bibl.); L. Brisson, *Collegium Politicum*, Fribourg (Suisse), February 2007 (with bibl.); W. K.C. Guthrie, *A History of Greek Philosophy*, vol. V: *The Later Plato and the Academy*, Cambridge 1978, 389 f; A.M. Archie, "The Unity of Plato's *Minos*", *Philotheos* 7(2007) 160-171 (esp. 160 note 1).

a measure of emphasis, in Plato's *magnum opus*. Such cases of grouping of related dialogues, where Plato's original works are joined by apocryphs of similar contents (a similarity that need not be very profound) and of close date, are not isolated in the *corpus Platonicum*<sup>2</sup>. It is to be assumed that the apocryphal components of such complex sets were the fruit of discussions within the Academy which followed the genesis or publication of the corresponding genuine pieces.

Professor Luc Brisson justly insists upon the “classement proposé par Thrasyllus dans la neuvième tétralogie”, which starts with the cognate dialogues *Minos*, *Laws* and *Epinomis* (listed in that order!) and roughly corresponds to the structure of the third trilogy in Aristophanes of Byzantium's “edition” (*Laws*, *Minos*, *Epinomis*). He concludes, inevitably, that “au début de l'ère chrétienne, le *Minos* et l' *Épinomis* existaient et étaient considérés comme deux dialogues authentiques”<sup>3</sup>. In view of their thematic relationship with the *Laws*, underlined by Aristophanes' and Thrasyllus' classification, their date of composition may be sought in the years of Plato's old age – which saw Plato's work on the *Laws* almost finished. This chronology of the *Minos* can hold good if we exclude the possibility that the Platonic elements in the dialogue stem from the Anonym's use of literary-philosophical models that were much earlier than the Anonym himself – in other words, if we postulate models deriving from contemporary<sup>4</sup> discussions in the Academy led by Plato himself (c. late 350's – early 340's) and not from the heritage of the Hellenistic thinkers. However, Professor Brisson is inclined to opt for the former interpretation of the Platonic layer of the *Minos*, one assuming distant models and a Hellenistic, instead of a fourth-century, author. He puts the *Minos* c. 250 BC, a century after 348/7, the year which saw the *Laws* barely completed and the *Epinomis* hardly started<sup>5</sup>. This late dating (not quite unprecedented<sup>6</sup>) partly depends on his conjecture that the *Minos* with its concluding remark (321 D) “était prévu pour être une introduction aux *Lois*”<sup>7</sup>. Such an introduction would be indeed expected in a

<sup>2</sup> Cf. e.g. *Alcibiades I and II; Hippias Major and Minor*.

<sup>3</sup> Brisson (n. 1 supra).

<sup>4</sup> I.e. contemporary with the Anonym according to my chronology of his activity.

<sup>5</sup> Brisson (n. 1 supra).

<sup>6</sup> See e.g. J. Souilhé, *Platon. Oeuvres complètes XIII 2: Dialogues suspects*, Paris 1962 (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.) 81-85.

<sup>7</sup> Brisson (n. 1 supra).

Hellenistic text rather than in a classical one but its occurrence is variously difficult to assume in the present case, even if we disregard the *Laws*, *Minos*, *Epinomis* order in Aristophanes. Compare the interpretation of 321 D to follow, which does not explain that passage as announcing a fresh Socratic analysis but as summing up the essence of what has already been concluded in the forthcoming discussions in the same dialogue (see *infra* [IV-V]).

The dialogue structure of this type – reflecting the art of an apocryph which varies aspects of a Platonic original – need not have been a rare case in the *corpus Platonicum*. For, on the one hand, the relationship between the *Minos* and the *Laws* may have been in principle less formal, literarily speaking, than that which would give the *Minos* the status of an introduction (and the *Epinomis* that of a conclusion). There is an instructive parallel in the relationship envisageable between the *Laws* and the *Epimenides*, a pseudo-Platonic dialogue which cannot be taken to correspond with either the beginning or the end of the *Laws* (below, VI a). On the other hand, despite Professor Brisson's attempt at establishing links between the *Minos* and the third-century culture, his approximate date for the dialogue – mid-third century BC<sup>8</sup> – seems too late with regard to its treatment of historical, social and constitutional realities. Notably, the modalities of the Anonym's criticism of democracy and Attic drama as well as his insistence upon the Cretan themes are hardly compatible with a period much (if any) later than the 350's/340's<sup>9</sup>. These matters cannot be explained away by the students of the *Minos*' chronology as a trace of influence of typical notions of Plato's political theory, notions that have long divorced themselves from Greek practical politics. And it is evidently easier to understand the favourable treatment of the *Minos* and the *Epinomis* in Thrasyllus and Aristophanes, which makes them genuine works (for several reasons,

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.* : "...un peu avant ou un peu après 250, car le dialogue fait montre d'une culture qui s'apparente à celle de l'époque".

<sup>9</sup> Sections IV-VI below; for the "Cretan themes" and the chronology of the *Minos* see also Morrow ([note 1 supra] 20 ff. 35 ff., whose arguments – though also lead to the dating of the *Minos* to the second half of 350s – differ from mine on several points. – As to the problem of the *terminus ante* see also M. Isnardi, *La parola del passato* 9(1954) 49 note 1: "Si può notare come, seguendo essenzialmente le enumerazioni di D. L. ..., la segnalazione di opere di carattere teorico politico in ambito accademico riguarda solo l'attività di Speusippo, Senocrate, in certa misura Eraclide". (Thanks to Professor S. Gastaldi's kindness, I have been given a copy of this important article from *Par. pass.* 1954).

I follow those Platonists who are not ready to accept this view of the two ancient scholars), if we postulate for those dialogues a long span of life before the terminus ante quem of *c.* 200 BC.

II. To revert to the problem of the Platonic elements of the *Minos*. The Scholarch's oral teaching will have had an important rôle – that of a conceptual model, however hard to imitate owing to its high quality – in the entire process of the birth of *spuria*. As to the imitators' choice of particular themes, it may have been inspired i.a. by the topicality of political issues connected with them<sup>10</sup>. In view of the length, political colour and the thematic complexity of Plato's *Laws*, it is not difficult to understand the comparative wealth of parallel production, extant (the *Minos*; the *Epinomis*) or postulated on the basis of the dialogue titles and the expected features of the contents (the *Epimenides*, [*infra*, VI]). And the eloquent relationship between the *Laws* and the *Laws*-centred apocryphs enables us to better understand certain enigmatic passages on both sides – especially the *Laws* can help us in interpreting certain parts of these comparatively brief apocryphs. These manifestations of intertextuality appear the more natural as all preserved dialogues of the group seem to originate from one period – that of Plato's old age, whose ideas (partly on account of that age precisely, if we are allowed to venture this easy conjecture) seem to have been coherent enough on several salient points<sup>11</sup>.

Our attention will be focused on the common traits of the *Minos*–*Laws* pair, which forms the starting-point of the analysis in the sequel, rather more than some traits of the *Epinomis*, whose similarities with the *Laws*–*Minos*–*Epimenides* group are less prominent. (The Academics' choice of the main theme or themes for a specific dialogue, understandably, influenced the choice of accessory themes, too. This need not be an exclusive practice, however, in every case – e.g., despite its concentration on mathematical and astronomical problems, the reader of the *Epinomis* notes that the dialogue about the “Nocturnal Council” remains sporadically of interest for our psychological subject also<sup>12</sup>).

<sup>10</sup> For a transparent example (the *Sisyphus*) see my paper on “The True Statesman of the *Statesman* and the Young Tyrant of the *Laws*: An Historical Comparison”, in: (Ch. J. Rowe ed.) *Reading the Statesman. Proceedings of the III Symposium Platonicum* (Sankt Augustin 1995) 337–346 (esp. 343).

<sup>11</sup> The *Epimenides* will have belonged to Eubulus' period, if our interpretation of *IG II 2<sup>nd</sup> ed.*, 4968, line 22, and the fragment's political context, is accepted as exact (Dušanić, *Epigraphica* 53 [1991] 1–32 [esp. 30 f.]; note 54 below).

<sup>12</sup> E.g. *infra*, IV, on *Epin.* 989 C (“*due nourishment and education*”).

In conclusion of the preceding introductory remarks let us add one more detail which concerns the works of senior Academics. It is to be regretted that Xenocrates' *Περὶ σωφροσύνης* and *Περὶ ἐγκρατείας*, among the Chalcedonian's other works of presumably close kind and date<sup>13</sup>, have been lost; if we had them, we should have been probably able to complete our picture of the late Platonic notions of *σωφροσύνη* and cognate virtues though Xenocrates must have been *sophron* temperamentally, not only with regard to his ethical teaching. And M. Isnardi<sup>14</sup> must have been right in excluding, for the *Minos*, “una datazione postsenocratea”.

Now, the quality of *sophrosyne* is not explicitly mentioned in the *Minos*, a remarkable fact which registers one exception only, that concerning the status of *θύμος*. Significantly, the exception is not consistently made in all passages where the *θύμος* is spoken of<sup>15</sup>; this was obviously due to the theoretical and practical difficulties the Greeks had in strictly defining that part of the body. In the case of the evidence analyzed below, under (III) and pertaining to the diet, the omission of the term *sophrosyne* is complete. It is best taken to have been deliberate – reflecting the inferior status of that kind of moderation which regulates the natural needs of the body (according to the *Laws*<sup>16</sup>, it is “...a native surface quality which shows in mere children and animals...”). As such, in the *Minos* and the *Minos*-like essays, this simple – so to say, plebeian (*δημῳδῆ*) – sort of moderation was liable perhaps to be referred to in other, less imposing ways. The Athenian of the *Laws*<sup>17</sup> seems to have felt the same terminological need; he consequently distinguishes the “temperance in the popular sense of the word” from “that high and forced sense in which temperance might be said to be the same thing with *φρόνησις*”. On the other hand, the omission of the term from the final section of the

<sup>13</sup> For example, the *Περὶ φρονήσεως* and the *Περὶ ψυχῆς* (D.L. 4, 12 and 13).

<sup>14</sup> Isnardi (n. 9 supra) 52, cf. Professor L. Brisson's *Bibliography* (n. 1 supra).

<sup>15</sup> Note the verbal form *ἐὰν σωφρονῆς*, 320 E (“if you are wise” (Lamb)/ “si vous êtes prudents” (Brisson)), see *infra*, IV–V. My first impression was that 320 E does not cite one of the meanings of the family of words *σωφρονεῖν*, *σώφρων*, *σωφροσύνη* etc. that interest us here but Professor Chr. Rowe was right to remark, during the meeting of the Collegium Politicum at Freiburg, that there is an eloquent connection between the “moderation passages” of 320 E and 321 D. It is dealt with *infra*.

<sup>16</sup> IV 710 A.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*

*Minos*, 321 D<sup>18</sup>, will have had another reason. It may be put down to the peculiarities of the literary-philosophical context of 321 D – in other words, to the shortness and allusive character of a passage which offers an aporetic conclusion of the dialogue.

Despite the almost complete absence of the word itself, we may take that the concept of *sophrosyne* figures in the dialogue under different names and within different contexts, of unequal importance. The main reason for this state of affairs seems to be the structural incoherence of the entire dialogue; to be exact, as regards pages 317 D ff., its dual nature of a work that is both philosophical and real-political. Plato himself produced comparable two-level dialogues.

To begin with the purely theoretical side of the *Minos* 317 D ff. It is well known, *sophrosyne* has several aspects in the Greek thought. According to a basic typology deducible from the anonymous author of the dialogue himself and the parallels of his Platonic sources<sup>19</sup>, the *sophrosyne* in the *Minos* may be described as of three sorts or consisting from three interconnected parts. Hierarchically listed, they are (the details of ancient definitions vary) (A) the self-control of one's appetites, (B) the moderation of ambition/courage, and (C) – the most “exalted” sort of all – the moderation of soul that leads to knowledge<sup>20</sup>. This three-fold schema, like Plato's teachings about the mixed constitution and the tripartite division of an individual which obviously inspired it, may be reduced to a bipartite schema, which eliminates the second sort of *sophrosyne* by uniting it with (A), the *sophrosyne* of the appetites or (C), the *sophrosyne* of soul<sup>21</sup>. The union is understandable in the light of Plato's body-soul dualism. For instance, in the moral psychology of the *Timaeus* which influenced the *Laws*, the reader finds no more than two basic elements, rational

<sup>18</sup> In my opinion (infra, IV-VI), 321 D concerns the moderation of both the *thumos* and the *psyche*, being the only part of the dialogue to deal with these two subjects – however briefly and inconsistently. (At 320 E, namely, the *ἐὰν σωφρον* seems to refer to that aspect of the *thumos* which is close to the intellect [note 15 and IV below, cf. e.g. Guthrie, next note, 476 text to n. 2]; at 321 D, there is no reason to assume an analogous highly complimentary meaning for the *καὶ τῆς τῶν ἄλλων*). The humorous tone of 320 E and the fact that the message of 321 D takes an (apparently) indirect form do not change the essence of our interpretation.

<sup>19</sup> E. g. *Charmides* (W. K. C. Guthrie, *A History of Greek Philosophy*, vol. IV: *Plato. The Man and His Dialogues: Earlier Period*, Cambridge 1975, 156 ff.) and the *Laws* (R. F. Stalley, *An Introduction to Plato's Laws*, Oxford 1983, 54 ff. et passim).

<sup>20</sup> Cf. *Phaedr.* 237 D ff. 253 C ff.

<sup>21</sup> G. M. A. Grube, *Plato's Thought*, London 1970, 120 ff.

and irrational<sup>22</sup>; the latter includes both (A: ~stomach) and (B: ~heart) of the foregoing (three-fold) schema, whenever it is desirable to present the schema in its simplified (two-fold) form. Compare *Min.* 318 A 1-2 (τὴν ἀνθρωπεῖαν ἀγέλην τοῦ σώματος, with J. Burnet's and J. Souilhé's notes ad loc.) as contrasted by 318 A 6-7 (ταῖς ψυχαῖς τῶν ἀνθρώπων). On the other hand, in the *Republic*, the second, "spirited", element of soul comes near to the intellectual in more than one aspect, including that describable as reputable ambition (εὐδόκιμον) and close to what Socrates expects from his companion at 320 E (ἐὰν σοφρονῆς).

III. Firstly, the moderation of diet. For Plato and many others it should regulate the man's use of food and, especially, wine<sup>23</sup>. This sort of *sophrosyne* implies the life of a reasonable frugality, to judge from scattered notices in Plato's works and biography<sup>24</sup>, notably from his explicit advice which includes the condemnation of "excess in meats and drinks" as well as "the mad frenzy of sex"<sup>25</sup>. At the *Minos* 320 A-B, Socrates speaks of the Dorian laws restricting the use of wine: "... of all the many nations of men, both Greek and foreign, the only people who refrain from drinking-bouts and the jesting that occurs where there is wine, are the Cretans, and after them the Spartans, who learnt it from the Cretans. In Crete it is one of their laws which Minos ordained that they are not to drink with each other to intoxication (μὴ συμπίνειν ἀλλήλοις εἰς μέθην). ... (These laws) have made Crete happy through the length of time, and Sparta also, since she began to use them; for they are divine". The anonymous text does not qualify Minos' norm just quoted but the analogous passages in Plato suggest that, for the Scholarch, it may have seemed "moderate"; the εἰς μέθην modifier implies less than the complete prohibition of course. Of the parallels from the *Laws*, that at II 671 A ff. appears the most instructive, with its reference to "the Cretan and Spartan practice"<sup>26</sup> and the explicit use of the term<sup>27</sup> which interests us here<sup>28</sup>. P. 354 E of the *Eighth Letter*, roughly contemporary

<sup>22</sup> Stalley (n. 19 supra) 56-58 et passim.

<sup>23</sup> Wine: see *Laws* II 673 E ff. et passim (cf. e.g. *Symp.* 176 D). – "Desires" (food, drink, sex "must be diverted from the so-called pleasant toward the good"): *Laws* VI 782 D ff.

<sup>24</sup> E.g. *Rep.* III 404 D; *Epist.* VII 326 B; Ael. *VH* 2. 42; 12. 30; Plut. *Mor.* 779 D and *V. Lucull.* 2. 4-5. Note 30 below.

<sup>25</sup> Cf. *Laws* VI 783 C ff. In the *Timaeus* (70 D), sexual desire is not mentioned explicitly; the omission is probably deliberate (Guthrie [note 1 supra], 311 f.).

<sup>26</sup> II 674 A.

<sup>27</sup> In its verbal form.

<sup>28</sup> 673 E: τοῦ σοφρονεῖν ἕνεκα ("as a training in self-command").

with the *Minos*, deserves to be quoted: “the god of sober men [ἀνθρώποις σώφροσιν] is law; the god of fools is pleasure [ἄφροσιν δὲ ἡδονή]”; it belongs to the same nexus of notions, like the *Minos*’ Socrates’ comments on the importance of food in the good lawgiver’s programme<sup>29</sup>. Our evidence about the Academy’s activities in the sphere of practical policy, dealt with in some detail *infra* (VI), shows that Plato paid much attention indeed to the advantages of frugal nourishment and the Dorian sobriety<sup>30</sup>.

IV. It is less easy to discover, in the *Minos*, comments on the complex – let us call it, political – constituted by such things as heart, *thumos*, moderation of ambition and the related themes of the psychology of states and/or powerful individuals. Indeed, the second (even the third) kind of *sophrosyne*, in the three-fold typology delineated *supra* (II), has received far less attention on the Anonym’s part than the first kind, one that concerns the self-control of the appetites. But the importance of political *sophrosyne* in the discussions of the *Laws* – especially the passages explicitly devoted to the enumeration and explanation of indispensable qualities of a tyrant<sup>31</sup> and to the warlike mentality of the Spartans and the Cretans<sup>32</sup> – suggests that the problems of the political *sophrosyne* and their ramifications are likely to have a place, albeit discreet, within the text of the *Minos*, too.

The closing words of the dialogue seem significant from that point of view. In my opinion, they summarize the preceding conversation, omitting, in an apparently aporetic manner, to answer directly<sup>33</sup> the central question concerning the third type of *sophrosyne* (321 D 1-5: “And what might that be which the good lawgiver and apportioner

<sup>29</sup> 317 E, 318 A (of the *paidotribes* !), 321 C-D.

<sup>30</sup> See note 24; *Epist.* VII 336 C-D.

<sup>31</sup> *Laws* IV 709 E ff.

<sup>32</sup> II 666 E, I 626 A-B, IV 705 D, et al.

<sup>33</sup> An indirect answer, I think, is hidden in 317 B (cf. *Tim.* 80 B [A. E. Taylor, *A Commentary on Plato’s Timaeus*, Oxford 1928, 575 ff.]: divine harmony is the highest *sophrosyne*), in the reference to Marsyas’ and Olympus’ invention of music (*Laws* III 677 D). – However, Morrow (note 1 above) 37 thought that 321 D referred to the “right law” and Brisson (note 1 above) CIX–CX seems to have been of a similar opinion. But if the Anonym thought of the law here, where the problems and history of *nomoi* provide otherwise an almost uninterrupted line of conversation (including the story on Zeus and the Cnossian King), the aporetic end of the dialogue, or rather the ignorance admitted by both interlocutors at 321 D, would be quite awkward dramatically. Let us note a feature of Plato’s attitude to the realpolitical psychology – in his hierarchy of political factors, the character of leading men comes before the quality of “the laws and the customs” (*Ep.* VII 325 C-D; cf. *Minos* I 650 B, cited by Brisson, *loc. cit.*, CIX).



distributes to the soul to make it better ?”) ; they do not reflect the unfinished state of the work or introduce the chapter of a fresh analysis left for something that might be called the *Greater Minos*. At the very end of the dialogue (321 D 7-11), Socrates comments upon his and his companion’s failure to respond to 321 D 1-5: “But indeed it is shameful for the soul of either of us to be found ignorant of those things within it on which its good and abject states depend, while it has studied those that pertain to the body and the rest”. “(Things) that pertain to the body” are obviously “food<sup>34</sup> and labour (τροφήν καὶ πόνους)” spoken of, or alluded to, at 321 C (!), 318 A et passim, 319 E ff. In the context, between the references to the body’s instinctive parts<sup>35</sup> and the main attribute of a soul capable of progress<sup>36</sup>, “the rest” (καὶ τὰ τῶν ἄλλων ...) can mean *thumos* only. To understand the logic of the phrase we must note that, in some cases<sup>37</sup>, the location of the *thumos* was not completely identical with/covered by that of the body (*loc. citt.*: σῶμα) in the strict sense of the anatomic term<sup>38</sup>; consequently, the *soma* may sporadically have a narrower meaning (~ stomach) than usual; its point being to warn the reader of the *soma*’s distance from the qualities and functions of “the high spirit” (~ heart). Thus the author of the *Timaeus* (70 A) distinguishes between two mortal souls that are “incased” in the thorax. He explains: “that part of the inferior soul which is endowed with courage and passion and loves contention [is] settled nearer the head”; its correlate, “which desires meats and drinks” etc., is “placed between the midriff and the boundary of the navel”. Untechnically but understandably in the context of a brachylogical, two-fold formula, the anonymous author of the *Minos* takes at 321 D that the *soma* may refer to the individual’s instinctive parts alone<sup>39</sup>. He neglects here the high spirit (~ positive aspects of courage and justice, cf. 320 E [ἐὰν σωφρονῆς] and notes 15 and 18 above), obviously because it is connected, somewhat ambiguously, with that section of the thorax which is situated “nearer the head” and not “between the midriff and the boundary of the navel”.

<sup>34</sup> Guthrie (note 1 supra) 318 n. 2.

<sup>35</sup> Which deal with the τροφή.

<sup>36</sup> I.e. the soul’s *sophrosyne* producing harmony (cf. Guthrie IV [note 19 supra] 156). For its identification with the quality which makes the soul better see below, (IV).

<sup>37</sup> Corresponding to the special kinds of harmony: *Rep.* IV 443 D (“... and all others there may be between them...”). Note 18 supra.

<sup>38</sup> Cf. supra, text to n. 22. Taylor (note 33 above) 500 ff.; Grube (n. 21 above) 143 ff.; L. Brisson, *Platon: Timée – Critias*, Paris 1992, 35–61 (48 – 61).

<sup>39</sup> *Rep.* VIII 549 A ff.

The ancient reader was able to decipher 321 D 10-11 in the manner proposed here as, for him, the moderation of the *thumos*' functions consisted in the first place from the control of its bellicosity<sup>40</sup>. In a democratic branch of the Athenian public opinion, Minos passed for a militant monarch and the Cretans for a militant nation<sup>41</sup>. His warlike mentality resembled that of a timocratic man, to use the terminology of the *Republic*<sup>42</sup>, and led to the birth of maritime empires of Cnossus as well as (post-Thesean) Athens, condemnable processes in Plato's opinion<sup>43</sup>. However, Minos' activity did not provoke condemnation only. According to the propaganda of the fourth-century Athenian conservatives endorsed by the Academy, the Cnossian's aggressiveness was tempered by the patriotic (Pan-Hellenic, Pan-Cretan) nature of his wars (notably those waged against the Carians, the Hecatomnids' predecessors<sup>44</sup>) and the merits of his lawmaking<sup>45</sup>; the whole of the *Minos*' argument suggests high esteem for his policies – primarily his legislation<sup>46</sup>. Hesiod's invented (?) verses at 320 D<sup>47</sup> are probably to be understood in the light of analogous apologetic messages<sup>48</sup>; the same might be said of the Anonym's decision to pass

<sup>40</sup> *Laws* IV 706 A ff.

<sup>41</sup> Note 32 above.

<sup>42</sup> VIII 544 C (timocracy as “the constitution of Crete and Sparta”). S. Dušanić, *The Ancient World* 36 (2005) 116 ff.

<sup>43</sup> *Laws* IV 706 A ff. Cf. *Critias* 119 B (the twelve hundred vessels of the royal city of Atlantis).

<sup>44</sup> See e.g. Thuc. I 4. Dušanić (n. 1 supra) 177 f. 212-221, 370 ff. 378 ff.

<sup>45</sup> *Laws* I 630 D ff.

<sup>46</sup> *Minos* 319 B ff. (on Zeus as a “sophist” and sophistry as “a highly honourable art”), 320 D (“by the sceptre of Zeus [Hesiod] means nothing else than the education [Minos] had had of Zeus, whereby he directed Crete”).

<sup>47</sup> “Hesiod” implies Minos' rule over the whole of Crete – in any case, according to the Boeotian's verses, the king ruled both the *περικτιόνες* (= *περίοικοι*) and the “cities” (cf. note 9 supra). Modern commentators tend to overlook this duality of Minos' status, described with emphasis; however, it well accords with Plato's approval of the federal programme of the so-called *synkretismos* (συγκρητισμός, Plut. *Mor.* 490 B) which, among other things, defended the union of Cnossus and Gortyn (*Laws* III 702 C; IV 708 A), of the Cretan Dorians and the Cretan Achaeans (the latter formed the bulk of the population of the island's *perioeci*, mainly controlled by the Gortynians). For the complex of historical/mythographic traditions concerning this programme, its supporters and opponents see my book on the *Laws* (supra, n. 1) 165 ff. 379 ff. et passim. The ramifications of these traditions involve i. a. Minos (cf. Arist. *Pol.* 1271 B [R. F. Willetts, *The Law Code of Gortyn*, Berlin 1967, 12 f.], Sarpedon, Idomeneus, Nauplius, Leucus, Amyclaeus et al.).

<sup>48</sup> I should even venture on the hypothesis that 314 D, καὶ τὰλλα πάντα (according to Professor Brisson [note 1 supra] n. XXIII, “il est très difficile de voir à quoi fait référence” this expression: Lamb did not comment upon it), refers to the

over Sarpedon the “Asian’s” myths in silence as well as Homer’s criticism of Minos’ (*Od.* XI 322: “terrible”) brutality. Diplomatic and military *rapprochement* between Athens and Crete after *c.* 355 BC – supported by the Academy and having clear anti-barbarian inspiration – was conducive to the creation of similar legends, centred not only on the figure of Minos but also on the complex authority of another mythic (half-mythic) Cnossian, Epimenides, and the story about the Cretans’ contribution to the Greek victory in Xerxes’ war. No wonder, that piece of the Cretan fictional tradition is alluded to in the *Laws*, which “combines the propaganda of an Attico-Dorian (Spartan) resistance to the advance of the barbarians with the constitutional notions of conservative inspiration”<sup>49</sup>. An analogous combination of two things – one structural (aristocratic *sophrosyne* ~ the mixed constitution), the other political (the victorious, hoplitic wars against the barbarians) – brings the unity to the *Minos* 317 D ff. as well as the *Critias*. On the other hand, it can be shown that Plato’s barbarophobia led him to the acquiescence in such manifestations of political injustice as the successful activities of the Delian League (*Ep.* VII 332 B-C) and the Spartan occupation of Messenia (*Laws* III 685 C ff. et pass.).

V. The problem of the moderation of soul seems to be referred to in the closing chapter of the *Minos*, i.e. in the context which, by itself, suggests an important topic. I am unaware – much of the recent production on the apocryph has remained inaccessible to me – whether modern interpreters also tend to assume that the moderation of soul forms the central point of “our” (unexpressed) answer (τί ἄν ἀποκρινάμενοι) to Socrates’ crucial question (“and what might that be which the good lawgiver and apportioner distributes to the soul to make it better?”, 321 D). Such an interpretation of 321 D seems probable enough, though the Companion’s replica is not helpful here (“This time I am unable to say”) and Socrates proves unwilling to assist the further debate, despite its importance (“But indeed it is communities whose rank was not that of complete *poleis*, i.e. which were either free κῶμαι, or περίοικοι (the Anonym was aware of their importance in the internal policy of Crete – the island’s internal wars to be exact – as well as of their place in the Minoan mythology: 320 D and note 60 infra), or even federal states (κοινά ~ *synkretismos*). This interpretation well accords with the message of the entire phrase (Lamb’s transl.: “... justice and law preserve cities and **everything else**, while injustice and lawlessness destroy and overturn them”), which implies that such communities had legislation of their own.

<sup>49</sup> Dušanić, “The *Laws* and the Foreign Policy of Eubulus’ Athens”, in (F. L. Lisi ed.), *Plato’s Laws and its Historical Significance*, Sankt Augustin 2001, 229 with n. 5.

shameful for the soul of either of us to be found ignorant of those things within it on which its good and abject states depend, while it has studied those that pertain to the body and the rest.”). For, in an unprejudiced interpretation of 321 D, the final phrases of the apocryphal dialogue are easiest understood if compared with what the Athenian of the *Laws*<sup>50</sup> says about the exalted moderation (τὸ σωφρονεῖν) of soul (ψυχή) leading to knowledge – φρόνησις<sup>51</sup>. Indeed, the *rapprochement* of *Minos* 321 D with *Laws* IV 710 A is difficult to avoid since lines 321 D 1-5 refer to the bettering of ψυχή under the influence of the good lawgiver and νομεύς, a process that resembles the acquisition of the φρόνησις just mentioned both intellectually and politically<sup>52</sup>. And there is a remarkable thematic parallelism between the *Laws*, IV 710 A ff., where the term *sophrosyne* figures explicitly as well as with emphasis, and the *Minos* 321 B ff., where it is understood only, if I am not wrong.

The parallelism is all the more suggestive as it is focused on the series of three major points, closely connected. They may be epitomized as moderation “in the matter of pleasures”, moderation producing wisdom, and moderation leading to the alliance of virtuous autocracy and the God-sent legislation. The last point recalls the *Minos*’ comments on the Cnossian’s collaboration with Zeus (cf. 321 B)<sup>53</sup> and, to a degree, Plato’s glorification of Nestor’s temperance and statesmanship (*Laws* IV 711 E-712 A)<sup>54</sup>.

VI. Like many of Plato’s dialogues, the *Minos* combines philosophical issues with the comments on practical policy and political topicalities. To quote Guthrie’s gloss on the *Phaedo* 115 E<sup>55</sup>, “one must always remember that [Plato’s] concern with language, logic or method was only ancillary to a larger purpose. The end was

<sup>50</sup> IV 710 A, quoted above, text to n. 17.

<sup>51</sup> Guthrie (n. 19 supra) 156 with nn. 4-5.

<sup>52</sup> Cf. *Symp.* 209 A-B. – Of course, the *psychagogia* due to the Attic theatre (see e.g. *Minos* 321 A 5) produced less desirable results.

<sup>53</sup> Cf. *Minos* 321 B.

<sup>54</sup> In the political propaganda of the *Laws* (*loc. cit.*), Plato’s “Nestor” has some important features of the Athenian statesman Eubulus of Probalinthus, very influential during the 355-346 period (see nn. 50 [227 ff.] and 11 supra; also, Dušanić, “Platon, la question messénienne et les guerres contre les Barbares”, in: [P. Brulé et J. Oulhen edd.] *Esclavage, guerre, économie en Grèce ancienne. Hommages à Yvon Garlan*, Rennes 1997, 83 ff.) and referred to as *sophron* by Aesch. II 184. I hope to develop elsewhere the interpretation of the text of the *Laws* which leads to this equation.

<sup>55</sup> IV (note 19 supra) 244.

right living, as Plato, for all his wider philosophical interests, never fails to make clear". As noted *supra* (IV), in the case of the *Minos* and, on the whole, of the *Laws*, Plato was convinced that the constitutional and military-patriotic topics (understandably, these latter tended to be closely connected with the current political events) were interdependent psychologically and in several other analysable ways.

Of the *Minos*' themes which illustrate its author's interest in *Realpolitik* and topical matters, I have chosen to deal with one such only. It concerns the moderation of diet and includes two points that make it especially relevant here: (a), that theme presupposes the discussion of the more or less enigmatic *Epimenides*, another work presumably belonging to the *Minos* group but lost now; and (b), it helps us understand certain aspects of the *Minos* as well as the *Laws* which concern the Aegean policy and constitutional projects of the post-355 period.

- (a) The pseudo-Platonic *Epimenides*, attested in Diogenes Laertius' list (3, 62) of *notheuomenoi* only (if the epigraphic fragment IG II 2, 4968, heavily mutilated, is put aside<sup>56</sup>), probably served as the source of two eloquent notes on Epimenides in the *Laws* (I 642 D-E and III 677 D-E). During the mid-fourth century, the eponym of the *Epimenides* must have been a topical, if long dead, prophet and theologian<sup>57</sup>. His fourth-century topicality would explain Plato's humorous reference to him as "in strict fact a man of yesterday" (III 677 D)<sup>58</sup>. Not only an atticophile, aristocratic legislator and a barbarophobe (I 642 D-E), that half-mythic seer had an Eleusinian doublet and was considered to have invented the use of the plant of ἄλιμον<sup>59</sup>. These last two merits, connected with Eleusis and ἄλιμον respectively, made him an appropriate historico-political model for a conservatively inspired<sup>60</sup> discussion. Especially, for the discussion of the problems of frugality and the moderate consumption of food (Demeter's gift rather than meat) and wine that characterize the *Minos* – its passage 321 C for example<sup>61</sup>. Epimenides' Cnossian

<sup>56</sup> Note 11 above.

<sup>57</sup> *FGrHist* 457; K. Schöpsdau, *Platon. Nomoi (Gesetze), Buch I-III*, Göttingen 1994, 220 ff.; *DNP* 3(1997) 1144 (with a recent bibliogr.); my paper cited above, note 11; text to nn. 74-75 below.

<sup>58</sup> Schöpsdau (n. 57 above) 364.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, 363.

<sup>60</sup> Contrast the evidence cited in our notes 49, 75, 68 f. and in DL I 110 (Epimenides' connection with Nicias son of Niceratus).

<sup>61</sup> Cf. above, text to n. 34; *Epin.* 989 C-D.

origin and his (apocryphal) authorship of two(?) further compositions recalling the dialogue examined here – *Cretan Politeia* and *Minos and Rhadamanthus* (D. L. 1, 112) – must have facilitated the fourth-century readers to recognize “his” works’ relevance for the constitutional, Minoan<sup>62</sup> and psychological aspects of the apocryph under scrutiny.

- (b) To put it simply, Athenian fourth-century political and military difficulties in the north Aegean – intensified by her defeat in the fatal Social War (355 BC), – made her progressively move towards a southern as well as a peaceful policy. After the late 360’s, Plato’s friends among the Athenian statesmen such as Chabrias, Timotheus and Eubulus<sup>63</sup> proved largely instrumental in that process, which was approved by the Scholarch himself<sup>64</sup>. The rôle of Crete with her religious prestige and the strategic importance was crucial therein. Among other things, a hostile (pro-Carian) Crete would hinder the Athenian massive import of corn from Cyrene and Egypt; that import became indispensable for Athens after her losing the control of Bosphorus<sup>65</sup> – a fact which, it hardly needs to be stressed, touches upon the *Minos* and its immediate context in several ways (Epimenides, frugality and Eleusis, Minos’ Pan-Cretan strategy, et al.).

The foregoing considerations can be connected with what the author of the *Minos* writes, or implies, on social problems. In different ways, he expresses his anti-democratic attitudes. To note some points only, he alludes favourably to the aristocratic ideals/slogans of σωφροσύνη and ἀλήθεια; takes the monarch, not the *demos*, as a source of good legislation; criticizes the democratic mentality of the Attic drama; speaks of “the impiety of the multitude” (οἱ πολλοί); fails to compliment the people’s champion Theseus<sup>66</sup>. It seems significant,

<sup>62</sup> DL I 114 (infra, text to note 75).

<sup>63</sup> Dušanić (n. 49 supra) 227–239.

<sup>64</sup> Id., *Illinois Classical Studies* 27-28 (2002-2003 [2004]) 63–75.

<sup>65</sup> Cf. e.g. Rhodes – Osborne, *GHI* 96 (with comm.).

<sup>66</sup> The aristocratism of *sophrosyne*: *Charm.* 157 D-E (Guthrie IV [note 19 supra] 157); – of *aletheia* (315 A, cf. 317 D 2; 321 B 3-4) : *Hipp. Mai.* 284 E; *Isocr.* I 17. – The monarch (~ Minos) and “good men” as the authors of political laws (significantly, the expressions such as the *law is a city’s resolution*, 314 B-C. E, et saepius, stem from the Companion’s prejudices only): 317 A, 317 C, 318 A, 318 C, 318 D. – The mentality of the Attic tragedy (δημοτερπέστατον καὶ υὑγαγωνικώτατον): 321 A (“the noble fiction” and the young: *Laws* II 663 D-E; *ibid.* E : “it seems no easy matter to convince men of [truth]”). – “The impiety of the multitude”: 318 E. – Theseus not mentioned at (e.g.) 321 A (“tribute”).

in the times which interest us, that the Athenian democrats launched a humorous comparison concerning the diet of this last; according to it, they preferred a Theseus nourished by beef over a Theseus “nourished by roses”<sup>67</sup>. In an analogous manner<sup>68</sup>, the meat distributed to people served as a weapon of the demagogy of Chares<sup>69</sup> – the famous general who was contemporary of the *Minos*<sup>70</sup> and the adversary of all basic notions of the Anonym’s policy, interior as well as exterior<sup>71</sup>. These notions included, it seems, the plan of a reform of certain elements of the Athenian *politeia*, in order to assimilate them to the Dorian/Spartan<sup>72</sup> patterns, recommended politically as well as constitutionally<sup>73</sup> – the plan resembling that which inspired the pro-Spartan propaganda of many parts of the *Laws*<sup>74</sup>. The apocryph with its ideal of *sophrosyne* and the *laudatio Minois* must have had a similar purpose, in addition to the purposes analyzed in the foregoing pages. The *Epimenides* will have been a similar case. It is rather easily interpreted as the ultimate source of the forgery recorded by Diogenes Laertius, I 114: “There is extant a letter of his (Epimenides) to Solon the *lawgiver*, containing a *scheme of government* (*politeia*) which *Minos* drew up for the Cretans. But Demetrius of Magnesia, in his work on poets and writers of the same name, endeavours to discredit the letter on the ground that it is late and not written in the Cretan dialect but in Attic, and New Attic too...” Whatever the history and chronology of this so-called Epimenides letter, the epigraphic fragment of the fourth century BC just mentioned (*IG* II 2, 4968) seems to imply that, indeed, the Athenian conservatives of that period ascribed to Epimenides the idea of reforming, on the basis of traditional Cretan laws, an early constitution of Athens<sup>75</sup>.

\* The translations quoted are from B. Jowett (*Timaeus*), R. D. Hicks (*Diogenes Laertius*), W. R. M. Lamb (*Minos, Epinomis*), P. Shorey (the *Republic*), and A. E. Taylor (the *Laws*).

<sup>67</sup> Plut. *Mor.* 346 A; Plin. *NH* XXXV 129. Dušanić, *Živa Antika* 31(1981) 154.

<sup>68</sup> Cf. e.g. *Critias* 119 D ff. (“bull”, “banquet”).

<sup>69</sup> *Schol.* Demosth. III 31; cf. Isocr. VII 29. Dušanić (note 67 supra) 154 and nn. 132 f.

<sup>70</sup> *PA* 15292; J. K. Davies, *Athenian Propertied Families* (600–300 B.C.), Oxford 1971, 568 f.

<sup>71</sup> Dušanić (note 64 supra).

<sup>72</sup> Id. (note 1 supra) 233 ff. 279, 381 ff.

<sup>73</sup> *FGrHist* 70 (Ephorus) F 139; Isocr. XII 200 ff.

<sup>74</sup> See e.g. Morrow (note 1 above) 17–92.

<sup>75</sup> Note 11 above.