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## Plato's Cosmology and Its Ethical Dimensions

Although a great deal has been written on Plato's ethics, his cosmology has not received so much attention in recent times, and its importance for his ethical thought has remained underexplored. By offering integrated accounts of *Timaeus*, *Philebus*, *Politicus*, and *Laws X*, the book reveals a strongly symbiotic relation between the cosmic and the human sphere. It is argued that in his late period Plato presents a picture of an organic universe, endowed with structure and intrinsic value, which both urges our respect and calls for our responsible intervention. Humans are thus seen as citizens of a universe that can provide a context for their flourishing even in the absence of good political institutions. The book sheds new light on many intricate metaphysical issues in late Plato, and brings out the close connections between his cosmology and the development of his ethics.

Gabriela Roxana Carone teaches at the University of Colorado at Boulder and is a Fellow of the Harvard University Center for Hellenic Studies.

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GABRIELA ROXANA CARONE

*University of Colorado at Boulder and  
Harvard University Center for Hellenic Studies*



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*A Rosa Mazzini,  
en mi recuerdo*

## Contents

<i>Preface</i>	<i>page</i> ix
1 Introduction	1
I. <i>Why Cosmology and Ethics?</i>	1
II. <i>Plato's Cosmology in the Context of the Dynamics of Plato's Thought</i>	7
III. <i>Plato's Cosmology and the Interpretation of Plato's Dialogues</i>	13
IV. <i>The Plan of this Book</i>	18
V. <i>The Order of the Dialogues</i>	22
2 Demiurgy in the <i>Timaeus</i>	24
I. <i>Introduction</i>	24
II. <i>The Philosophical Meaning of the Demiurge</i>	29
III. <i>The Ontological Status of the Demiurge</i>	42
IV. <i>Conclusion</i>	51
3 Cosmic God and Human Reason in the <i>Timaeus</i>	53
I. <i>The Cosmic God as a Model for Human Reason</i>	54
II. <i>Divine and Human Demiurgy</i>	62
III. <i>The Ethical Function of Astronomy</i>	68
IV. <i>Conclusion</i>	78
4 Creating Mixtures in the <i>Philebus</i>	79
I. <i>The Dialectical Prelude and the Context for the Cosmological Discussion</i>	81
II. <i>Cosmology and the Fourfold Classification</i>	85
III. <i>Conclusion</i>	102

5	Happiness in the Universe of the <i>Philebus</i>	103
	I. <i>Pleasure, God, and Human Life</i>	104
	II. <i>Happiness for All Humans: The Socratic Revival and the   Philebus' Educational Suggestions</i>	116
	III. <i>Conclusion</i>	122
6	Reversing the Myth of the <i>Politicus</i>	124
	I. <i>Understanding the Politicus Myth: Why does It Matter?</i>	125
	II. <i>Some Gaps in the Traditional Interpretation</i>	129
	III. <i>The States of the Cosmos Successively Presented in the Text</i>	132
	IV. <i>Autonomy and Divine Guidance</i>	141
	V. <i>Conclusion</i>	144
7	Cosmic and Human Drama in the <i>Politicus</i>	146
	I. <i>The Cosmological Significance of the Myth</i>	147
	II. <i>The Ethical and Political Meaning of the Myth</i>	153
	III. <i>Conclusion</i>	160
8	<i>Laws X</i> : First Causes and the Origin of Evil	162
	I. <i>The Priority of Soul over Body</i>	164
	II. <i>What is the Evil Soul? Some Questions</i>	170
	III. <i>The Scope of "Soul" at Laws 896e–897b</i>	172
	IV. <i>The Status of an Evil Soul at a Cosmic Level</i>	174
	V. <i>Humans, Evil, and Teleology</i>	178
9	Conclusion	189
	<i>Notes</i>	197
	<i>Bibliographical References</i>	265
	<i>Index Locorum</i>	281
	<i>General Index</i>	305

## Preface

This book is the result of many years of thought and research, and has taken on several different shapes before reaching its final version. It started as a project based on (and soon took off beyond) my Ph.D. thesis, written between 1992 and 1995. My research on Plato's cosmology goes back somewhat further, and I am happy that, as this book is coming to fruition, my *La noción de dios en el Timeo de Platón*, originally published in Buenos Aires in 1991, is due to appear in its second edition for a Spanish-speaking readership. Proper acknowledgements were made in both those productions to scholars and institutions, in Argentina and in England, which contributed to my research then. But I would like here to thank David Sedley and Richard Sorabji for their keen criticism early on. I am also grateful to Christopher Shields and Raphael Woolf, who commented on different chapters of the book, and to the anonymous referees for Cambridge University Press for their helpful suggestions. It is my pleasure to thank, in addition, the National Endowment for the Humanities for generous financial support, and the Center for Human Values at Princeton University, which has allowed me to finalise the manuscript in optimal research conditions and in an excellent collegial environment.

Previous versions of sections of this book have appeared as follows: Chapter 2, Section II.2 is based on Carone (2004c); Chapter 3, Section III is based on Carone (1997); parts of Chapter 5, Section I are based on Carone (2000); Chapter 6 is based on Carone (2004a); parts of Chapter 7 are based on Carone (1993); and parts of Chapter 8 are based on Carone (1994). I am grateful to the editors of those outlets for permission to reprint this material.

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