

THE COSMIC CYCLE IN THE *STATESMAN* MYTH. II. THE GODS AND THE UNIVERSE*

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This part as well as the previous one is devoted to critical discussion of the new interpretation (abbreviated as NI) of the myth in Plato's *Statesman*, according to which the myth contains three cosmic phases instead of two, as is accepted by the traditional interpretation (TI). The different variants of the NI were brought forward by L. Brisson,¹ C. Rowe² and G. L. Carone.³ In what follows I start from their attempts to find an additional cosmic reversal of the universe and then proceed to theological implications of the myth and the light they shed on Plato's theology in general.⁴

*For Part I see *Hyperboreus* 14 (2008): 2, 57–86. This part, as well as the previous one, was written during my Edwin C. and Elizabeth A. Whitehead Fellowship at the School of Historical Studies, the Institute for Advanced Study, Princeton, NJ, in the second term of 2007/2008; it was completed during my fellowship at the Wissenschaftskolleg zu Berlin, in the first term of 2010/2011. I would like to thank both institutions for their support, and Dr. Natalie Tchernetska for improving my English and for helpful criticism.

¹L. Brisson, *La Même et l'Autre dans la structure ontologique du Timée de Platon* (Sankt Augustin³ 1998) 488–496 and “Interprétation du mythe du *Politique*”, in C. Rowe (ed.), *Reading the Statesman: Proceedings of the III Symposium Platonicum* (Sankt Augustin 1995) 349–363.

²C. Rowe (ed.), *Plato: Statesman with Translation and Commentary* (Warminster 1995) 11–13; 186–197 and “Zwei oder drei Phasen? Der Mythos im *Politikos*”, in M. Janka and Chr. Schäfer (eds.), *Platon als Mythologe* (Darmstadt 2002) 160–175.

³Throughout Part II, I refer to G. L. Carone, *Plato's Cosmology and Its Ethical Dimension* (Cambridge 2005), and not, as in Part I, to her earlier article “Reversing the Myth of the *Politikus*”, *CQ* n. s. 54 (2004) 88–108.

⁴After publication of Part I, some studies of the myth appeared or became available to me. F. Ricken, in his translation and commentary of the dialogue (Platon, *Politikos* = Platon, *Werke* II 4 [Göttingen 2008] 109–141) gives the interpretation of the myth (without going, however, into the details of the text) and devotes some pages to refuting the NI. C. Kahn, “The Myth of the Statesman”, in C. Partenie (ed.), *Plato's Myths* (Cambridge 2009) 148–166, rejects the NI and proposes his own interpretation; D. El Murr (“Hesiod, Plato, and the Golden Age: Hesiodic Mo-

In Part I, I discussed the arguments of the NI that transformations of living beings, their modes of birth and ageing suggest that there is an interim era between the era of the Demiurge and the contemporary one. These arguments, in my view, are insufficient to prove the case. I turn now to the attempts to find this interim era on the cosmic level. The NI proponents claim that the universe in our era rotates in the same direction as in the era of the divine rule, autonomously according to Rowe, or due to the divine pilot who already returned to the steer, according to Brisson and Carone. In the text they find indications that the universe suffered one more reversal, now to its contemporary direction, produced either by the universe itself (Rowe) or by the god who returned to the steer (Brisson and Carone). Rowe claims that the story points out to this reversal at 273 a 4 – b 3:⁵

μετὰ δὲ ταῦτα προελθόντος ἱκανοῦ χρόνου, θορύβων τε καὶ παραχῆς ἤδη παύομενος καὶ τῶν σεισμῶν γαλήνης ἐπιλαβόμενος εἰς τε τὸν εἰωθότα δρόμον τὸν ἑαυτοῦ κατακοσμούμενος ἦει, ἐπιμέλειαν καὶ κράτος ἔχων αὐτὸς τῶν ἐν αὐτῷ τε καὶ ἑαυτοῦ, τὴν τοῦ δημιουργοῦ καὶ πατρὸς ἀπομνημονεύων διδαχὴν εἰς δύναμιν.

According to Rowe, this means that after the withdrawal of the god the universe reverted to the direction opposite to that it had previously; this sets up the shaking and destruction of living beings (see 273 a 1–4); after some period of this (relatively short one, as Rowe believes) W–E rotation accompanied by turbulences on the cosmic scale, the universe reverts itself, now by the power of its own intelligence, to the rotation it had under the rule of the Demiurge, and this is the start of the contemporary era. It would mean that the universe in the divine era rotates in the same direction as nowadays, whereas the interim era has the opposite W–E rotation.

tifs in the Myth of the *Politicus*”, 276–297) and C. Rowe (“On Grey-haired Babies: Plato, Hesiod, and Visions of the Past [and Future]”, 298–316), in the volume edited by G. R. Boys-Stones and J. H. Haubold (eds.), *Plato and Hesiod* (Oxford 2009), treat the Cronus-motif in the vein of two- and three-phase interpretation resp. (For my own view see Pt. I, p. 79–81.) Note that Rowe, although he sticks to the essence of his earlier proposal, now admits that he needs a new explanation of 274 e 10 – 275 a 1 and 273 e 6–7, which serve as ‘the strongest prima facie evidence’ for the TI (p. 316 n. 51); on these passages see Pt. I, p. 63 and 79 f. resp.

⁵Rowe, *Statesman* (n. 2) 195 ad 273 a 6.

However, the text does not mention any additional reversal explicitly, and there are sufficient reasons to believe that it is not implied either. First of all, if we accept Rowe's proposal, it would mean that when the Demiurge returns to the steer at the end of the contemporary era (Rowe, together with the traditionalists, holds the view that this event is described in 273 d–e), he must revert the universe's course to the direction opposite to that it has today (and also in the era of Cronus, according to Rowe), i. e. to the direction W–E. It would give us two divine phases with opposite directions of cosmic revolutions. What then remains of the privileged position Rowe ascribes to the E–W rotation, which, in his view, is inherent both to the divine era and to the contemporary one and which provides forward development of living beings in the both?⁶

Second, according to the carefully built argument of the theoretical preliminaries of the story (269 c – 270 a), the autonomous revolutions of the universe and its revolutions under the god's guidance have the opposite directions, as it is resumed in 270 a 5–9: *τοτὲ δ' ὅταν ἀνεθῆ, δι' ἑαυτοῦ αὐτὸν ἰέναι, κατὰ καιρὸν ἀφεθέντα τοιοῦτον, ὥστε ἀνάπαλιν πορεύεσθαι πολλὰς περιόδων μυριάδας...*⁷ Moreover, the life and intelligence endowed to the universe by the Demiurge allow it to move in the direction just *opposite* to its revolutions under the rule of the Demiurge (269 c 6 – d 2), not to revert itself again to the direction it had under his rule: *τὸ δὲ πάλιν αὐτόματον εἰς τὰναντία περιάγεται, ζῶον ὄν καὶ φρόνησιν εἰληχὸς ἐκ τοῦ συναρμόσαντος αὐτὸ κατ' ἀρχάς.*⁸

⁶ See Rowe, *Statesman* (n. 2) 13.

⁷ Here I concur with the objection of Carone (n. 3) 245 n. 39 against Rowe.

⁸ Rowe, *Statesman* (n. 2) 188 ad loc. (cf. Rowe, “Zwei oder drei Phasen?” [n. 2] 173 f.), is right in that it does not follow from this statement that the universe owes its reversal to its own intelligence: actually it is the consequence of the bodily nature of the universe (269 d 2 – e 3). However, this does not mean, as Rowe suggests, that the Demiurge endowed the universe with intelligence in order to give it ‘the power to move itself in a circle, *either forwards or backwards*’ [my italics]. The meaning is that intelligence allows the universe to keep (i. e. to acquire anew after the initial turbulences) the regular circular movement similar to that it had under the intelligent rule of the Demiurge; and this happens, *pace* Rowe, when the universe reverted in the direction opposite to that it has under the rule of the Demiurge.

Third, the end of the Demiurge's rule is marked by the story-teller as the transition to the essential purpose of the myth (272 d 5);⁹ which is to make vivid the contrast between the conditions for which the definition of the statesman as the herdsman would be apt, namely the divine era, and the contemporary era, for which it is not.¹⁰ Thus, the end of the divine era signals the move towards this crucial contrast between the two eras, and this important point would be obscured, if the withdrawal of the Demiurge meant the start of the interim era, and not of the contemporary one – which is essential for the contrast.¹¹

On the contrary, nothing undermines the traditional understanding of the passage in question: the universe, ceasing gradually from turbulences of the reversal, 'went into the accustomed course of its own' (273 a 4 – b 1), *viz.* it continued to revolve in the same direction, opposite to that it had under the divine rule, but gradually set itself in order, due to its intelligence, and thus it gets as close as possible to the regular motion it had under the Demiurge's guidance.

The proposal of Brisson and Carone is more radical: the universe in its contemporary phase not only rotates in the same direction as in the age of Cronus, but it is also under the reign of the Demiurge, who returned to the steer in the beginning of our era. Carone endorses Brisson's view that the contemporary era is 'one where god still takes care

⁹ οὐδ' ἔνεκα τὸν μῦθον ἡγείραμεν, τοῦτο λεκτέον, ἵνα τὸ μετὰ τοῦτο εἰς τὸ πρόσθεν περαίνωμεν. This probably means 'we must now make explicit the reason of bringing the myth into action, in order to move forward through what follows up to the initial point of our discussion', *viz.* to the subject of the ruler (both Campbell and Rowe understand πρόσθεν as 'what is before us', but this makes the statement much more trivial: cf. 273 e 4 f., where πρόσθεν obviously means 'earlier').

¹⁰ At this point, the purpose of the story is not made explicit; the ES mentions it again when he moves on to the specific changes that affected human beings in the beginning of the contemporary era as essential for this purpose (274 b 1–2); only completing the story about development of our civilisation he explains the mistake of defining the statesman as the herdsman (274 e 1–3). This link not only helps to bring attention to the main point, which is obscured by digression on prognostics of the future of our universe, but also to narrow progressively the focus from the universal to human dimension.

¹¹ This objection is valid even at a greater extent against the view of Brisson and Carone, who make Demiurge to come back in the beginning of the contemporary era, thus depriving his withdrawal of the importance it has according to the passage discussed.

of the revolution of the whole universe, even though we no longer have secondary deities taking charge of their respective regions'.¹² However, she takes the teaching of the mankind by the gods as a sign that the minor gods are also present in the universe, 'although more detachedly', and that their presence implies that the Demiurge is in charge of the universe as the whole.¹³

I start from the cosmological aspect of this interpretation. The preliminary discussion of the two opposite rotations of the universe, as we have seen, is hardly in favour of view of Brisson and Carone: according to them, there are only two kinds of rotation, the one ruled by the god and the autonomous one; whereas two cosmic epochs with various grades of divine rule are not envisaged, even if not excluded directly.

Now to the most radical element of this variant of the NI: it has to find an indication in the story that the god, who had left the steer in the end of the age of Cronus, returned to it to reverse the universe to its contemporary rotation. Brisson and Carone propose that the event, which both traditionalists and Rowe locate in the end of the contemporary era, thus in the future as related to us – the Demiurge returns to rescue the universe from destruction (273 d 4 – e 4) – in fact belongs to the past, before the beginning of our era. Accordingly, the whole development of the universe from its initial turbulences through putting itself in order and to the final decay (272 e 6 – 273 d 4), which was usually understood as the cosmic counterpart of the evolution of mankind in our era, is now assigned to the interim era between the age of Cronus and the contemporary world.

Before considering the metaphysical implication of this interpretation let us look at textual difficulties of the proposed re-composition of the story. There is an immediate objection: the passage on the return of the Demiurge is closed with the words: τοῦτο μὲν τέλος ἀπάντων εἴρηται, and the following story about the beginning of our era starts from the reversal of ageing to the contemporary one, which followed the reversal of the universe (273 e 4–5):

τὸ δ' ἐπὶ τὴν τοῦ βασιλέως ἀπόδειξιν ἰκανὸν ἐκ τοῦ πρόσθεν ἀπτομένοις τοῦ λόγου· στρεφθέντος γὰρ αὖ τοῦ κόσμου τὴν ἐπὶ τὴν νῦν γένεσιν ὁδὸν τὸ τῆς ἡλικίας αὖ πάλιν ἴστατο κτλ.

¹² Brisson, "Interprétation" (n. 1) 351–352, 360; Carone (n. 3) 139.

¹³ Carone (n. 3) 140.

What is relevant for the demonstration of the nature of the king is sufficiently cleared on the basis of what was said before provided that one grasps properly the essence of this.¹⁴

This indicates that the advent of the Demiurge marks the end of the cosmic cycle and the beginning of the next one;¹⁵ the ES returns to the phase of the cycle already described,¹⁶ but now focuses more narrowly on the matter relevant for the subject of the ideal ruler, i. e. on the new physical and biological conditions that make the type of king-herdsman unattainable. It would be absurd to say that this subject, namely the absence of the king-herdsman from the contemporary universe, is already essentially clear from what was narrated before (ἱκανὸν ἐκ τοῦ πρόσθεν), if the era just described were the interim one.¹⁷

It also contradicts the proposal of Brisson and Carone that the Demiurge upon his return makes the universe again without the death and old age, by ‘*reversing* all that has been dissolved and got ill during the autonomous rotation’ (273 e 2–5). This diagnostic does not correspond to the interim era of Brisson and Carone when the living beings developed from

¹⁴ On the difficulties of this sentence see Rowe, *Statesman* (n. 2) 196 ad 273 e 3–5. I depart from him only in taking ἐκ τοῦ πρόσθεν as dependent on ἱκανόν, not on ἀπτομένοις.

¹⁵ For τέλος ἔχειν as formulaic end of reasoning see *Criti.* 90 d 5, e 3, cf. *Theaet.* 183 c 7; *Leg.* 899 d 4; thus the strong τέλος ἀπάντων in our case can only mean the completion of *all* essentials of the story; what follows should be the discussion of their inferences, not the transition to the new phase. Cf. against Brisson’s attempt (“Interprétation” [n.1] 352) to weaken the meaning of this statement the justified criticism of Rowe, *Statesman* (n. 2) 196 ad 273 e 3–5.

¹⁶ This is made explicit by the direct reference to the point when the universe reversed to the nowadays mode of generation (στρεφθέντος γὰρ αὐ τοῦ κόσμου τὴν ἐπὶ τὴν νῦν γένεσιν ὁδόν). The γὰρ implies that this reversal has been already narrated, and it can be only (against both variants of the NI) at the point when it was released by the Demiurge. The causal connection between a direction of the universe’s rotation and a direction of ageing had been already maintained at 271 b 4–8.

¹⁷ Carone (n. 3) 245 n. 40 proposes that the point here is the start of the forward ageing in the beginning of the contemporary era: the fact that the ES invites to *start from before* implies the contrast with the backward ageing in the previous era (the third, interim era, according to Carone). This proposal is founded on the wrong rendering of the text as if ἀπτομένοις depended like an infinitive on the ἱκανόν; the ES in fact asserts that what is relevant for the purpose of the story (*viz.* the essence of the ruler) is clear from what *has been said before*.

the old age to childhood and disappeared without death; also, this restoration does not correspond to the contemporary universe in which, whatever optimistic view you might take, both the old age and death exist. On the contrary, everything is in order if diagnostic is related to our universe and the medicine to the new era of the Demiurge, which is forward of us.¹⁸

Further, to endorse their proposal, Brisson and Carone point out to the negative aspects in the description of the development of the universe after the withdrawal of the Demiurge (272 e 6 – 273 d 4), and oppose it to our era, where they, on the contrary, stress the details that should point to the presence of the god. Carone argues that the behaviour of the universe abandoned by the god contradicts its characteristic as a creature endowed with intelligence (269 d 1–2): it keeps in mind the divine teaching only *for a short while* and afterwards degrades gradually to the state when it is at risk of total destruction.¹⁹ If she were right, we would be deprived of any display of the universe's intelligence at all, since according to theoretical preliminaries of the myth, the rationality of the universe manifests itself at the time when it is abandoned by the god and when it revolves in the direction opposite to that it had under the Demiurge's rule (269 c 7 – d 3 cited above). But in fact the development of the universe after the Demiurge's withdrawal provides sufficient evidence of its intelligence. First of all, it is not a straightforward degradation from the perfect state. The universe develops through four phases: (1) it is affected by its own turbulences after the Demiurge's withdrawal; (2) then, due to recollection of the Demiurge's teaching, it acquires the regular motion and begins to take care of itself and its inhabitants; this time, as long as the universe keeps in memory the divine teaching, it manages all things in the best way; (3) gradually, due to increasing oblivion of divine teaching it yields to the disorder; (4) only at the end of the phase it generates more evils than good things, and finally it approaches the total destruction, from which it is saved only by Demiurge's return (273 c 2 – d 4).

Thus, the universe develops from temporal prevailing of irrational affections, through the triumphant victory of its own grown rationality over chaos into a long struggle of reason and affections accompanied by

¹⁸ The NI proponents believe that this backward ageing belongs not to the era of the Demiurge, but to the interim one; see *contra* Pt. I, p. 64–71. I argued there that the reversal of ageing as it is depicted at 270 d 6 – 271 a 2 corresponds entirely to the curative intervention of the Demiurge as characterised at 273 e 2–5 (Pt. I, p. 65).

¹⁹ Carone (n. 3) 127; 241 n. 10.

growing forgetfulness, up to the final senile capitulation before the forces of chaos. This creates an exact meta-psychological counterpart to the straightforward human development of the contemporary era from the young to the old age, not the backward one of the alleged interim one, as one would expect, according to the NI.²⁰

It is also implausible that this carefully depicted process, which certainly appeals to our *Weltgefühl*, refers to the interim era, which has no relation to us at all. On the contrary, taken that gradual degradation refers to the contemporary era, it provides sufficient evidence for the universe's intelligence as it is argued in the preliminary part of the myth. Carone is right that the most successful phase 'is extremely brief'; but this is the phase of excellence (273 b 4–6) and it is an extraordinary achievement of rationality; equally, the disastrous phase occupies only the last segment of this era (273 b 3, d 1–2). Much more important, in the terms of our existence, is the continuous phase between these two points, of resistance to evil and only gradual and late yielding to it.²¹ Whatever one may think about scope of universe's intelligence thus depicted, its merits and faults correspond entirely to the preliminary description of the universe's intelligence: it approximates in the highest possible grade the perfection of its creator, but does not equal it and thus needs periodic supply of 'life and deathless' from the Demiurge (269 d 5 – 270 a 8).²²

²⁰ This development reminds of the development of human beings *in our universe* according to the *Timaeus* – from the initial disturbances of infancy to the control of psychic motions due to philosophy; this control means imitation of rotational movement of the universe (90 a–d).

²¹ This intelligent albeit imperfect behaviour has nothing to do with the 'mechanistic view' of the universe, as characterises it Brisson, "Interprétation" (n. 1) 362, who compares it with the atheistic doctrine of the universe ruled by blind forces of 'nature and hazard' in the *Laws* X. For this reason, one would also resist his elegant proposal that the *Statesman* myth envisages three eras, the first totally deprived of divine rule, the second dominated entirely by the God, and the third, the contemporary one, which represents the synthesis of the first two (Brisson, "Interprétation" [n.1] 361; Rowe, *Statesman* [n.2] 197 ad 274 e 1 and Carone [n. 3] 141 concur).

²² The view of M. S. Lane, *Method and Politics in Plato's Statesman* (Cambridge 1998) 104, disputed by Carone, is quite right on significance of the universe's autonomous rotation, but I cannot agree that its decline is only 'a relict of Greek cosmological pessimism': rather, it betrays an important tenet of Plato's own theology that perfection of everything created by the god depends ultimately on proximity to the act of creation. Cf. the gradual degradation of Atlantis' rulers

This development of the universe, which, according to Brisson and Carone, contradicts the picture of development in the beginning of the contemporary era,²³ in fact closely correlates with the latter. The universe in the beginning of its autonomous rotation is in the state of disturbance; accordingly, the contemporary era starts with the helpless state of humans, who are unable to defend themselves against the animals and to provide food for themselves in the severe climate (cf. 272 a 5 – b 1).²⁴ It is also significant that the primeval disorder, which is suppressed but not entirely abandoned by the creative act of the Demiurge, is the source of all ‘*the cruel and unjust*’ in the universe, which further conveys this evil to the living beings (273 b 4 – c 2). In the rule of the Demiurge it gives birth to the living beings with minimal presence of evil (272 c 2–4), and this maintains universal peace of Cronus’ era; the gradual strengthening of the chaotic element after the Demiurge’s withdrawal is thus the suitable meta-psychological counterpart for growing cruelty of animals in the beginning of the contemporary era (274 b 6–8).²⁵ Equally, the next phase, the temporal triumph over chaos and the beginning of the universe’s taking care of itself and its inhabitants due to restoring in its mind the teaching of the Demiurge corresponds to the learning of humans from the gods of the use of fire, of sowing etc, *viz.* to the beginning of struggle against physical and moral evils in the human dimension.²⁶

because of diminishing of the divine portion in their nature, on the one hand, and forgetting of divine teaching, on the other (*Cri.* 120 d – 121 a).

²³ Brisson, “Interprétation” (n. 1) 350–351, when he insists on discrepancy between the behaviour of the universe that *at first* remembered the teaching of the Demiurge and the calamities of human beings *in the beginning* of our era, simply forgets that these events belong to the different phases of the cycle, the first one to the recovery of the universe after its initial disturbances, the second to the beginning of the disturbances.

²⁴ After 273 a 8 (the universe recovered from the initial disturbances) the story about the development proceeds in the present tense, which is appropriate for diagnostic of the contemporary state of the universe and for prognostics of its future; the beginning of our era from 273 e 8 again is narrated in historical tenses.

²⁵ According to 274 b 6–8 the influence of the Demiurge’s withdrawal is the most direct on the living beings who were cruel *by their nature*, probably on those, as 273 b 8 – c 3 implies, which had more corporeal element; the growth of evil in human beings who are more rational is thus less straightforward but still inevitable.

²⁶ The text stresses parallelism between the autonomy and taking care of itself by the humankind and the universe (274 d 4 – d 8); notice that this undermines the at-

It is true that the depiction of human development in the contemporary era lacks any prediction of the prevalence of evil in the future. Brisson and Carone argue that this degradation has nothing to do with the contemporary world, and Carone insists specifically that the view of inevitable decay is incompatible with expectation of ‘the best kind of politics’.²⁷ As for the first objection, it should be taken in account that the regressive tendency of the contemporary era is not relevant at this part of the story: it should make vivid the general differences in the environment between the two eras and thus make clear why the all-embracing herdsmanship is not applicable to the contemporary mankind. Add also the literary aspect: after the monumental depiction of the world’s regress, both in biological and moral domain (273 c 2 – d 4), it would be counterproductive to report details of the same decay, now in the specifically human dimension.²⁸ On the other hand, once the decay of the universe is assigned to the alleged third era, we are left without any distinctive final of the contemporary one.²⁹

Now to the next, theoretical, difficulty at which Brisson and Carone point – if indeed this decaying universe is the world in which we live, it would undermine human hopes for the better political order. I start with the view of decay itself. It is true that there is no other comparable statement about the inevitable decay of the whole universe in Plato’s work. Still, it cannot be discarded easily: on the one hand, Plato sticks to the view that everything created is destined to destruction.³⁰ Even if one

tempts of the NI to assign the process of the universe beginning to take care of itself after the Demiurge withdrawal (273 a 4 – b 2) to the interim era.

²⁷ Carone (n. 3) 126 f.

²⁸ Notice the reminiscence of Hesiod’s prophecy of the destruction of the contemporary humankind by the god (*Op.* 180, Hesiod hints also at the better time after that, *ibid.* 175), which is effective only if this picture of regress is related to the nowadays universe. Compare further the senile features of the decayed universe in Plato with Hesiod’s prophecy of the birth of grey-headed babies at the end (see Pt. I, p. 81). It seems that dynamics of growing prevalence of the number of evils over the number of goods in the *Statesman* (273 c 2–4; d 1–4) is inspired by the similar quantitative diagnostic of the *Op.* 178 f.; 197–201.

²⁹ 270 a 2–9; 274 d 5–8 show that the two-phase-cycle is repeated endlessly in the identical form. This makes superfluous a detailed description of the future of the contemporary mankind since the metaphysical aspect of its decay and the necessity of the Demiurge’s intervention had been represented in the 273 c 4 – d 4.

³⁰ See *Rep.* VIII, 546 a 2–3, and in the reversed form, *Phaedr.* 245 d 3–4. According to the *Timaeus* not all what is born, but ‘all which is bound’, *viz.* is created

disputes Plato's seriousness about the universe's creation in general, it is beyond doubt *created* according to the *Statesman's* myth, and therefore has the inherent tendency to destruction. On the other hand, there is an important parallel in the *Timaeus*: the universe, as well as the lesser gods, which both are created by the Demiurge, are excepted by his extraordinary will from the law of the inevitable destruction (32 c 2–4; 40 b 2–6); although without dramatic intervention of the Demiurge (the difference which is important and which I hope to discuss on another occasion), both the law of inevitable destruction and its exception are thus applied to the universe *in which we live*, and not to the alleged interim phase, which has no counterpart in the *Timaeus*.

As for the worries of Brisson and Carone that the inevitable decay of *our* universe would be incompatible with Plato's efforts to improve the mankind, let us remember that the doctrine of periodic partial cataclysms, which inevitably destroy single societies in Plato's later dialogues, accompanies his projects of the ideal state, as in the *Timaeus–Critias*, or of the second-best state, as in the *Laws*. Moreover, Plato viewed these cataclysms not as a disappointing violation of the rational order of the universe, but as a part of providential care of the gods: the cataclysms are sent by them to *purify* the earth (*Tim.* 22 d–e, cf. *Cri.* 121 b–c),³¹ since they destroy the intellectually advanced but morally degraded river civilisations in lowlands and spare the primitive mountain civilisations, thus returning a given society to the healthy stage.³² Thus, I would not hesitate to ascribe to Plato

as a combination of soul and body, is in principle destructible, since, contrary to the *Phaedrus'* view, in the *Timaeus* Plato holds that the soul is *created*, although it remains indestructible by its nature, in difference to the lesser gods and the universe.

³¹ On the similarity of this 'purification' with the destruction of decayed mankind in the *Statesman* see Pt. I, p. 65 f. with n. 24.

³² The mechanism of social development in the *Laws* creates the same correspondence, although implicit one, between gradual deterioration and inevitable divine punishment: after each cataclysm, a society moves gradually from the mountains down to the rivers, and that movement is accompanied by its growth, economic development and oblivion of the previous catastrophe (III, 682 b–c); at the end, it is again affected by the flood, which will spare only primitive mountain dwellers. Much more disturbing from the point of view of theodicy is that the gods, according to the *Timaeus–Critias*, destroy not only the degraded Atlantis but also its victorious opponent, the primeval Athens at the moment of its highest perfection, which is close to Plato's ideal. I find attractive the proposal of Sarah Broadie, "Theodicy and Pseudo-history in the *Timaeus*", *OSAPh* 21 (2001) 6, that this destruction was

of the *Statesman* the view that the human efforts, which even in the best case can be only partially and temporally successful, are both possible and valuable in spite of general growth of evil in the universe; also that they are not compromised by the future destruction of the mankind and radical renovation of the universe by the Demiurge (which will happen at the point when any attempts to improve the world become entirely hopeless).

I turn now to the attempts of Brisson and Carone to find positive evidence for the presence of the Demiurge and the lesser gods in the contemporary era. Carone points out to the command to living beings in the beginning of our era to procreate and to take care of their procreation autonomously (274 a 3 – b 1) as one of the signs of Demiurge’s rule in the contemporary universe, although in a more detached way than in the era of Cronus (she compares it with the instructions on how to move that the universe receives from the Demiurge in the *Tim.* 36 d 4–7):³³

οὐ γὰρ ἐξῆν ἔτ’ ἐν γῆ δι’ ἐτέρων συνιστάντων φύεσθαι ζῶον, ἀλλὰ καθάπερ τῷ κόσμῳ προσετέτακτο αὐτοκράτορα εἶναι τῆς αὐτοῦ πορείας, οὕτω δὴ κατὰ ταῦτά καὶ τοῖς μέρεσιν αὐτοῖς δι’ αὐτῶν, καθ’ ὅσον οἶόν τ’ ἦν, φύειν τε καὶ γεννᾶν καὶ τρέφειν προσετέτακτο ὑπὸ τῆς ὁμοίας ἀγωγῆς.

But these commands should be merely the farewell commands to the universe given by the Demiurge at his withdrawal depicted earlier in the story (272 e 3–5) at the end of Cronus’ era.³⁴ The same is true for the instructions in the *Timaeus* (see below).

benevolent, since it had to save the state of the ancient Athens from the inevitable decay. But whatever it might be, Plato’s gods are not hesitating to give moral lessons even at the price of destruction of the innocent.

³³ Carone (n. 3) 140 f.

³⁴ One textual point: Carone takes the words ὑπὸ τῆς ὁμοίας ἀγωγῆς (274 b 1) as related to the προσετέτακτο, viz. ‘was ordered to the universe by similar guidance [of the Demiurge]’. Since this guidance consists in letting the universe and living beings to become autonomous, the sentence does not support her case. However, thus far the Demiurge was not depicted as having direct influence on ‘the parts of the universe’: in the age of Cronus these parts were in charge of the subordinate gods (271 d 4–6), and these gods abandoned their care together with the withdrawal of the Demiurge (272 e 6–10). Again, according to 274 a 3 f. the subordinate gods were in charge of procreation of living beings in the age of Cronus (see Pt. I, p. 75). Henceforth, it is more likely that the subject in this sentence is the subordinate gods, not the Demiurge.

No more convincing is another alleged evidence that the Demiurge returned and rules the contemporary universe, such as the remark of the ES, which opposes the conditions of the contemporary epoch as *the age of Zeus* to that under the rule of Cronus (272 b 2). A possible implication for the theology of the myth, if any (the strict sense of the remark is that the contemporary world is only *said* to be the age of Zeus), should be rather that the contemporary era is not deprived entirely of the *divine* rule, not that it is under the rule of *the Demiurge*.

Carone further regards the passage in which the ES refers to tradition of the reversal of sun in the time of Atreus and Thyestus produced *by the god* (269 a 1–5) as evidence of the Demiurge's rule in the contemporary era.³⁵ However, these words refer to the god of this traditional tale, *viz.* to Zeus, not to the Demiurge of ES' doctrine (which is not yet announced at this moment). As the ES admonishes, tradition provides only the raw material, which should be further explained in the vein of his theory (269 b 5 – c 1).³⁶

This brings us to the crucial point for understanding the theological dimension of the myth. I turn to the notoriously difficult passage, which Brisson and after him Carone use as evidence that the universe during the age of Cronus was under the god's rule, *as it is nowadays* (271 d 3–6). The passage is the ES answer to the question to which of the two rotations the age of Cronus belongs:

NE. ΣΩ. ἀλλὰ δὴ τὸν βίον ὃν ἐπὶ τῆς Κρόνου φῆς εἶναι δυνάμεως, πότερον ἐν ἐκείναις ἦν ταῖς τροπαῖς ἢ ἐν ταῖσδε; τὴν μὲν γὰρ τῶν ἄστρον τε καὶ ἡλίου μεταβολὴν δῆλον ὡς ἐν ἑκατέραις συμπίπτει ταῖς τροπαῖς γίνεσθαι.

ΞΕ. Καλῶς τῷ λόγῳ συμπαραηκολούθηκας. ὁ δ' ἦρου περὶ τοῦ πάντα αὐτόματα γίνεσθαι τοῖς ἀνθρώποις, ἥκιστα τῆς νῦν ἐστὶ καθεστηκυίας φορᾶς, ἀλλ' ἦν καὶ τοῦτο τῆς ἔμπροσθεν. τότε γὰρ αὐτῆς πρῶτον τῆς κυκλήσεως ἦρχεν ἐπιμελούμενος ὅλης ὁ θεός ὡς νῦν κατὰ τόπους ταῦτ' ὅν τοῦτο ὑπὸ

³⁵ Carone (n. 3) 129 f.

³⁶ The start of the contemporary rotation with its drastic change of all previous conditions should be located, according to any interpretation of the cycle, in a much earlier time than the already sufficiently civilised age of Thyestus and Atreus. As the remark of the YS approved by the ES (271 c 5–8) shows, they both take the story of Atreus and Thyestus as a dim memory of *two* reversals, one in the beginning of the contemporary era and another in the beginning of the earlier one. However, the tradition, albeit inexact, is not entirely wrong: after all, the Demiurge is ultimately responsible for both reversals, not only at the moment when he takes the helm, but also when he withdraws.

θεῶν ἀρχόντων πάντη τὰ τοῦ κόσμου μέρη διειλημμένα. καὶ δὴ καὶ τὰ ζῶα κατὰ γένη καὶ ἀγέλας οἶον νομῆς θεῖοι διειλήφεσαν δαίμονες...

Brisson and Carone accept the emendation of A. Diès:

τότε γὰρ αὐτῆς πρώτον τῆς κυκλήσεως ἦρχεν ἐπιμελούμενος ὅλης ὁ θεὸς ὡς νῦν, <καὶ> κατὰ τόπους ταῦτόν τοῦτο, ὑπὸ θεῶν ἀρχόντων πάντ' <ἦν> τὰ τοῦ κόσμου μέρη διειλημμένα.³⁷

The emendation makes the ES say that the age of Cronus hardly corresponds to the contemporary rotation; accordingly it should belong to the previous one: at that time the Demiurge ruled and took care of the universe *like nowadays*, and all parts of the universe were distributed between the subordinate gods (the following text shows how the *daimones* who, according to the standard view, are identical with these subordinate gods, provided blessed life for all living beings). The text points out that the crucial difference between the contemporary era and the previous one lies in the lack of care of the subordinate gods; the Demiurge is at the rule, but he has not the subordinate gods at his disposal and thus, presumably, is not able to control all the universe. This is close to the general view that Brisson defends (Carone believes that both the Demiurge and the subordinate gods are at rule, but in a more detached way than in Cronus' era).

The emendation contradicts the statement about the withdrawal of the Demiurge from the steer;³⁸ the attempts of Brisson and Carone to find evidence for his implied return to the steer are unsuccessful, as I argued. Take further in account the context. The question is to which *rotation* the life under Cronus belongs, to the contemporary or to the previous one.

³⁷ Brisson, "Interprétation" (n. 1) 351 with n. 7; Carone (n. 3) 131 wrongly calls this emendation 'reading of all manuscripts'. A. Diès (ed.), Plato, *Œuvres complètes* IX/1. *Le Politique* (Paris 1935) ad loc., ascribed this emendation to K. F. Hermann. In fact it was proposed by J. N. Madvig (*Adversaria Critica* I [Hauniae 1871, repr. Hildesheim 1967] 385 (as correctly notices R. Brague, *Du temps chez Platon et Aristote* [Paris 1982] 77 n. 11), and was accepted by M. Wohlrab (Leipzig 1887) in his revision of K. F. Hermann's edition; in Hermann's edition (Leipzig 1851) the manuscript text is printed without any emendation, but with the same punctuation as accepted by Diès.

³⁸ Madvig regarded 273 a (the subordinate gods withdrew their care) as a sufficient reason for his emendation; it is not clear how according to his or Diès' view the emended text agrees with the even more explicit withdrawal of the Demiurge himself (cf. pertinent remarks of Brague [n. 37] 79).

If we follow the emended text, the answer is that it hardly corresponds to the contemporary rotation, since today there is no care of the subordinate gods. But the character of rotation depends mainly on the Demiurge; the difference between the two rotations thus remains unexplained, and the following depiction of all-penetrating care of the lesser gods looks like a speculation on the part of the ES,³⁹ in contradiction to the clear statement that this care was the direct sequence of the general cosmic order, *viz.* of the rule of the Demiurge (ἄλλα θ' ὅσα τῆς τοιαύτης ἐστὶ κατακοσμήσεως ἐπόμενα, μυρία ἄν εἴη λέγειν, 271 e 2 f.).

These or similar considerations make much more plausible another kind of emendation, one that makes the syntax smoother than in the manuscript text, removes the reference to the rule of the minor gods in the contemporary universe, which contradicts *prima facie* the abandonment of their care according to 272 e 6, and makes their rule in the age of Cronus dependent on the rule of the Demiurge:

τότε γὰρ αὐτῆς πρῶτον τῆς κυκλήσεως ἦρχεν ἐπιμελούμενος ὅλης ὁ θεός, ὡς δ' αὖ κατὰ τόπους ταῦτον τοῦτο, ὑπὸ θεῶν ἀρχόντων πάντ' <ἦν> τὰ τοῦ κόσμου μέρη διειλημμένα.⁴⁰

Most editors and interpreters accept this or a similar emendation. Granted that it is correct, the *daimones*, who according to the next sentence (272 d 6 – e 2) rule the herds of living beings and took care of them, are either the same as the gods just mentioned or represent a special category of them. *All* subordinate gods thus abandon their care of the parts of the universe, according to 272 e, and this seems to be confirmed by the remark 274 b 5–6 that the mankind in the beginning of the contemporary era was deprived of the care of the *daimones*, while another remark which refers back to 274 b 5–6 describes this as the loss of the care of the gods in general (274 d 4–6).

³⁹ I argued (Pt. I, p. 71–73) that both the question and the answer strongly suggest the existence only of two eras, not of three.

⁴⁰ See *Platonis Opera* I (Oxford 1995 [OCT]), the *Statesman* text is by D. Robinson; see in the apparatus ad loc. other emendations on the same lines. The reasons for emendation were already adduced by G. Stallbaum, *Platonis Politicus* (Gothae 1841) 192 ad loc.; see further L. Campbell (ed.), *The Sophistes and Politicus of Plato* (Oxford 1867) 56 f. ad loc., and, most recently, D. Robinson, “The New Oxford Text of Plato’s *Statesman*: Editors’ Comments”, in Rowe (n. 1) 45 f.

The text thus emended is logical and corresponds entirely to the TI, creating the due opposition between the era of Cronus and the contemporary one as concerns both the rule and the absence of the Demiurge and that of the subordinate gods. I prefer, however, to defend the manuscript reading, close to the tentative proposal of Campbell: he put the comma after ὁ θεός and regarded τὰ τοῦ κόσμου μέρη διειλημμένα as a cognate appositional accusative to the verb ἦρχεν or rather to the whole sentence τότε γὰρ αὐτῆς πρῶτον τῆς κυκλήσεως ἦρχεν ἐπιμελούμενος ὅλης ὁ θεός;⁴¹ accordingly, ὡς νῦν κατὰ τόπους ταῦτόν τοῦτο is the comparison in accusative, which is related to the following part of the sentence: ‘the parts of the universe every way being divided under the rule of deities as is now the case in certain places’.⁴²

Although this seems to me plausible linguistically, it creates a difficulty that the comparison ὡς νῦν κτλ. misleadingly anticipates its *comparandum*. Instead I propose to regard the comparison as related to the preceding part of the sentence, and the ὑπὸ θεῶν ἀρχόντων as the appositional nominative, which contains the explication of ταῦτόν τοῦτο (this entails the ellipsis of the verb ἐστί, which is not uncommon), i. e.:

⁴¹ On this construction, which is often not recognised and which is spread not only on transitive but also on intransitive verbs, resembling formally a cognate accusative but in fact being an explication of the whole sentence, see Wilamowitz (ed.), Euripides, *Herakles* II (Berlin² 1895) 19 ad v. 59; Kühner – Gerth I, 284–286; E. Fraenkel (ed.), Aeschylus, *Agamemnon* (Oxford 1950) II, 29 ad v. 47 (with further literature, cf. index s. v. Apposition). The most part of the examples cited come from poetry, but Plato’s fondness for this construction is illustrated by Riddell’s ‘Digest of Idioms’ (J. Riddell [ed.], *The Apology of Plato* [Oxford 1877] 119 ff.); *Pol.* 272 e 1 f. (see Pt. I, p. 74 n. 42) can be added to the examples. The discussed case is the closest to the examples Riddell collected under the item ‘noun-phrases’, which ‘stand for sentences or parts of sentences’ (p. 122 f.). Notice that Campbell who took his first proposal back, because of 272 e (the subordinate gods abandoned their care), emended the text nevertheless (ὡσαύτως δ’ αὖ instead of ὡς νῦν) retaining the difficult appositional accusative. The later emendations, which entail the insertion of ἦν making thus the construction smoother, are closer to the earlier emendation of Stallbaum.

⁴² Brague (n. 37) 73–95 accepts the manuscript text and renders it close to Campbell. However, as most interpreters, he is opposed to the idea that the subordinate gods still rule in the contemporary universe (p. 79); he takes ὡς νῦν κτλ. in the sense that in some places the gods possess certain domains separated from the profane world (cf. p. 79 f. and 84), viz. they do not rule. This, however, ignores the force of ταῦτόν τοῦτο, which shows that parts of the universe are now divided between the gods-rulers, as it was the case in Cronus’ era.

τότε γὰρ αὐτῆς πρῶτον τῆς κυκλήσεως ἦρχεν ἐπιμελούμενος ὅλης ὁ θεός, ὡς νῦν κατὰ τόπους ταῦτόν τοῦτο, ὑπὸ θεῶν ἀρχόντων πάντη τὰ τοῦ κόσμου μέρη διειλημμένα.

At that time, first of all, the God ruled, taking care about the rotation of the universe itself on the whole, in the manner which remains nowadays the same [as it was then] as concerns the local aspect of this rule, namely that the parts of the universe every way were [then] divided among the gods, their rulers.

The comparison, although it suggests formally the identity of the Demiurge's rule in Cronus' era and in the contemporary one, means that it is similar only as far as it concerns the distribution of power between the subordinate gods; the central rule of the Demiurge over the revolutions of the universe does not exist today; even the rule of the lesser gods is now limited.⁴³ The logic of the ES answer is now clearer than on the prevailing emendation: Cronus' age can belong *only* to the era of the Demiurge, because all blessings of this age depended either directly⁴⁴ on his rule, or on the division of the parts of the universe between the subordinate gods. The latter were in charge of the 'parts of the universe', *viz.* of its elements and natural powers, as it follows from 274 a 5–8: the generation and nourishment of human beings, previously the task of the gods,⁴⁵ were now, after withdrawal of the Demiurge, commissioned to the 'parts' of it, however, only *as far as it is possible* (καθ' ὅσον οἶόν τ' ἦν), as Campbell rightly observed.⁴⁶ It means, I suppose, that in the age of Cronus when the

⁴³ The comparison serves at the same time as an analogy and as a proof: taken that nowadays the local rule of the universe is in the hands of the lesser gods, *a fortiori* the whole parts of the universe were divided between them in the era of the Demiurge. The analogy will be then similar to that of the rule of the *daimones* over the human beings (and all other living beings) in the age of Cronus and the rule of the humans over animals nowadays (271 e 5–7).

⁴⁴ As most interpreters, I understand πρῶτον as that of logical force ('first of all, at that time, the god ruled taking care of the whole universe'). Brisson and Rowe take it as temporal (Rowe, *Statesman* [n. 2] 192 ad 271 d 3–4: 'the god then began to rule and take care'). This creates an unnecessary contrast between the beginning and the later stage of the god's rule, whereas it should be the same mode during the whole era, according to any interpretation (cf. Brague [n. 37] 82 n. 19).

⁴⁵ See pt. I, p. 75.

⁴⁶ Campbell (n. 40) 69 ad loc.; the reference should be, however, to 274 a 4–5, not to 273 b 3.

Demiurge took care of regularity of cosmic revolutions, the lesser gods supervised the natural processes at the lower level of the universe, i. e. suppressed the phenomena like earthquakes, floods, etc. and thus made environment ideally adapted to make human existence invulnerable. In the contemporary universe they are pushed to the level of local rulers who still possess some control over natural forces but not over the whole environment of the universe.⁴⁷

If we retain the manuscript text, it further allows us to separate the *daimones* who rule exclusively the human and other living beings in the Cronus era (271 d 6 – e 2; 274 b 5–8) and thus represent the lowest and the proximate level of the Demiurge's rule as the special kind of deities from the subordinate gods – against the prevailing assumption that they are identical.⁴⁸ This separation is justified by the parallel description of the age of Cronus in the *Laws* (IV. 713 d): the god commissioned the rule of the mankind to the *daimones* who were of the *more divine* and the better stock than the human beings, viz. they were not the gods in proper sense. This corresponds to the cosmic hierarchy in the *Phaedrus* (246 e – 247 a): the army of the gods and the *daimones*, divided in eleven units under the command of eleven older gods, follows Zeus in the procession beyond the heavens (the twelfth, Hestia, remains in the house of the gods). The similar hierarchy – the twelve (Olympic) gods – the chthonic gods – the *daimones* – the heroes – is the core of the system of religion in the *Laws*.⁴⁹ Moreover, in Plato the *daimones*, who are sometimes identified with the guardians of the souls, sometimes with the reasonable ele-

⁴⁷ The distribution of lands between the gods is an important motif in the *Critias* (109 b 1–2; 120 d 6) and the *Laws* (747 d 1 ff.); this endorses and develops traditional view of certain gods who protect their favourite countries and enjoy privileged worshipping there. According to the *Laws* (828 a 7 – b 3; 848 c 7 – d 7) each part of the projected city of Magnesia should be assigned to a special god or *daimon*.

⁴⁸ See Pt. I, p. 83–84 with nn. 68, 69. The personal divinity can be called occasionally θεός (e. g. *Leg.* 775 e), and *vice versa* gods may be called δαίμονες, as *Phaedr.* 274 c, *Tim.* 40 d 6 (here it probably includes various kinds of deities); in the *Statesman* the Demiurge is called the ὁ μέγιστος δαίμων (272 e 7; the emendations that remove this ambiguity are superfluous). Nevertheless, when necessary, Plato carefully distinguishes the gods and the *daimones* both conceptually and verbally.

⁴⁹ See, especially 717 a–b; 738 a; 771 d; 848 c–e, and other passages in G. R. Morrow, *Plato's Cretan City* (Princeton 1960) 434; cf. also 727 b where those who follow the gods are in all probability *daimones*.

ment of the soul itself, take care of the universe exclusively in its human dimension.⁵⁰

Now to the difficulty that impelled Campbell to emend the text (apart from difficulty of syntax which he did not regard as intolerable): the statement that the parts of the universe were divided between the lesser gods, their rulers, in the era of the Demiurge *as it is the case nowadays* seems to contradict the assertion made further that the subordinate gods abandoned their care from the parts of the universe together with the Demiurge's withdrawal (πάντες οὖν οἱ κατὰ τοὺς τόπους συνάρχοντες τῷ μεγίστῳ δαίμονι θεοί, γνόντες ἤδη τὸ γιγνόμενον, ἀφίεσαν αὐτὰ τὰ μέρη τοῦ κόσμου τῆς αὐτῶν ἐπιμελείας, 272 e 6–8). There is also a reiteration that calamities affected the human beings in the beginning of the contemporary era since they were now deprived of the care of the *daimones* (274 b 5–6); it is emphasised again that the human beings now needed the divine teaching, since they were deprived of the care of the gods (274 d 4–6). So far, the manuscript text seems to create the discrepancy and an emendation, which would expel the subordinate gods entirely from the contemporary universe, seems inevitable.

Nevertheless, there are sufficient reasons to resist this temptation. Even if we are prepared to accept that Plato could expel traditional gods of Greek religion from the contemporary universe, it remains unexplained how the gods, who withdrew entirely *before* the contemporary era started, could teach the mankind the crafts necessary for survival *in the beginning of it* (274 c 1 – d 8):

ἔτ' ἀμήχανοι καὶ ἄτεχνοι κατὰ τοὺς πρώτους ἦσαν χρόνους, ἅτε τῆς μὲν αὐτομάτης τροφῆς ἐπιλελοιπιῦσας, πορίζεσθαι δὲ οὐκ ἐπιστάμενοί πω διὰ τὸ μηδεμίαν αὐτοὺς χρεῖαν πρότερον ἀναγκάζειν. ἐκ τούτων πάντων ἐν μεγάλαις ἀπορίαις ἦσαν. ὅθεν δὴ τὰ πάλαι λεχθέντα παρὰ θεῶν δῶρα ἡμῖν δεδωρηται μετ' ἀναγκαίας διδαχῆς καὶ παιδεύσεως, πῦρ μὲν παρὰ Προμηθέως, τέχνη δὲ παρ' Ἥφαιστου καὶ τῆς συντέχνου, σπέρματα δὲ αὐτὰ καὶ φυτὰ παρ' ἄλλων· καὶ πάνθ' ὅποσα τὸν ἀνθρώπινον βίον συγκατασκευάσκειν ἐκ τούτων γέγονεν, ἐπειδὴ τὸ μὲν ἐκ θεῶν, ὅπερ ἐρρήθη νυνδὴ, τῆς ἐπιμελείας ἐπέλιπεν ἀνθρώπου, δι' ἑαυτῶν τε ἔδει τὴν τε διαγωγὴν καὶ τὴν ἐπιμέλειαν αὐτοῦ αὐτῶν ἔχειν καθάπερ ὅλος ὁ κόσμος...

⁵⁰ I proposed tentatively (Pt. I, p. 82 f.) that the souls that were excepted from incarnations at the age of Cronus (271 c 2) already had gone through philosophical lives in the contemporary era and that they are identical to the daemonic rulers under the Demiurge's supreme command.

Here I leave the company of the TI supporters, who usually dismiss this divine teaching as lip-service to traditional lore and explain it as figurative description of autonomous human inventiveness.⁵¹ Such a device contradicts the interpretative strategy of the story-teller who normally regards evidence of traditional lore as reliable, albeit inexact, not dismisses it or interprets it metaphorically. The metaphoric reading creates the discrepancy even within one and the same sentence: the story-teller asserts that the gods teaching was necessary, *since* the mankind had been deprived of the care of gods.⁵² On the contrary, provided that we understand both the lack of care and teaching in their literal senses, the latter becomes indispensable, as a palliative of the former care; it will be further in harmony with the earlier remark that the gods preserve something of their rule in the contemporary universe, and, at last, it restores Plato's standard view of the contemporary universe as one which is under the rule of the gods.⁵³

⁵¹ See, on the side of the TI, M. Erler, "Kommentar zu Brisson und Dillon", in Rowe (n.1) 377; M. M. McCabe, "Chaos and Control: Reading Plato's *Politicus*", *Phronesis* 42 (1997) 102 n. 35 (most proponents of the view that the gods are missing from our universe entirely do not even mention their teaching, as e. g. A. Nightingale, "Plato on the Origins of Evil: The *Statesman* Myth Reconsidered," *Ancient Philosophy* 16 [1996] 65–91); on the side of the NI see Rowe, *Statesman* (n. 2) 197 ad 274 c 6, who endorses the three-phase-interpretation, but believes that the contemporary universe is entirely deprived of the divine element. Notice that τὰ πάλαι λεχθέντα παρὰ θεῶν δῶρα, often cited in defence of the metaphoric reading, does not imply in fact any modification of literality of this report (as τὰ λεγόμενα in certain cases implies): τὰ πάλαι λεχθέντα means 'the things which were told long ago'; in the *Statesman* it is the normal way of reference to the ancestral tradition (268 e 8–10; 269 b 2–4), which is endorsed in its literal meaning, although it can be elucidated and further developed.

⁵² G. R. F. Ferrari, "Myth and Conservatism in Plato's *Statesman*", in Rowe (n. 1) 394 n. 17, who assumes rightly that the lesser gods are present, although in the detached way, in the contemporary universe (he thinks that the Demiurge is present, too), explains the divine teaching as the metaphor of the ability of human beings to take care of themselves, in opposition to the theories of passive learning from their environment, like Democritus'. I believe that the opposite is true: Plato rejects the view similar to Democritus' that the humans learn *actively*, albeit forced by the the circumstances, in favour of the view that the autonomous possibilities of the earliest mankind are limited and they thus need supernatural help.

⁵³ The general scenario of the myth makes unacceptable another metaphoric interpretation, namely that the teaching of the gods should be substituted by painful learning by the mankind itself and that this learning was recollection of the divine

Thus far I agree with Brisson and Carone, who contrary to most TI supporters, take the divine teaching as a challenge to the view that the contemporary universe is deprived entirely of the divine care. However, I cannot agree with their argument that since the lesser gods deprived the parts of the universe of their care together with the withdrawal of the Demiurge, their appearance as teachers signals his own return to the steer and thus the interim era between these events.⁵⁴ In fact, the divine teaching becomes necessary because of the abandonment of the divine care *as it was depicted before* (ἐπειδὴ τὸ μὲν ἐκ θεῶν, ὅπερ ἐρρήθη νυνδὴ, τῆς ἐπιμελείας ἐπέλιπεν ἀνθρώπους, 274 d 4–5), *viz.* when, together with the withdrawal of the Demiurge, all gods abandoned their care of their parts of the universe (272 e 69); thus both this abandonment and the Demiurge's withdrawal are still valid in the moment of divine teaching.⁵⁵

Instead, I propose to explain the presence of the gods and their teaching in the context of the two-phase-view: the withdrawal of the Demiurge means the end of his presence and rule in the universe, up to his next advent; the abandonment of the lesser gods' care of the parts of our universe, however, does not mean that they withdrew themselves but only that they

care in the age of Cronus, similar to the universe's recollection of the teaching of the Demiurge (273 b 1–3). At first glance, διὰ τὸ μηδεμίαν αὐτοὺς χρείαν πρότερον ἀναγκάζειν (274 c 3–4) seems to imply that the real cause of acquiring the crafts was the need, not supernatural teaching. However, contrary to the divine steering of the universe, the divine care of the humans in the age of Cronus had nothing to do with technical skills. Thus, *χρεία* is rejected as the moving force of development on its own: there was no need to learn the crafts in the age of Cronus; on the contrary, when the divine care had been abandoned and the need to learn appeared, the 'need' turned out to be an insufficient teacher without help of the gods. Cf. the myth in the *Protagoras*: after the desperate efforts of the mankind to learn the art of politics only the teaching of Zeus saves the mankind from inevitable destruction (322 b–c).

⁵⁴ See Brisson, "Interprétation" (n. 1) 350 and Carone (n. 3) 139 f.; Brisson holds that only the Demiurge, and not the lesser gods, cares about the universe nowadays; he treats the divine teaching as an extraordinary intervention (p. 351–352 with n. 8); Carone thinks that the gods rule permanently. Surprisingly, they seem not to notice that the literal reading of divine teaching undermines their hypothesis of the third era: if only the intervention of the gods saved the human beings from perishing in the beginning of our era, what would be an outcome in the alleged interim era when the environment, according to the NI, is much more severe and the mankind lacks care of the gods entirely?

⁵⁵ Note that this abandonment of care about the parts of the universe is valid for the contemporary era also according to the explicit statement at 274 a 4–8.

withdrew the care they had performed under the command of the Demiurge, i. e. the total control that completely suppressed the autonomy of natural forces. They remain in charge of natural forces (according to 271 d 4–6 and 274 a 6–8, see above), and also of human beings, as their teaching shows, but by interventions and not ruling constantly, in correspondence with the usual Greek view, but with typically Platonic modification that their role is entirely moral. On the contrary, the *daimones* disappear from the physical universe in our era entirely, according to 274 b 5–7, probably settling instead inside the souls as spiritual guiders.⁵⁶

Keeping the lesser gods as having rule in the contemporary universe, although in a more limited way than in the era of Cronus, we restore the harmony of the *Statesman* with the distribution of the divine powers, the Demiurge, the lesser gods, the *daimones* and the soul of the universe, which is distinctive in Plato's later dialogues, the *Timaeus* and the *Laws*.⁵⁷ Take first the lesser gods and their teaching. Along with Plato's tendency to depict human beings as created by the gods,⁵⁸ there are constant references to the gods who teach the humankind various crafts at the dawn of civilisation.⁵⁹ The connection between creation and teaching is the most

⁵⁶ See Pt. I, p. 84.

⁵⁷ Apart from Campbell (see above n. 46) and Lane (n. 22) 104 f., 110, who assumes that the gods are present in the contemporary era, the TI proponents stick to the view that Plato depicts the contemporary universe as deprived of gods entirely. According to more popular interpretation, this corresponds to Plato's genuine view, as most recently claimed by El Murr (n. 4) 294 f., who, in diametrical opposition to Brisson and Carone, interprets the myth in the sense that in the contemporary universe the Platonic art of statesmanship is simply inapplicable. The second interpretation is represented by Nightingale (n. 51) 87–89, who proposes that the age of Zeus, depicted as a variant of 'humanistic' anthropology similar to that of Protagoras, is the view of the ES, not Plato's own, who distances from this view as 'both false and dangerous' (p. 89). Nowhere in the text I see any support for her view that 'Plato's picture of the age of Zeus is designed to warn readers not to confuse it for our own world' (notice also that Protagoras' view is not entirely 'humanistic', see nn. 53 and 59).

⁵⁸ See Pt. I, p. 74 n. 43.

⁵⁹ *Menex.* 238 b; *Phaedr.* 274 c–d; *Phileb.* 18 b; *Leg.* III. 679 a 6–b 3. This view is typical for the later dialogues, but already Protagoras' myth combines the inborn technical abilities of the mankind given by the divine creator (which are called the 'divine particle'), the gradual and only partially successful 'autonomous' development, and the later divine improvement of the human nature. No matter how literally one may take the role of the gods here, it cannot be easily replaced by purely human inventions. The debatable statement that the Form of the bed produced by the god

explicit in the *Timaeus–Critias*: the gods, who participate in creation of the human beings by the Demiurge and receive commands, at the moment of his departure, to take care of the human beings (*Tim.* 41 a–d), after that rule and teach them separately, each within their own people (*Criti.* 109 b–d, cf. *Tim.* 24 b–c). At the same time, the *Timaeus–Critias* agree with the *Statesman* that only in the beginning this divine care is so close; later the human progress is mostly autonomous, in correspondence with the popular belief, which Plato readily endorses in other dialogues, but neither this care nor rule disappear entirely.⁶⁰ The *Statesman*, together with the *Timaeus*, provides a metaphysical explanation of this extraordinary initial involvement and following distancing: our ancestors were privileged to live in proximity of the previous era of the Demiurge.⁶¹

The other functions of the gods in the contemporary era are beyond the scope of the *Statesman* myth: it emphasises the autonomy of the universe and the mankind and accordingly reduces to minimum the role of the gods (see clear statement to this effect in 274 d 4–8). Still, the scarce indications we possess, their teaching and their taking care of some areas of the universe, show that the implied view is essentially the same as elsewhere in Plato, namely that the gods take care of human beings, without however limiting their autonomy and responsibility. Plato, as it

serves as the paradigm of all other beds (*Rep.* X. 597 b) does not refer directly to the divine teaching; still, it reflects the same tendency that discovery of culture cannot be explained by human efforts alone (cf. M. F. Burnyeat, “Culture and Society in Plato’s Republic”, *The Tanner Lectures on Human Values* 20 [Salt Lake City 1999] 246–249, who takes the passage seriously, contrary to many previous scholars).

⁶⁰ According to the *Laws*, the god initially taught the mankind two crafts, modelling and plaiting, which alone survive through periodic cataclysms. The progress after each cataclysm is depicted as autonomous in general (III. 678 e 10 – 679 b 3); but the initial inventions in some fields, which already belong to the contemporary civilisation, are sometimes ascribed to the gods: *Leg.* VI. 782 b 3–8; II. 653 c.

⁶¹ The divine teaching is explained by initial proximity of our ancestors to the gods in another later dialogue, *Philebus*, 16 c–d (David Sedley, *Plato’s Cratylus* [Cambridge 2003] 32 plausibly connects this proximity to the act of creation as depicted in the *Timaeus*); although the invention of all τέχναι, viz. crafts and sciences, goes back in the *Philebus* to this gift, the method of finding ‘one and many’ in all existing things, the inventions themselves are of basically human character. Cf. also the motif that in earlier times more people were descendants of the gods, and the people were more certain than today about the god’s existence, *Leg.* 948 b 3–7; also that the earlier theologians who were descendants of the gods better understood the divine nature, *Tim.* 40 d–e.

is well known, preserves all fundamentals of traditional anthropomorphic religion in his political projects, in the *Republic*, where information on religious life is notoriously scarce,⁶² and, much more visibly in the *Laws*, in both cases, however, stressing purely moral character of the gods' rule and impossibility of appeasing them by sacrifices and offerings.⁶³ More relevant for my purpose is the question exactly what kind of causality and power is assigned to traditional gods. According to the *Timaeus* the pantheon includes, apart from the divine planets and stars, also the gods of traditional religion (40 d – 41 a): both kind of gods not only take part in the act of creation of the Demiurge – they make the human body and the mortal part of the soul, 41 b 7 – c 6; 42 d 5 – e 3), but also continue to take care of human beings after his departure, following his commands: they must nourish and receive living beings after their death (41 d 1–3), presumably, judge their souls; in general they must rule the human beings 'in the best possible way'.⁶⁴ The same is true for the theology of the *Laws*: Plato builds the battery of arguments to prove that all gods, not only the cosmic gods of heavenly bodies but also traditional ones, take care of the human soul as the smallest part of the whole universe (899 d 5 – 907 c 9). Plato's gods thus combine their traditional, anthropomorphic features and care of human individuals with physical powers over the universe. At the same time this rule does not entail all-mightiness: the gods are carefully acquitted of any responsibility for moral and physical evil; their control both over nature and human beings is thus limited.⁶⁵

⁶² See M. McPherran, "The Gods and Piety in Plato's *Republic*", in G. Santas (ed.), *The Blackwell Guide to Plato's Republic* (Malden, MA 2006) 84–103.

⁶³ The overall importance of the traditional gods in the *Laws* needs no proof, but it is worth to mention that the care of *these* gods is one of the main objects of the philosophical arguments closely connected with a general view of the cosmic order in the X book.

⁶⁴ These lesser gods are not only 'the Sun and other intelligent heavenly bodies responsible for seasonal growth and decline', as Burnyeat (n. 59) 247 maintains: it follows from 40 e 3 – 41 a 6 that the gods in charge of creation and further care of human beings are both visible gods, *viz.* the heavenly bodies, and the gods who are visible to the extent they wish to be, *viz.* the gods than can appear in the human form, *viz.* the gods of traditional religion. According to an occasional remark in the *Leg.* 904 b 1–2, the soul and *the gods* are together in charge of generation of living beings.

⁶⁵ Plato's god being exclusively good is responsible only for good things (*Rep.* II. 379 c); in the *Timaeus* both the Demiurge and the lesser gods are released of all-embracing control over human beings, and thus of responsibility for evil the latter

The abandonment of the gods' care in the *Statesman*, taken that it means abandonment of *all-penetrating control* of the era of Cronus, is thus close to Plato's standard view of them. It probably means that the gods are still in position to mobilize natural forces for the sake of maintenance of moral order, however, not continuously but by extraordinary interventions, in the manner of the interventions of the Demiurge at the end of each cosmic cycle, but on a lesser scale and more frequently.⁶⁶ I will not here engage in the debate about the sincerity or seriousness of Plato's defense of the traditional anthropomorphic gods; it is sufficient that they represent constantly a specific type of causality in his dialogues, especially in the later ones, which cannot be substituted by other types, such as the Demiurge, the world soul and the mankind. The role of the lesser gods in the *Statesman*, as it appears from the scarce indications, does not diverge from Plato's more explicit statements in other dialogues.⁶⁷

I turn now to the claim that the absence of the Demiurge in the contemporary era contradicts the view of Plato's later dialogues "which rather tend to emphasize the existence of a divine *nous* that is responsible for the way our world is arranged, which is the best and most beautiful way possible" as Carone put it.⁶⁸

might produce (42 d 1–5 and the 42 e 3 f. resp.). The divine guidance over human beings is performed mainly through the divine element present in the soul, which leads those willing to follow justice and the gods left by the Demiurge in charge of the universe (*Tim.* 41 c 6 – d 1). This need not mean that the rule of these gods depends exclusively on willingness of the man to obey them; but it seems that the most manifest expression of their rule over and care of those who do not obey is punishment of their souls after death; at least according to the *Laws* (904 c–e), i. e. they do not intervene normally in human life.

⁶⁶The most impressive example of this care is the cataclysms sent by the gods to punish the degraded states according to the *Timaeus–Critias*.

⁶⁷I do not understand why Ferrari (n. 52) 394 n. 17 regards the divine teaching that saved the mankind of the inevitable perishing as evidence that these gods are not worthy of the title of the wise rulers of the universe. He also cites in support for this view the comparison between the age of Cronus and that of Zeus, which is not in favour of the latter one (272 b 1–3). Note, however, that the ES refers to the contemporary age as being 'under the rule of Zeus', according to the conventional view only (τόνδε δ' ὄν λόγος ἐπὶ Διὸς εἶναι). According to the myth, the contemporary universe is worse because of detachment of the gods and not because they are not sufficiently wise.

⁶⁸Carone (n. 3) 240 n. 4: for other passages she refers to see below n. 75.

The debate on whether the act of creation in the *Timaeus* should be understood literally or only figuratively as a depiction of the divine causality that is permanently at work in the universe, dates back to Plato's pupils. I believe the literalists' position is stronger;⁶⁹ however what matters here, is not the true meaning of the figure of the Demiurge, but only similarity or divergence of the scenario of the *Statesman* with other Plato's accounts of his role.

Now, the absence of the Demiurge from the contemporary universe is evident in the *Timaeus*: having completed his part of creation, the body of the universe and its intelligent soul (*Tim.* 30 b), the lesser gods (39 e – 41 d) and the divine part of human souls (41 d – 42 d), he orders the lesser gods to create the other parts of the souls and human bodies (41 c). From this point the Demiurge does not take part in creation.⁷⁰ His absence from

⁶⁹ For a recent defense of literal interpretation see D. J. Zeyl (tr.), *Plato, Timaeus* (Indianapolis – Cambridge 2000) XX–XXV and D. N. Sedley, *Creationism and its Critics in Antiquity*, Sather Classical Lectures 66 (Berkeley etc. 2007) 98–107. Both Brisson, *La Même et l'Autre* (n. 1) 478–496 and Carone (n. 3) 31–35 support non-temporal understanding of creation; for other prominent participants of this debate see the next note.

⁷⁰ The following passage, which was often misinterpreted, deserves special attention (*Tim.* 42 e 5–6): after creation of the perennial part of the souls the Demiurge orders the subordinate gods to create the mortal parts as well as bodies; having given the instructions, he then sojourned in his *usual state*, while the gods passed to perform the orders: Καὶ ὁ μὲν δὴ ἅπαντα ταῦτα διατάξας ἔμενεν ἐν τῷ ἑαυτοῦ κατὰ τρόπον ἦθει μένοντος δὲ νοήσαντες οἱ παῖδες τὴν τοῦ πατρὸς τάξιν ἐπεὶ θοντο αὐτῇ, καὶ λαβόντες ἀθάνατον ἀρχὴν θνητοῦ ζῴου, μιμούμενοι τὸν σφέτερον δημιουργόν, πυρὸς καὶ γῆς ὕδατός τε καὶ ἀέρος ἀπὸ τοῦ κόσμου δανειζόμενοι μόρια ὡς ἀποδοθησόμενα πάλιν, εἰς ταῦτόν τὰ λαμβανόμενα. The non-literalists, following Proclus, tend to treat ἔμενεν ἐν τῷ ἑαυτοῦ κατὰ τρόπον ἦθει as a reference to the doctrine of the *Republic* (381 e) that the god is unchangeable, and take it as a hint to the readers that the temporal act of creation violates permanent relation of the Demiurge to the universe and thus should not be understood literally (H. Cherniss, *Aristotle's Criticism of Plato and Academy I* [Baltimore 1944] 425; L. Tarán, "The Creation Myth in Plato's *Timaeus*", in: J. Anton, G. Kustas (eds.), *Essays in Ancient Philosophy* [Albany 1971] 380; M. Baltés, "Γέγονεν (Platon, *Tim.* 28 B 7). Ist die Welt real entstanden oder nicht?" [1996], in: idem, *Διανοήματα: Kleine Schriften zu Platon und zum Platonismus* [Stuttgart – Leipzig 1999] 317). On the side of literalists, G. Vlastos ("Creation in the *Timaeus*: Is it a Fiction?" [1965], in: idem, *Studies in Greek Philosophy II* [Princeton 1995] 269) argued *contra* that constancy of the god is compatible with the temporal act of creation. In my view, the dispute is groundless

the universe he created is also more or less obvious; the universe in which we live is in the charge of the world soul, who moves the heavens, and of the lesser gods, who take care of living beings (41 d 2–3; 42 e 1–4), thus it is similar to the contemporary era as presented in the *Statesman*.⁷¹

Carone admits that Demiurge in the *Timaeus*, after he had instructed the heavens how to move (36 d 4–7), “ceases his direct work on the universe”. However, she takes this as ‘the mythological literal picture’ and tries to find indications of his active rule in the contemporary universe that contradict this literal withdrawal,⁷² according to the standard strategy of non-literalists of looking for the hints in the *Timaeus* that the temporal act of creation should not be taken literally. Her attempts to find such hints are unsuccessful: it is *not* implied that the heavenly bodies continue to learn their movement from the Demiurge *after* his withdrawal; on the contrary, the text (38 e 5–6) points out unambiguously that this education was temporal and ended together with the Demiurge’s withdrawal (note the aorist participle for teaching and the aorist for learning: τό τε προσταχθὲν ἔμαθεν). By the same token, the prevalence of the νοῦς over the ἀνόγκη (48 a 2–5), which Carone cites as an analogy to the alleged

since the passage discussed does *not* imply the doctrine of unchangeable god, but on the contrary definitely points out to his transition from one state to another. It is wrong to render it as if the Demiurge ‘when his commands are given *continues in the same stay*’ (Campbell [n. 40], Introduction, XXXVIII, who opposes the Demiurge of the *Timaeus*, who acts upon everything without moving from his place, to the Demiurge of the *Statesman*, who withdraws from the universe and again returns; also Baltes, *loc. cit.*, believes that ἔμενεν means that “der Gott *immer* ‘in der seiner eigenen Art entsprehenden gewohnten Haltung/Seinsweise verharrt’”). In fact, διατάξις as the *part. aor.* should designate the action prior to that which is designated by the main verb ἔμενεν; the impf. ἔμενεν has accordingly not durative, but the inchoative force: the Demiurge having given the orders *returned* to his usual state (the μένοντος of the next sentence takes over this inchoative meaning – the lesser gods began to create when the Demiurge *again* sojourned in his usual state; it would be superfluous to mention this if the god sojourned in this state permanently during his work of creation). The passage thus points out that the Demiurge normally is not in the direct contact with the universe and that his creative activity means temporal going out of this state. Whether this corresponds to or contradicts the statement that the god is unchangeable in the *Republic* is another question.

⁷¹ Cf. Sedley (n. 69) 114, who maintains that the Demiurge according to the *Timaeus* is present in the universe not directly but due to structures, divinities and both the world and human souls he created.

⁷² Carone (n. 3) 140 f.

rule of the Demiurge in the contemporary universe in the *Statesman*,⁷³ is related in the *Timaeus* to the process of creation, not to the actual rule over universe.⁷⁴ Rather, in the *Timaeus* Plato follows consistently the plot according to which the Demiurge is active only in the process of creation, after that commissioning the rule to the lesser divine forces, as is the case in the *Statesman*. The same is true for two other later dialogues, the *Philebus* and the *Laws*, to which Carone refers for support of her view that the Demiurge is present in the contemporary universe.⁷⁵ Both dialogues carefully distinguish the creator of the universe, which is identical to the Reason, and its actual mover, the world soul, which, according to the *Laws* (897 b) at least, can choose whether to follow the reason or not.⁷⁶

⁷³ Carone (n. 3) 141.

⁷⁴ This statement is made when the story moves from the products of the Reason (νοῦς), viz. of the Demiurge, to the products of necessity; the latter had been persuaded by the Reason, “to direct the most part of the things coming to be to the best possible state” (47 e 2–5). The products the Reason are called δεδημιουργημένα (*part. perf.*); the creative role of the Demiurge is thus ends at this point. The effects of the necessity are demonstrated primarily by its role in creation, but it is beyond doubt that it continues to act in the current processes of the contemporary universe.

⁷⁵ Carone (n. 3) 240 n. 4: refers, apart from *Tim.* 46 c–e, 48 a, to *Phil.* 28 c ff., *Leg.* XII. 966 d–e, 967 d–e.

⁷⁶ The *Laws* distinguish between the soul as the ultimate cause of movement (X. 896 d – 897 b 4) and the νοῦς which is called ‘the god’ (897 b 1–2) and ‘one who has set the universe in order’ (XII. 966 e 2 – e 4). It may seem that according to the *Leg.* XII. 966 e 2–4 the divine reason not only created the universe but continues to rule it, since it controls movement of the heavenly bodies (ἐν δὲ τὸ περὶ τὴν φορὰν, ὡς ἔχει τάξεως, ἄστρων τε καὶ ὄσων ἄλλων ἐγκρατῆς νοῦς ἐστὶν τὸ πᾶν διακεκοσμηκός). However, the more detailed earlier reasoning in the book X, which is recapitulated by this statement (see 966 d 6–7) shows unambiguously that the νοῦς rules in the universe only as far as the soul follows it (νοῦν μὲν προσλαβούσα ἀεὶ θεὸν ὀρθῶς θεοῖς, ὀρθὰ καὶ εὐδαίμονα παιδαγωγεῖ πάντα, ἀνοία δὲ συγγενομένη πάντα αὐτὰ πάντα τούτοις ἀπεργάζεται, 897 b 1–4); the divine reason is thus at the reign only *qua* laying out the principles of the universe order, not as its direct ruler, exactly as in the *Statesman* and in the *Timaeus*. Similarly, the νοῦς of the *Philebus*, which represents the productive or creative causation (τὸ ποιοῦν, τὸ δημιουργοῦν, 26 e – 27 c 1) is the ruler of the universe only *qua* putting its elements in harmonic order, i. e. as its creator, not as its ruler (28 c 6 – e 6; 30 c 1–8). Carone (n. 2) 46–52 in her attempt to assimilate the world soul to the Demiurge ignores careful argumentation in favour of the opposite view by S. Menn, *Plato on the God as Nous* (Carbondale – Edwardsville, Ill. 1995).

Thus, as far as I can see, the NI, in all three variants, that of Brisson, Rowe and Carone, is not tenable in the face of text evidence. Neither is tenable the assumption that underlies it, more evident in Brisson and Carone, less in Rowe, that Plato's view of the universe in which we live ought to be more optimistic than the TI proponents believe: according to the TI, the universe in which we live *does* rotate in the direction opposite to that it has under the Demiurge's rule and it *is* liable to inevitable decay, which again makes necessary the advent of the god at the end of the contemporary era. In fact this pessimistic perspective is the most effective proof of the universe's dependence on the god, who restores, by periodic interventions, movement, life, and goodness of his creature. This might also serve as evidence for more dramatic and more profound optimism of Plato's view. Equally, we should reconcile with the awkward vision of the god's direct rule, under which the living beings are born old from the earth, develop backwards and disappear at the end, in spite of the NI proponents' attempts to bring it closer to the contemporary way of generation and development. I tried to show that these reversed processes are part of the god's machinery of restoration of the universe's youth and health, and simultaneously of restoration of moral integrity of all souls.

At the same time, the efforts to revise the traditional two-phase-view, although mistaken, have not been in vain, as they justly encourage us to reconsider the question of divine presence in the contemporary universe. There are unmistakable indications in the text that the contemporary era, deprived of the rule of the Demiurge and of the *daimones*, nevertheless has the lesser gods, who, according to Plato's standard view, continue to rule parts of the universe and the human beings in a more limited way, gradually distancing themselves from the mankind, like in other dialogues. The *Statesman* is thus fundamentally in agreement with other later dialogues (the *Timaeus*, the *Philebus* and the *Laws*) as concerns the departure of the Demiurge after the creation, the role of the world's soul as its intelligent mover, and the role of the lesser gods as guarantors of moral order in the universe. This does not mean that theology and cosmology of the *Statesman* corresponds entirely to their most important counterparts, theology and cosmology of the *Timaeus*, which does not hint at cosmic reversals, degradation of the contemporary universe and advents of the Demiurge. However, the two dialogues are related in this respect, as they both describe the universe in similar metaphysical

terms, and their differences can thus shed light on development of Plato's thought.

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Во 2-й части критического разбора “новой интерпретации” мифа в платоновском *Политике* (Л. Бриссон, Кр. Роу, К. Кароне) опровергаются попытки ее сторонников обнаружить в тексте указания на дополнительный поворот космоса и, таким образом, три фазы существования космоса, вместо двух, как это ранее понималось. Свидетельства, на которые опирается Роу, доказывая, что миф изображает современный космос вращающимся в том же направлении, что и в эру правления Демиурга, его творца, а также Бриссон и Кароне, которые полагают сверх того, что Демиург продолжает руководить миром в нашу эру, оказываются неосновательными. Ошибочна и более глубокая посылка, из которой исходят Бриссон и Кароне, стремясь отнести изображение космоса, обреченного на упадок, и спасительное вмешательство божественного творца к “промежуточной” третьей эре, а не к современной – по их мнению, подобный финал нынешней эры несовместим ни с убеждением Платона в телеологическом мироустройстве мира (*Тимей* и др. диалоги), ни с его политическими проектами переустройства общества. В действительности, несмотря на необычность для Платона подобного драматического прогноза, он вполне соответствует и его общему убеждению в смертности всего сотворенного, и более специфическому учению *Тимея* о том, что мир, будучи разрушим по своей природе, пребывает вечным, ибо такова воля его творца. Отсутствие Демиурга в современном мире и автономное вращение разумного космоса в *Политике* также находит параллель в *Тимее*, где творец, завершив свою созидательную работу, вверяет вращение космоса мировой душе, а заботу о людях низшим божествам, богам греческой традиционной религии. Напротив, пересмотр толкования двух пассажей *Политика* (271 d 1–3; 274 c–d) позволяет отвергнуть преобладающее среди традиционалистов мнение, что уход Демиурга из современного мира сопровождается исчезновением из мира и низших божеств: упразднение ими их заботы о частях мира означает лишь устранение тотального контроля, которым они обладали в правление Демиурга, но не их полное устранение от дел (см. 274 a 4–5). Боги сохраняют в какой-то мере правление над природными силами, в их ведении находятся отдельные страны; наставляя людей в ремеслах в начале современной эры, они спасают их от неминуемой гибели – в соответствии с той ролью, которая отводится им в других поздних диалогах Платона: неусыпное, но ограниченное попечение об одушевленном мире и его обитателях, предоставляющее им свободу, с богов же снимающее ответственность за зло.