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### Plato's Equivocal Wisdom

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## *“Plato’s Equivocal Wisdom”*

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*Paper presented to the SAGP at its 2005 meeting with the Central Division of the APA*

Socrates and Plato do not speak or write in one voice about wisdom, yet their altogether unique theorizing about it represents the focal point of the West’s first philosophy, *philosophia* as the “love of wisdom.” Significantly, then, Plato’s differing notions and wordings for wisdom throughout his dialogues must be continually revisited and reexamined. Tentatively, I adopt Gilbert Owen’s wording and senses of “univocal” and “equivocal,” which he used in relation to Aristotle’s philosophy, only as a heuristic guide, to inquire into Plato’s own ‘equivocal’ senses of wisdom.<sup>1</sup> Because Plato has no ‘univocal’ or single-minded sense of wisdom, it is critical to revisit certain claims and assumptions about his contrasting and complementary usage of terms, their meanings, and importance for his overall theory of wisdom. By so doing, his philosophy emerges in clearer sight.

By this analysis, some of these claims are re-evaluated and overturned. Of particular interest are those views that have been formerly accepted as developing or changing from Plato’s *Republic* to the *Laws* regarding the kind of wisdom, hence also the philosophy necessary to guide the State. My interpretation diverges at key junctures from some of the standard interpretations of the meaning and significance of these changes.

First, we can agree that clear differences are to be found between Plato’s depiction of philosophical wisdom and the philosopher rulers in the *Republic* and in the *Laws*. By way of preliminary background for these changes, Plato’s depiction of the kind of philosophic wisdom necessary for political leadership, at the same time, also reflects the underlying nature, constitution, and values of their different forms of political society and government. As a result of these Platonic interconnections, Plato’s description of the nature of political society, and his characterization of philosophers as political leaders contain further reason and evidence for his making novel developments in the theory of wisdom between the *Republic* and the *Laws*. Instead of dividing and breaking away from theories in earlier dialogues, Plato’s final views actually serve to advance, broaden, and perhaps unify his overall conception of wisdom and philosophy.

A new interplay between *sophia* and *phronesis* emerges in Plato’s conception of wisdom in later dialogues that is quite different from his views in early and middle dialogues. First (*Part I*), the present inquiry shows that *sophia* no longer represents primarily theoretical, philosophic wisdom as it does in the *Republic* (and as Aristotle defines it). Rather, according to the reading and interpretation of the texts presented here, *sophia* becomes closely akin to Plato’s earlier conception of wisdom in relation to temperance (*sophrosyne*) in his Socratic dialogues, in that the highest inner harmony and virtue necessarily require *sophia* qua self-knowledge. Second (*Part II*), this analysis further aims to show that these claims about wisdom are unlike Plato’s views in other dialogues, and also unlike the accepted scholarly interpretations of the virtues in the *Laws*. Third (*Part III*), Plato implies that *phronesis* is necessary to complete *sophia*, which, as will be shown, is primarily an interpersonal type of

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<sup>1</sup>Owen, G. E. L. (1970).

virtuous wisdom. *Phronesis* does so by encompassing not only theoretical, philosophic knowledge, but for the first time, a new version of practical, political knowledge.

## PART I

As brief background to these interpretations, one may recall that according to scholarly dogma, the many fine, and precise distinctions about different sorts of human wisdom remain implicit and tentative in Plato's dialogues: It remained for Aristotle to make those distinctions explicit and precise. Moreover, it is commonly thought that *phronesis* and *sophia* are synonymous terms for Plato's notion of wisdom, and that '*sophia*' may be merely a "more honorable name" for '*phronesis*.'<sup>2</sup> Aristotle then is reputed to be the first philosopher explicitly to define *phronesis* as practical wisdom, and *sophia* as theoretical wisdom. As shown below, this standard opinion does not take into sufficient account Plato's last dialogue, the *Laws*, wherein the meaning and application of these two terms for human wisdom diverge.

This failure to recognize the ways *phronesis* and *sophia* are clearly differentiated in the *Laws* is but one example of how misconstruing Plato's theories in the *Laws*, and, in addition, the relation of the *Laws* to other dialogues prevents us from appreciating the full course and development of the Platonic conception of wisdom. From early, to middle, to late dialogues, Plato conveys diverse views of wisdom, both in theory and also as exemplified by different kinds of wise individuals, such as (a) Socrates, (b) philosopher-kings and queens in the *Republic*, and (c) philosopher-rulers and legislators in the *Laws*.

In the *Republic*, wisdom represents the highest form of philosophical knowledge and virtue. In the *Laws*, it is frequently claimed (incorrectly, as demonstrated below) that wisdom assumes some lower form. For instance, R. F. Stalley (1983) argues that Plato's "mouthpiece," the Athenian Stranger, "seems to rely on the accumulated experience of humankind rather than on any form of specialist knowledge."<sup>3</sup> One commentator, Ernst Zeller (1876) has gone so far as to claim that wisdom in the *Laws* is based *solely* on the harmony between reason and desire.<sup>4</sup> If this latter claim were valid, wisdom would become difficult to distinguish from temperance, *sophrosyne*, also commonly defined, and understood in terms of the same such harmony. Perhaps following Zeller's nineteenth-century assessment, many twentieth-century commentators also argued that in the *Laws* temperance (*sophrosyne*) is made "tantamount" to virtue, or that the other virtues, including wisdom, become subordinate to temperance.<sup>5</sup> Because inner harmony characterizes the virtue of temperance in the *Republic* and in the *Laws*, it would then appear that Plato's theory of wisdom (and consequently of all virtues) has radically changed. No longer seen as philosophical wisdom,<sup>6</sup> wisdom would then appear to be lowered to the level of mere

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<sup>2</sup> Gorgemanns, p. 154.

<sup>3</sup> Stalley, p. 48.

<sup>4</sup> Zeller, pp. 524-525, p. 529.

<sup>5</sup> Muller, pp. 16-19; Barker, p. 344; North, p. 187; Hall, p. 92; Klosko, p. 199; Stalley, p. 55.

<sup>6</sup> Zeller, pp. 529-530; cf. pp. 533-534; Stalley, p. 9, p. 30; Muller, p. 96; pp. 18-19. Gorgemanns (1960), however, calls

temperance.

Further still, another horn of this inquiry shows that, in his other dialogues, Plato appears to make no distinction between *sophia* and *phronesis*. He uses ‘*sophia*’ primarily to indicate the virtue of wisdom in the *Apology* and the *Protagoras*. In the *Republic*, Plato uses ‘*sophia*’ to indicate theoretical, philosophic wisdom (*Republic* 428c12-d3; 429a1-3). Yet he also less frequently uses the term ‘*phronesis*’ to indicate theoretical wisdom: twice for example, in the *Phaedo* (69b3; 69c1), and twice in the *Republic* (559b11; 621c6). In brief, Plato seems to use both terms synonymously when discussing wisdom as the highest and best state of knowledge and virtue.<sup>7</sup>

Because commentators have thus interpreted Plato as consistently drawing no meaningful distinction between these two terms throughout his writings,<sup>8</sup> both *phronesis* and *sophia* thereby become further wrongly equated with harmony (*symphonia*) and temperance in Plato’s last dialogue, the *Laws*. Consider the following passage:

“For without harmony (*symphonia*) ... how could even the smallest fraction of wisdom (*phronesis*) exist? It is impossible. But the greatest and best of harmonies (*symphonia*) would most properly be accounted the greatest wisdom (*sophia*)” (689d5-9).

Plato seems to use the terms, ‘*phronesis*’ and ‘*sophia*,’ interchangeably to indicate wisdom, understood here as the “best harmony,” *symphonia*. Thus, commentators<sup>9</sup> understandably find it difficult to avoid concluding that Plato equates wisdom with harmony in the *Laws*.

Yet, can it be valid to suppose that Plato would equate any virtue, such as wisdom, with the psychological state underlying that virtue within the soul, namely, harmony (*symphonia*)? Simply put, for Plato these two represent different facets of someone’s character. For instance, a virtue and its underlying psychological state are not interchangeable in theory or in actuality: One cannot collapse into or replace the other. Hence, I suggest that the difference in the meanings of *symphonia* (harmony), *phronesis*, and *sophia* (cited above: 689d5-9) can be explained by entertaining a possible paraphrase of Plato’s text as follows.

For without harmony (*symphonia*) as a condition of the human soul, how could there be any fraction of wisdom (*phronesis*) within the soul? However, the greatest condition of harmony in the soul represents the greatest self-knowledge (*sophia*)?

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this view of wisdom “meaningless,” and instead proposes that “moral insight” offers a better, and truer, meaning of *phronesis* in the *Laws*. According to his interpretation, moral insight comes from understanding the fundamental principles of law, and Plato’s *Laws* suggests that such insight is necessary to bring about the harmony of reason and desire, pp. 148-151. A more recent commentary by Zdravko Planinc (1991) also seems more consistent with an alternative interpretation of Plato’s theory of virtue in late dialogues.

7. Stalley claims Plato’s usage implicitly follows Aristotelian distinctions between *phronesis* and *sophia*, p. 48.

<sup>8</sup>Allen, R. E. (1965); Bambrough, J. R. (1965); Fine, G. (1988).

9. Specifically Muller, pp. 16-19; Gorgemanns, p. 144.

Such a paraphrase serves well to clarify the distinctions called into question by the present analysis, in that, as I strongly suggest, *phronesis* and *sophia* point to different aspects of wisdom, each of which is related uniquely to harmony, that is called “*symphonia*.” The key difference is: *Sophia* more directly implicates temperance and psychic harmony than *phronesis* does in the *Laws* (688b).<sup>10</sup>

Further evidence for this interpretation is present in the *Laws*. Consider Plato’s statement that the ‘commander’ of *symposia* (wine-drinking dinner parties) “should be wise (*phronesis*) about social gatherings.... Then the commander we set over drunken men should be sober and [self-disciplined] (*sophos*) ... [not] a commander of drunkards who was himself drunken, young, and foolish (not *sophos*)” (*Laws* 640c9-d7). These uses of ‘*phronesis*’ and ‘*sophos*’ (to indicate ‘wise’) do not seem synonymous: ‘*Phronesis*’ in this case may imply the ‘commander’s’ possession of some form of knowledge about “social groups” that is based upon experience or intellectual training, whereas ‘*sophos*’ may indicate the virtue of *sophia*, which (as discussed below) represents the greatest psychic harmony resulting from a person’s self-knowledge.

## PART II

Before this rendering of Plato’s final view of wisdom can be further defended, surely Plato’s varying notions of *sophia* need to be made more comprehensible, that is, within the context of his other dialogues. For the present analysis, it is fruitful to start with Plato’s last work, the *Laws*, and work back to his earlier dialogues.

In the *Laws* Plato implies that *sophia* primarily involves the harmony between reason and desire in the soul: “Wise (*sophos*) [is] the person who has feelings of pleasure and pain in accord with the dictates of right reason and is obedient thereto” (696c; 653b7-9). In another passage (819a), he claims that a person without extraordinary intelligence is still wise and good, if he or she possesses a harmonious soul and properly trained desires. Plato further argues:

“Those shall be held in reproach for their ignorance [my reading: ‘lack of harmony between reason and desire’], even though they be expert calculators, and trained in all accomplishments and in everything that fosters agility of soul, while those whose mental condition is the reverse of this shall be entitled ‘wise’ (*sophos*), even if – as the saying goes – ‘they spell not neither do they swim,’ and to these latter, as to persons of sense, the government shall be entrusted” (*Laws* 689c7-d10).

Here, I argue, Plato rejects his notion in the *Republic* that a philosophic, political leader must have exceptional, inborn intelligence, and also have undergone rigorous intellectual training to become good and ‘wise.’ He seems to imply that a person hardly needs to be a philosopher to rule society effectively and wisely. However, below (*Part III*) we will see why this is not the case (*Laws* 711e-9-712a4; 969b5-c5; *Republic* 473d; 515c5-516b7).

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10.Saunders argues instead that in this passage and throughout the *Laws*, *sophia* and *phronesis* are “indistinguishable,” p. 46.

Further analysis shows that Plato ultimately uses the term '*sophia*' to convey wisdom in the form of self-knowledge, and not merely as a high level of virtuous inner harmony and self-discipline (Cf. *Laws* 718e). I would suggest that this rendering of *sophia* coheres best with similar passages found in other later Platonic dialogues, --*Sophist* (230a, 233a); *Theaetetus* (176c), and in the early, so-called 'Socratic' dialogues. The passages below from the *Laws* also show Plato most insistent on this particular meaning of *sophia* in his last work:

(1) "It is from this same 'sin' [i.e., 'erroneous or excessive love of self'] that every person has derived the further notion that one's own folly is wisdom (*sophia*); whence it comes about that though we know practically nothing, we fancy that we know everything" (732a6-b4).

(2) ['Double' ignorance is when] "the folly is due to the person being gripped not by ignorance only, but also by a conceit of wisdom (*sophia*)" (863c5-7; 952c6; 962e).

Someone who has self-knowledge correctly knows what he or she can and cannot do, for only such a person has the proper assessment of his or her own abilities and specific limitations. Such a person would be least likely to overstep the boundaries of one's knowledge and capabilities. In particular, Plato argues that the immoral person lacks self-knowledge, and is thus the victim of a "double ignorance": Not only is someone ignorant; most importantly, one is deceived in thinking oneself to be wise. Plato implies that only a clear-thinking person, one possessing true self-knowledge can know what is best for oneself, and hence be a trust-worthier member of society (more trustworthy, that is, than someone without such wisdom).<sup>11</sup>

Nevertheless, although self-knowledge was a necessary condition for the virtue of *sophia* in other Platonic dialogues, it certainly was not the sufficient condition. In the *Laws*, however, self-knowledge seems to become the necessary and sufficient condition for *sophia*. Plato does not even mention '*sophia*' in relation to philosophic or theoretical wisdom in the *Laws*;<sup>12</sup> he uses '*phronesis*' for this sense of wisdom. As this analysis reveals, the *Laws* instead focuses primarily on '*sophia*' as 'self-knowledge' that is crucial for the highest psychic and interpersonal harmony. [In addition, it is interesting merely to note here, that when Plato refers to craft-knowledge (*technai*: arts, skills, and sciences), he uses the term '*sophia*' (*Laws* 677c; 689d; 747a-c).] These meanings and the present analysis of *sophia* in the *Laws*, whereby *sophia* primarily represents 'self-knowledge,' further exemplify the unique contributions of Plato's overall philosophy of wisdom and human virtue. It seems useful then to suggest that Plato's vision harks back to the nature of Socratic wisdom found in an early dialogue, the *Charmides*, wherein temperance is identified with wisdom. At one point, Socrates claims: "This is wisdom and temperance (*sophrosyne*) and self-knowledge—for someone to know what one knows, and what one does not know" (*Charmides* 167a5-6). Ultimately, Socrates appears not to accept this view, apparently because such wisdom entails ignorance in the *Charmides* (169e-170a2). Nevertheless, the understanding that both wisdom

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11. This same view reflects one aspect of wisdom in the *Republic*, namely, that *sophia* indicates genuine self-knowledge, and that only such knowledge benefits oneself in relation to others (*Republic* 442c5-8).

12. To analyze this aspect of *sophia* would entail yet another direction for inquiry and interpretation.

and temperance are equivalent to self-knowledge is again dominant in the *Laws*; yet, this theoretical connection no longer seems to fall into the same conundrums.

It would be simplistic, though tempting, to argue that Plato in the *Laws* comes to accept the view he rejects in the *Charmides*. Yet *Charmides* and the *Laws* are dialogues with very different purposes: *Charmides* aims to define ‘*sophrosyne*,’ while the *Laws* aims to define and present a different conception of wisdom, and the other virtues, for citizens, philosophers, and political society. It must be highlighted that, according to the analysis above, wisdom includes self-knowledge, but temperance need not include wisdom in the theoretical and practical Platonic senses of philosophical and political knowledge in the *Laws*.

As pertinent background, Plato espouses this same view of *sophia* in the examination of the wisdom of Socrates in the *Apology*. In particular, Socrates’ possession of self-knowledge sets him apart from others. It seems to explain the oracular statement that he was wiser than any other human being (21d9). Thus, one finds that Plato’s philosophy represents a complete circle: In these respects, anyway, it ends where it begins. Plato’s portrayal of the wisdom of Socrates points us to an inexplicable, or indeterminate, inner state of soul which Socrates himself regrettably admits to having no ‘specialist’ kind of knowledge to share, or to pass on directly to others. Socratic wisdom (*sophia*) entails both self-knowledge and ignorance, in that such wisdom includes understanding and accepting any one individual’s inherent incompleteness in the face of absolute and certain knowledge of reality.

### PART III

Now one can closely evaluate a more unorthodox view claimed by this inquiry: that is, in Plato’s *Laws*, *phronesis* may be taken as a more complete kind of wisdom. Accordingly, *phronesis* complements and extends Plato’s final view of *sophia*, which, in turn, has become primarily associated with interpersonal wisdom and virtuous self-knowledge.

First, in making the case for this view (and interpretation), note that only in the *Laws* does Plato use ‘*phronesis*’ to indicate ‘wisdom’ whenever he lists the virtues (630ab; 631c; 906b3; 964b6; 965d2; also, in the listing in *Sophist* 247b1). Plato also seems to use ‘*phronesis*’ to indicate the virtue of comprehensive human wisdom regarding both theoretical and practical reason. Gorgemanns’ key commentary on the *Laws* (1960) seems to add credibility to the view at hand, for he argues that, in the *Laws*, *phronesis* and *nous* (reason) are often interchangeable words and virtues (631c6; 631d5; cf. 961e1-962c3; 963a11-b3).<sup>13</sup> However, this otherwise important observation can be taken too far, as Gorgemanns and Stephen Menn (1996) seem to do, by construing the connection between *nous* (mind; reason) and wisdom simply to imply that Plato equates human reason itself with its corresponding virtue, namely, *phronesis*.<sup>14</sup>

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13. Gorgemanns, pp. 152-153.

14. Like all virtues, *phronesis*, as the virtue of wisdom, is attainable only by human beings, precisely because our mind and reasoning is nothing neither more nor less than human, though capable of having divine aspirations. Further, see recent work of Stephen Menn, (1992; 1995).



Second, to the contrary, *nous* (reason) seems to have a wider range of meaning and import than is found in Plato's usage and meaning of the term and virtue of *phronesis*. For instance, in the *Laws*, *nous* means:

- (1) to simply have sense or reason (see 693b4, c3, c7, with 701d9; 687e5-7 with 688b6-7; 688e6-7 with 687e8-9);
- (2) the immortal element of mind in human beings (713e8-714a2);
- (3) divine reasoning embodied in legislation (713e);
- (4) the cosmic and divine principle of Mind in the universe (Book X).

The most telling evidence to advance the interpretation (as I propose here) is that, only in Plato's *Laws* does wisdom qua *phronesis* come to encompass practical philosophical and political "knowledge" (*Laws* 951b), as possessed by philosopher-lawmakers and rulers (961d-962; 964d3-10; 963a9-10; 965a1-2). By contrast, in the *Republic*, Plato uses '*sophia*' to indicate the philosophical, political virtue of wisdom (428c12-d3; cf. 429a1-3).

Further, unlike Plato's theory in the *Republic*, in the *Laws*, Plato's theory of *phronesis* (wisdom) also includes the newly formulated philosophical arts of judicial and aesthetic judgment (659a4; 656a2; 690b10; cf. 627e-628a5), legal rhetoric, and, most important, the art of law making. Finally, the complete wisdom of philosopher-rulers and legislators is also to include, or be derived from, philosophical, dialectical understanding of unchanging reason and principles underlying legislation, the cosmos, and the gods (967d4-968a4).

In the *Laws*, the practical aspect of wisdom, as included in the term and virtue of *phronesis*, is directed at the political art of legislation. Both the practical political arts, and the philosophical training and knowledge of philosopher-rulers aim to impart the ability to be "expert" legislators, who create and change law for the better (see 770a5-10; 770b4-c1; 769a9-e1; 803a; 858a-b). The Nocturnal Council is the central legislative body of the government of the State in the *Laws* (964c-e).<sup>15</sup> All members of this Council hold political and legal offices and possess significant political skill, experience, and powers. These legislative, ruling officials of the State must face their own challenge when pursuing political wisdom: to target and to hit the overriding aim of the many particular and diverse laws of the State. As Plato states, "If someone were to be plainly ignorant as regards the political mark to be aimed at, would that person, first of all, deserve the title of magistrate, and secondly, ... be able to secure the salvation of that object concerning the aim of which one knows nothing at all (962a8-b2)?" Because of their practical, political training along with their philosophical studies, Plato believes that the Nocturnal Council would be better able to comprehend the overall aim of legislation and to find the means to implement it (962b1-c2; cf. 962d7-

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15. Barker thinks that the Nocturnal Council contains 40 members, p. 400, Note #2. Morrow claims that the number of members is "much smaller" than 75, p. 223.



963a5).<sup>16</sup>

The other key aspect of the philosopher's legislative and executive wisdom is rhetoric.<sup>17</sup> Rhetoric is the art needed to fulfill the central practical aim of legislation to impart virtue, and thereby to bring about both individual and social justice in individuals and in society. Plato observes, "For of all studies, that of legal regulations, provided they be rightly framed, will prove the most efficacious in making the learner a better person; for were it not so, it would be in vain that our divine and admirable law bears a name akin to reason" (957c3-10; 714a; 835a).<sup>18</sup> Hence, rhetorical Prefaces before the laws must be written that aim to instill well-reasoned virtue and principled citizens, and to instill mutual understanding and respect between citizens and their elected officials.<sup>19</sup> Otherwise, social and political harmony in the State would not be achieved rationally or freely.

For citizens to become just, Plato's *Laws* strongly maintains that citizens must do more than internalize the actual restrictions and allowances of the *Laws* themselves. It is equally important, or even more so, that they internalize the rationale underlying laws. Thus, the political, philosophical arts of law making and rhetoric are indispensable parts of the wisdom (*phronesis*) of philosopher-rulers, if they are to fulfill one of the central aims of legislation. Along with civic friendship, "the lawgiver must try to implant in the state as much wisdom (*phronesis and sophia*) as possible (688b3; 687e8; 688e5; 693c4).

In addition, for Plato, one cannot understand the world, oneself, and human society without ongoing investigations and theoretical accounts along cosmologic and theological lines. Recall that in *Phaedo* Plato argued that when the soul communes with the unchanging Forms, it is in a state "called wisdom" (79d1-8). Thus, Book X of the *Laws* attempts to demonstrate that when the philosopher contemplates and understands how the Rational World-Soul communes with the Forms and the Good, his or her soul will be in a state called 'wisdom.' My examination (1993) stands in contrast to the common interpretation that Plato's theology is essential more for the good of the State than for its own intrinsic value: Contrary to the claims of other scholars on Plato's *Laws*, such as Stalley (1983), Planinc

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16. Plato likens the philosopher-ruler of the Council to an expert crafts-person, since both must know the "one" in order to organize everything with a single eye towards it (965b5-c4).

17. In contrast to the *Laws*, in the *Statesman* Plato argued that the art of rhetoric does not specifically belong to art of the *Statesman* (304c8-e1).

18. Plato makes a rhetorical pun between '*nous-nomos*' ('reason-law'), even though there is no valid etymological connection between these two words.

19. According to Plato's view, virtue results primarily from rational persuasion and the educative factor of an explanatory rhetorical Preface before the explicit statement of the law, rather than from the actual statement and force of the law (see 718b; 811d-e).

(1991), Seung (1996), without his theology, Plato does not have a complete theory of wisdom, of virtue, or of philosophic leadership in the *Laws*.<sup>20</sup>

### **Conclusion**

Ultimately, for Plato, this strikingly broad view of wisdom in the *Laws* is consistent with a life-long effort to articulate common links between practical and theoretical knowledge, on the one hand, and virtue on the other. The possession of philosophical wisdom always involves more than knowing that something is true, good, and just, and even more than knowing why. The possession of practical wisdom necessarily involves the ability to implement this knowledge in practice in one's own life, in human society, and in relation to gods (see *Republic* 539d8-540b10; 509a). In light of these diverse readings and their interpretations, one discovers a new interplay between *sophia* and *phronesis* in Plato's theory of wisdom in the *Laws*, one that is quite different both from Plato's earlier views of wisdom, and from Aristotle's distinctions between practical and theoretical wisdom.

To recapitulate the findings of the foregoing analysis, Plato's final theorizing shows critical developments and refinements. Notably, *sophia* no longer represents primarily a theoretical, philosophical wisdom, as it does in the *Republic*, and as it becomes exclusively defined by Aristotle. Rather, *sophia* is closely akin to Plato's own earlier conception of wisdom in relation to temperance in his Socratic dialogues. In his final view of these same virtues, Plato still maintains that the highest (or best) inner harmony requires *sophia*, which is to be understood as psychic and interpersonal self-knowledge. Yet, unlike his previous views, Plato prefigures Aristotle in his notion of *phronesis*. In the *Laws*, *phronesis* is thereby necessarily enlarged in definition, broadened in range and application, because it represents the wisdom and philosophy required for philosophers, qua lawmakers and rulers, to meet the requirements of a partly democratic society, government, and citizenry.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> VanHoutte, p. 392; Gorgemanns, p. 193. As an aside, Christopher Bobonich has written up his findings on Plato's late dialogues and the *Laws* (*Plato's Utopia Recast*, 2002), though I have not yet read this work. However, at the *American Philosophical Association*, Pacific Meetings, Los Angeles, March 1990, for the Group *Symposium*, "The Contemporary Assessment of Plato," I presented to Bobonich, and other attendees, a lengthy synopsis of my doctoral dissertation, "The Virtues of the *Laws*" (1988-89), particularly these new interpretations of the *Laws*. During my paper presentation, and afterwards, a 40-minute question and answer period ensued, primarily with Bobonich. At that past time, at any rate, he strongly disagreed with my findings, and insisted he preferred the standard scholarly, classicist, and philological interpretations of Plato's *Laws* and the later dialogues. I strongly encouraged him to check the pertinent textual passages in question as cited in my doctoral thesis, during and after my presentation. After this length of time, Bobonich may well have come around full circle to adopt such views and interpretations for himself.

<sup>21</sup> Lenzi (1989; 1997).

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