

Equality and Justice in Early Greek Cosmologies: The Paradigm of the “Line of the Horizon”

MARIA ANTONIETTA SALAMONE — PhD, Professor
University Complutense of Madrid
(Madrid, Spain)

E-mail: salamonema@filos.ucm.es

*The founders of Greek scientific thought believed justice in terms of equality. Cosmic equality, in fact, was conceived as the guaranty of cosmic justice: the order of nature is maintained because it is an order of equals. That the main components of the universe are equal was an old tradition in popular cosmology. In Hesiod earth and sky are declared equal (Theog. 126); and the distance between sky and earth is equal to that between earth and Tartarus (ibid. 719-25). Anaximander’s own cosmology is designed with just such a sense of aesthetic symmetry, with equality as the main motif: the intervals between each of the infinite worlds are equal; the intervals between earth, fixed stars, moon, and sun are also equal; earth and sun are equal. This is exactly the sense in which equality figures in the whole development of early cosmological theory from Anaximander to Empedocles: powers are equal if they can hold another in check, in a way that no one of them is more powerful than any other. The objective of this paper is to propose a cosmological interpretation of the term dikē in ancient Greek according to Aristotle, who establishes synonymy between justice and equality through the use of the «dividing line» paradigm. Aristotle reveals, in effect, that the words dikastēs «judge» and dikaion «just» come from the root dikē, «judgment or sentence», which in their turn are derived from the adverb dīksā, «division into two equal parts». Moreover, the adverb dīksā comes from the Greek root dīs-, «divided into two parts, dichotomous», which in its turn is derived from the Sanskrit root *diś-(dik) whose meaning indicates the astronomical concept of the «horizon line», — i.e. the boundary line that divides apparently the cosmos in two equal parts, the Earth and the Sky. As said by Palmer and Gagarin, in effect, the meaning of the word Dikē is associated with making a «judgment or decision» between two contestants, that is, placing a «dividing line» (straight or crooked) between them. Furthermore, this original conception representing justice as a division of the cosmos into two equal parts, or cosmic dasmós, has its roots in ancient cosmogony not only Greek but also Indo-Iranian, Hindus, Old Persian, Egyptian, Babylonian and Chinese. To conclude, according to my research, also Plato could have used the paradigm of the «Line of the horizon» to explain his cosmological Doctrine of Ideas.*

Key Words: Plato, Aristotle, Dikē, Justice, Equality, Dividing Line, Horizon Line, Cosmology

*It is as though there were a line divided into unequal parts,
and he took away that by which the greater segment exceeds the half,
and added it to the smaller segment.
And when the whole has been equally divided,
then they say they have their own, — i.e. when they have got what is equal.
Aristotle*

The traditional etymology of *dikē* is that it is derived from the root **deik-* of the verb *deiknymi*, «to show or point out», whence *dikē* comes to mean «indication, direction, way, custom». Émile Benveniste, connects *dikē* also with Lat. *dico*, and concludes that *deiknymi*,

© Salamone, Maria Antonietta, 2017

must originally have meant «montrer verbalement» and *dikē* thus originally meant «le fait de montrer avec autorité de parole ce qui doit être»: “Il s’agit d’une racine *deik-* qui donne respectivement *di-* en sanskrit, *diś* — en iranien, *dico-* en latin, *deiknumi-* en grec. Mais ces formes, si exactement correspondantes, ne concordent pas dans leur sens, puisque gr. *deiknumi* signifie «montrer» et lat. *dico* «dire». Il faudra donc arriver, par un travail d’analyse, à dégager le sens qui expliquera que *dike* ait le sens de «justice». (...) Ces indications permettent de préciser le sens initial de gr. *dike*, en tant que terme d’institution. En comparant les formes skr. *diś* et lat. *dicis causa*, on voit que *dix* énonce cette fonction comme normative; *dicis causa* signifie “selon l’énonciation formelle”, ou comme nous disons “pour la forme”. On rendra donc *dix* littéralement comme «le fait de montrer avec autorité de parole ce qui doit être», c’est-à-dire la prescription impératif de justice” [Benveniste, 1969: 107-110]. Leonard Robert Palmer excluded this derivation arguing that there is nothing in Homer or Hesiod to indicate these original meanings, though strictly speaking we cannot rule out the possibility that *dikē* originally had some connection with *dico*: “There is little doubt about the basic meaning of this root **deik*, which is exemplified in the verb *deiknymi* ‘I show, point out’. The root is widespread in many languages: for instance the German word *Zeichen* = ‘sign, mark’ is cognate with our token. In Latin, too, the original significance ‘show, point out’ is present in such derivatives as ‘index, *indicare*’. The most common sense of the verb *dico* is, of course, the secondary one, ‘to say’, a development for which we have seen many parallels. But the original significance ‘to point out’, is present in such phrases as ‘*iis istarn viam dico*’. Examples from many languages show that the semantic field of this root bears a striking resemblance to that of *modus*, *mark*, and the rest. But we should note that Greek shows no trace of the development ‘to say’, and so *dikē* cannot mean ‘pronouncement’ of the judge. Greek is faithful to the primary significance of the root ‘mark, indicate’, and so we must postulate for *dikē* the primary significance mark or indication” [Palmer, 1950: 157-158]. Rudolf Hirzel, also rejected this derivation on the grounds that the meaning «judgment, decision» is predominant in the *Iliad*, whereas the meaning «custom, way» only appears in the *Odyssey* and therefore must be a later development. He thus connects *dikē* with the verb *dikein*, “throw or strike”, and says it originally meant the «throw» of the judge’s staff in rendering a decision, and thence came to mean «decision». Though this conclusion is almost certainly wrong, Hirzel was right to emphasize the meaning «legal decision, judgment» and to call for a re-examination of the traditional etymology. A new approach has been suggested by Palmer, who argues that *dikē* must be understood from the position it occupies in the semantic field disclosed by the study of Greek contexts; in fact, Palmer shows, on the analogy of words of similar meaning in other languages, two basic meanings for *dikē* developed separately from this root **deik* [Palmer, 1950: 153-154]:

(a) Mark:

indication; point out, say.
characteristic.
aim, goal, winning post; throw.

(b) Boundary mark:

(of space) limit; measure; territory.
(of time) opportune moment, appointed time, season, year.
(metaphorical) dividing line, decision, judgement.

From (a) developed the meanings «characteristic, traditional, proper behaviour»; from (b) the meanings associated with making a «decision or judgment» between two contestants, that is, placing a «dividing line» (straight or crooked) between them. Palmer confirms that *dikē* does not mean «pronouncement of the judge» but in the sense of «boundary mark and dividing line» forms an integral part of that coherent structure of ideas occurs elsewhere in the Indo-European world and so justifies the postulate of an Indo-European origin. In ancient Greek, in effect, “*this underlying notion of a judgment as the drawing of a line is made particularly explicit by Theognis, who writes, 453 ff: I must decide this dikē by carpenter’s line and set square*” [Palmer, 1950: 159]. Gagarin follows the conclusions of Palmer for the most part, and describes the semantic field of the word: “*Dikē originally meant «boundary, dividing line», in particular the dividing boundary between two pieces of land or between any two property claims, the line being either «straight» or «crooked». From this meaning developed the use of dikē as a «ruling» or «settlement» which might be made (or merely proposed) between two parties in any dispute. Now the way in which these settlements were arrived at was somewhat different from what we know as judicial litigation today, and thus we must look briefly at the early Greek method of litigation. The process was as follows: when two parties had a dispute over land or other property (cattle, a wife, a murdered kinsman, etc.), they could settle the matter by force. If, however, they desired a peaceful settlement dikē, but could not agree to a settlement by themselves, they might agree to look for a third, disinterested person to propose a settlement (dikázein). They might agree to abide by the opinion of a particular judge (dikáspolos), or they might solicit proposals for settlements from several people and agree to abide by the one most acceptable to both sides (the straightest). In the process, each litigant might propose his own settlement (presumably in his own interest), and this proposal (or plea) would be his dikē. One important element in this process is dikē, an effective peaceful system for settling disputes. The people must submit to dikē, shun violence, and keep to their sworn oaths; the kings must administer dikē wisely and honestly. Straight settlements result in manifold benefits; crooked settlements lead to general decay*” [Gagarin, 1973: 81-94].

So that, according to Palmer and Gagarin, *Dikē* means a boundary mark and more specifically a dividing line. But so fundamental a word of the moral vocabulary is not isolated. It implies a peculiar *Weltanschauung* which must reveal itself in other expressions dealing with the same sphere of ideas. If this idea of boundary or limit is focal, then we should expect to find that other terms for moral ideas harmonize with it. I shall try to demonstrate that such a structure, such a harmony, exist in Greek philosophy; and, further, that it occurs in so peculiar a form that it justifies a conclusion about Indo-European etymological origins of the word. Chiefly we note that the just man is *endikos* quite literally *he remains “within his marks or limits”*; unlike his opposite, who is *ekdikos*. But what are these limits? They are the limits of his proper portion or allotment, his *Moirai*. Thus in Homer, and Ionian thought generally, we find a profound belief in Destiny (*Moirai*) as an ordinance which limits all individuals powers, whether human or divine; and we see, moreover, that this ordinance is even more a decree of moral obligation than a barrier of sheer physical impossibility.

In fact, according to Francis Macdonald Cornford, Greek cosmological, political, and moral thinking was dominated by this notion of appointed portions and proper limits: “*The framework of primitive religious representation in Greek polytheism or polydaemonism is a system of departments (moirai) clearly marked off from one another by boundaries of inviolable taboo, and each (department) the seat of a potency which pervades that department, dispenses its power with it, and resists encroachments from without*” [Cornford, 1991: 38]. And again:

“We have dwelt upon these details in order to bring out the fact that behind the familiar sense of Nomos, custom, use, law, lie traces of an older spatial significance — the notion of a range or province, within which defined powers may be legitimately exercised — what the Romans meant by a provincia. This aspect of idea has become obscured to us owing to the prevalence of the scientific notion of Law, which has become associated with causal sequences in time and has lost its old connection with space. For the understanding of the Greek world, it is necessary to grasp that Nomos does not suggest uniformity of temporal sequence, but exercise of power, within spatial or departmental boundaries. We must think of Law as a dispensation or system of provinces, within which all the activities of a community are parcelled out, and coordinated” [Cornford, 1991: 30]. Cornford had pointed that for Greek religious representation, no less than for early philosophy, the most significant truth about the universe is that it is portioned out into a general scheme of allotted provinces or spheres of power: *“The elements came into possession of their fixed regions when the first limits were set up by the eternal motion within the primary undifferentiated mass, called by Anaximander the limitless thing. The Gods had their provinces by the impersonal appointment of Lachesis or Moira. The world, in fact, was from very early times regarded as the kingdom of Destiny and (in the sense we have defined) of Law. Necessity and Justice — must and ought — meet together in this primary notion of Order, a notion which Greek religious representation is ultimate and unexplained”* [Cornford, 1991: 40]. Yet, if we reflect upon it, we shall see that some explanation is called for. In fact, Cornford explains that *“Primitive beliefs about the nature of the world were sacred (religious and sacred) beliefs, and the structure of the world was itself a moral or sacred order, because, in certain early phases of social development, the structure and behaviour of the world were held to be continuous with — a mere extension or projection of the structure and behaviour of human society. The human group and the departments of Nature surrounding it were unified in one solid fabric of morai — one comprehensive system of custom and taboo. The divisions of Nature were limited by moral boundaries, because they were actually the same as the divisions of society”* [Cornford, 1991: 55].

It is clear that early Greek notion of justice lends itself with seductive ease to application far beyond the bounds of politics and morals. To respect the nature of anyone or anything is to be “just” to them. To impair or destroy that nature is “violence” or “injustice.” Thus, in a well-known instance, Solon speaks of the sea as “justness” when, being itself undisturbed by the winds, it does not disturb anyone or anything. The law of the measure is scarcely more than a refinement of this idea of one’s own nature and of the nature of others as restraining limits, which must not be overstepped. Cosmic justice is a conception of nature at large as a harmonious association, whose members observe, or are compelled to observe, the law of the measure. There may be death, destruction, strife, even encroachment (as in Anaximander). There is justice nonetheless, if encroachment is invariably repaired and things are reinstated within their proper limit. The founders of Greek scientific thought believed harmony in terms of equality, to the point of identifying the concept of *dikē* with the concept of equality. In fact, cosmic equality was conceived as the guaranty of cosmic justice: the order of nature is maintained because it is an order of equals. *“That the main components of the universe are equal was an old tradition in popular cosmology. In J1. xv it is implied that the heavens, the sea, and “the murky darkness” are equal, since their respective lords are equals in “rank” and “portion.” In Hesiod earth and heavens are declared equal (Theog. 126); and the distance between heavens and earth is equal to that between earth and Tartarus (ibid. 719-25). Such ideas are mainly without even a semblance of physical justification. They boldly read into the universe that feeling for symmetry and balance which makes the Odyssey speak of a well-made*

ship as “equal” and of a wise, balanced mind also as “equal.” Anaximander’s own cosmology is designed with just such a sense of aesthetic symmetry, with equality as the main motif: the intervals between each of the infinite worlds are equal; the intervals between earth, fixed stars, moon, and sun are also equal; earth and sun are equal; the two land-masses of the earth — Asia and Europe— are equal, and the two great rivers in each are equal and divide the regions through which they flow into equal parts. To cap all this with the equality of the opposites which constitute this world would be in fine harmony with the whole design. The argument in *Phys.* 204 b 24-29 takes us beyond this aesthetic presumption into physical reasoning: *If one of the opposites were boundless, it would not only mar the architectonic elegance of the cosmology but would positively “destroy” the other opposites. Why so? Because — as we know from Fragment 1— the opposites are constantly encroaching upon one another. If one of them were limitless, there would be no stopping it by the rest, singly or in combination, for they are all limited. Its encroachment would continue until the rest were destroyed*” [Vlastos, 1947: 168-169]. This is exactly the sense in which equality figures in the whole development of early cosmological theory from Anaximander to Empedocles. Powers are equal if they can hold another in check so that none can gain “mastery” or “supremacy” or in Alcmaeon’s terms, “monarchy” over the others. So that, if this equality of the main components of the universe is maintained, justice is assured, for no opposite will be strong enough to dominate another. When encroachment occurs, it will be compensated by “reparation,” as, e.g., in the seasonal cycle the hot prevails in the summer, only to suffer commensurate subjection to its rival in the winter. Gregory Vlastos says that we can speak of the work of Anaximander and his successors, as the naturalization of justice: *“Justice is no longer inscrutable Moira, imposed by arbitrary forces with incalculable effect. Nor is she the goddess Dike, moral and rational enough, but frail and unreliable. She is now one with “the ineluctable laws of nature herself”;* *Hesiod’s Dike, she could no more leave the earth than the earth could leave its place in the firmament*” [Vlastos, 1947: 174].

So that, given a society of equals, it was assumed, justice was sure to follow, “for none would have the power to dominate the rest”. This assumption had a strictly physical sense. It was accepted not as a political dogma but as a theorem in physical inquiry. It is, nonetheless, remarkable evidence of the confidence, which the great age of Greek democracy possessed in the validity of the democratic idea, a confidence so robust that it survived translation into the first principles of cosmology. It was Plato, the bitter critic of Athenian democracy, who carried through the intellectual and political revolution to a successful conclusion: the idea of republic. In his system, we find at last the explicit and thoroughgoing negation of Anaximander’s equalitarian universe. In fact, also for Plato, equality is an equivalence relation, that is to say one that is transitive, symmetric and reflexive. Equivalence classes pick out classes of people or things that are the same, or similar, in some respect or other. There are many such, and we need to specify in respect of what two things are or are not equivalent before we are saying, or asking, anything definite. I can be equivalent to you in respect of age, or height, or weight, and many equivalence classes — contemporaries, coreligionists, comrades — may be of great importance socially or politically. But equality, for Plato, is more than just an expression of sameness. It suggests also a possibility of being either more than or less than. I can be the same age as you, but if I were not, I should be either older than you, or younger. With human beings, however, there are rather few respects in which we can be properly measured. Age, height and weight apart, the ascription of most numerical measures is a dubious affair. That’s why Plato distinguished “geometrical equality” (same shape) from “arithmetical equality” (same size), and reckoned the former to be of great cogency among

Gods and men, while the latter led to the great injustice of assigning equal shares to equals and unequal’s alike.

Aristotle took over the distinction, and elucidated justice in terms of “proportionate equality”. In the Fifth Book of the *Nicomachean Ethics*, Aristotle establishes a link, even etymological, between justice, law, equality — so that it will be said that a law is politically just or right when it establishes a certain form of equality among citizens — and distinguishes between two kinds of justice in view of the kind of equality that is to be carried out: on the one side, distributive justice, on the other side, corrective justice. Distributive justice refers principally to the distribution of political and economic rights and duties among citizens, while corrective justice regulates in a normative way the private relations among citizens consequently punishing those who violate the laws. As regards distributive justice Aristotle manifests that, as it is difficult come to an agreement about the “criterion” that has to be adopted at the time of distributing economic and political rights and duties among citizens — but democrats put it in liberty, oligarchs in wealth and aristocrats in virtue — the medium term of distributive justice has to be a mean proportional among the three types of criteria (in a way that *no one of them is more powerful than any other*); and the unjust is what violates this proportionate equality. Corrective justice, in turn, has two dimensions: one that regulates the transactions that citizens establish among them voluntarily, such as the contracts of purchase, sale, loan for consumption, loan for use, deposit, letting, etc. (commutative justice); and another that disciplines those relations that citizens establish or suffer involuntarily and that can be fraudulent or violent, such as theft, fraud, assassination, false witness, defamation, insult, etc. (restorative justice). Aristotle tries to prove that, in each of these parts of justice, the proportionate equality is determined by calculating a mean proportional, either geometrical (*mesotēs*), or arithmetical (*meson*), according to what is said about distributive or corrective justice [Salamone, 2014: 207-221].

From an etymological point of view, Aristotle reveals that the words *dikastēs* «judge» and *dikaion* “just” come from the root *dikē*, “judgment or sentence”, which in their turn are derived from the term *diksē*, “in two parts, bisection”, and from the adverb *dīksā*, “division into two equal parts”. Here is the famous text in which Aristotle establishes synonymy between justice and equality, through the use of the «dividing line» paradigm: “*Therefore, the equal is intermediate between the grater and the less, but the gain and the loss are respectively grater and less in contrary ways; more of the goods and less of the evil are gain, and the contrary is loss; intermediate between them is, as we saw, the equal, which we say is just; therefore corrective justice will be the intermediate between loss and gain. This is why, when people dispute, they take refuge in the judge; and to go to the judge is to go to justice; for the nature of the judge is to be a sort of animate justice; and they seek the judge as an intermediate, and in some states they call judge mediators, on the assumption that if they get what is intermediate they will get what is just. The just, then, is an intermediate, since the judge is so. Now the judge restores equality; it is as thought there were a line divided into unequal parts, and he took away that by which the grater segment exceeds the half, and added it to the smaller segment. And when the whole has been equally divided, then they say they have their own — i.e. when they have got what is equal. The equal is intermediate between the greater and the lesser line according to arithmetical proportion. It is for this reason also that it is called just (dikaion), because it is a division into two equal parts (dīksā), just as if one were to call it diksaion; and the judge (dikastēs) is one who bisects (diksastēs)*” [Aristotle, 1949]. Aristotle repeats with great insistence that the just is the equal, and this is therefore the first and fundamental notion of justice and law in him who, in his special mathematical phraseology, discusses the identification of justice with the idea of division into two equal parts. Actually, the adverb *dīksā*

used by Aristotle comes from the Greek root *dís-*, “divided into two parts, dichotomous”, which in its turn is derived from the Sanskrit root word **diś-(dik)* whose meaning especially indicates the astronomical concept of the «Line of the Horizon», *that is to say the apparent boundary line that divides the cosmos into two equal parts: the Earth and the Sky* [Salamone, 2013: 307-327].

In point of fact, in Monier’s dictionary (1964: 479-480) all terms that come from the Sanskrit root **diś-(dik)* — *2 f. quarter or region pointed at, direction, cardinal point* — refer to the concept of the “Line of the Horizon”, which is the line that divides apparently the cosmos in two equal parts, the Earth and the Sky; the Horizon line also divides the Sky into four equal regions (the four cardinal directions or cardinal points, which are the directions of north, east, south, and west, commonly denoted by their initials: N, E, S, W):

– *dik-kanyā*, f. a quarter of the sky deified as a young virgin;

– *dik-kara*, mf (ī) n. youthful, juvenile = aruṇa (as making a the sun) *dik-karin*, m. elephant of the quarter, one of the mythical elephants which stand in the four or eight quarters of the sky and support the earth;

– *dik-cakra*, n. the circuit of the quarter of the compass, the horizon;

– *dik-chabda*, m. a word denoting a direction;

– *dik-tata*, m. the line of the horizon, remotest distance;

– *dik-tás*, ind. from the regions of the sky;

– *dik-tulya*, mfn. having the same direction;

– *dik-pati*, m. a regent or guardian of a quarter of the sky;

– *dik-patha*, m. the path of the horizon, the surrounding region or quarter;

– *dik-pravibhāga*, m. a quarter, direction;

– *dik-préksana*, n. looking round in all directions;

– *dik-śūla*, n. sky-spear, any inauspicious planetary conjunction;

– *dik-srakti*, mfn. having the angles or corners towards the quarters of the compass;

Actually, all these terms *indicate* specifically:

(a): the Line of the Horizon;

(b): the region or direction of the sky lying under any of the four divisions of the Horizon;

(c): one of the four parts of the sky into which the Horizon is divided or the cardinal point corresponding to it;

(d): a compass point or direction other than the cardinal points;

(e): a point, direction, or place not definitely identified.

As a matter of fact, both the astronomical description of the sky divided into four parts — “a quarter of the Sky” — and the geometric description of the four cardinal points — “the circuit of the quarter of the compass” — indicate the rational Horizon which is defined as the great circle of the celestial sphere whose plane passes through the centre of the Earth and is parallel to the sensible Horizon of a given position. But what is the connection between the concept of the Horizon Line and the idea of Justice? Is it possible that the Line of the Horizon refers precisely to the cosmological and moral concept of equality, which is determinate metaphorically by the division of the universe into two equal parts, Sky and Earth? This interpretation is coherent with the Anaximander’s cosmology; Palmer seems to confirm this hypothesis when he says that, from an etymological point of view, the core of the idea of justice revolves around the cosmological concept of division/distribution of the universe; Palmer also explains that this idea comes from the Greek cosmogony which Alcman, the oldest poet of the Greek choral lyric, writes about in his Partheneion. In this work, Alcman speaks of the cosmological myth of *Aisa* “the part, the assigned destiny” and *Poros* “apportionment, destiny, the allotted portion”: the two primal principles or Gods who realized the primary act of distributive justice, in other words the first

major division of the universe into two parts (the Sky and Earth), which Cornford postulated as prior to the emergence of the Olympian dynasty in the world. From a moral and political standpoint the myth is condensed in the maxim “*let no man fly to heaven or attempt to marry Aphrodite*” and expresses an important feature of archaic Greek morality: the necessity to not go beyond one’s own limits, to avoid falling into excess and to adequately fulfil the role or the part assigned by *Moirai*. Greek morality is actually governed by the precept “*know yourself and do not go too far away*”: *pleonexia* is going too far away, or “having greater portion of destiny than just assigned”, *hybris*, or “falling into excess” or transgression, invasion of the sphere which another person is entitled to occupy completely.

According to Cornford and Palmer, actually, this original conception representing justice as a divine division of the cosmos into two equal parts, or cosmic *dasmós*, turns out to be both spatial (Sky is separated from Earth) and temporal (day is split from night), and has its roots in ancient cosmogony not only Greek but also Indo-Iranian, Hindus, Old Persian, Egyptian, Babylonian and Chinese: “*Before cosmology were cosmogony and theogony. Becoming was conceived as birth, and birth is the result of marriage. The primal marriage in the early cosmogonies is the union of Sky and Earth, represented in anthropomorphic religion of historic times by the ritual marriage of Zeus, or Jupiter, and his female partner. But Sky and Earth cannot meet in fruitful marriage till they have first been sundered from their original unity of form. The cosmogonies open, not with the marriage, but with the separation of Earth and Sky.*” [Cornford, 1991: 66].

The representation is this: the world began as an undifferentiated mass, without internal boundaries or limits (the Anaximander’s boundless universe). This mass separated into two parts, Earth and Sky, which were opposed or contrary, male and female. Finally the male and female were united by Eros, the contraries were combined, and gave birth to individual existence to Gods, or to things [Hesiod, 2006: 126]. In agreement to the ancients, in fact, “*Earth and Sky were one, as Melanippe the Wise, in Euripides, had learnt from her half-divine mother:*

*It is not my word, but my mother’s word.
How Heaven and Earth were once one form; but stirred,
And strove, and dwelt asunder far away:
And then, re-wedding bore unto the day
And light of life all things that are, the trees,
Flowers, birds, and beasts, and them that breathe the seas,
And mortal man, each in his kind and law*

*The Orphic cosmogony used by Apollonius Rhodius tells the same tale. In the Babylonian cosmogony, from which that of Genesis is derived, Marduk cut into two pieces the monstrous Tiamat, and one half of her he set in place, he spread out as heaven. The primitive Egyptian, likewise, described ‘Shu’ as separating the Sky (Nut) from the Earth (Seb). In the Taoism of China, an original Chaos splits of its own accord into the two opposed moieties called ‘Yang’ and ‘Yin’, the regions of light and darkness associated with heaven and earth” [Cornford, 1991: 67]. Moreover, in my view, in the *The Republic* Plato uses the paradigm of the “Line of the Horizon” to explain his cosmological doctrine of Ideas, that is to say the epistemic process which, from the darkness of the *doxa* itself of the sensible world, moves progressively toward the light of *episteme*, of the intelligible world, thanks to the use of mathematics and especially of philosophical dialectic. Thus, political and moral issues are interwoven with those of cosmological and metaphysical order, as is prescribed, since the beginning of the *Timaeus* itself,*

by reference to the dialogue that takes place during the literary eve, the *The Republic*. In fact, this idea of justice as an equal division of the universe can be further illustrated from several mythical passages in Plato, which describe the constitutional order of divine government in the Golden Age of Kronos. In that age, according to the Stranger in *The Statesman*, the revolution of the universe, under the guidance of Kronos, went in the direction contrary to its present motion; it was the dominion of Justice in the Golden Age, with which the prevalence of injustice in our own Age of Iron is in melancholy contrast. In Book XV of the *Iliad*, in fact, the Governor of the Universe, Kronos, divided the cosmos into equal parts among his sons Zeus, Poseidon and Hades: “*For we are three brothers, born of Cronus and Rhea: Zeus and I (Poseidon), and Hades is the third, the lord of the dead. And in three lots are all things divided, and each took is appointed part (or privilege, or status) that corresponded to it. When we shook the lots, to me fell the hoary sea, that I should dwell therein forever; and Hades drew the misty darkness, and Zeus the broad heaven among the eater and the clouds: the Earth and high Olympus are yet common to all. Therefore, never will I live according to the mind of Zeus; no, masterful though he be, let him stay quiet in his third part*” (The translation of Homer is from Cornford). In this passage, justice simply means “allocated part” or “lot”, and it is beyond dispute that from this basic meaning is derived the meaning of destiny. For at the end of the Golden period, Kronos let go the tiller and left the world to the reverse impulse of Fate and its own inborn desire. Then, all the Gods who in their several places had ruled together with the highest God, perceiving what was happening, in their turn left their divisions of the world-order without oversight. In the *Critias* it is declared that the Gods divided among them the whole earth, place by place, not as the result of strife, but peacefully by drawing “the lots of Justice”; and making themselves at home in their several countries, as shepherds over their flocks, they fostered us, their creatures and nurslings, ruling us not by violence, but by persuasive reason. Therefore, if we are right in thinking that *dikē* ultimately meant the division/apportionment of the universe into equal parts, it is clear that this division, as soon as it comes to be the work of a personal God, can be conceived as a *nomothesia*, — a laying down or fixing *nomoi* (laws) — ; and that this process is simply a redistribution to Gods and men of their domains, privileges and honours. Indeed, at the end of the Golden Age, when Zeus took his seat on the throne of Kronos inaugurating the Olympic dynasty, he immediately distributed to Gods their various privileges and hierarchically ordered his kingdom, partially confirming the constitutional system of Kronos and, simultaneously, extending it through other partitions. Aphrodite, for example, will be occupied with love and seduction; Hera with legitimate marriage, Athena with wisdom and war strategy, while Themis takes care of divine justice. As regards *anthropoi*, human beings, Zeus also wished to put them in their place by drawing a dividing line that definitively separated the immortal destiny of Gods from the human condition of *andrei*, as narrated in the myth of Prometheus which ends with Gods donating a *kalon kakon* (a good evil): Pandora, the first woman.



References

- AA.VV.: *The Cambridge History of Classical Literature* , Easterling and B. M. Knox, Cambridge, 1985.
- Aristotle, *The works of Aristotle. Vol.IX, Ethica nicomachea; Magna moralia; Ethica eudemia /translated into english under the editorship of W.D. Ross*, Clarendon, Oxford, 1949.
- Benveniste, É., *Le vocabulaire des institutions indo-européennes/ Émile Benveniste, sommaires, tableau et index établis par Jean Lallot. 2, Pouvoir, droit, religion*, Minuit, Paris, 1969.
- Bonner, R. J., *The Administration of Justice from Homer to Aristotle*, Greenwood Press, New York, 1968.

- Cornford, F.M., *From religion to philosophy: a study in the origins of western speculation*, Princeton University Press, Princeton 1991.
- Gagarin, M., “Dikē in the Works and Days”, *Classical Philology*, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, Vol. 68, No. 2, (1973), 81-94.
- Harrison, J., *Themis*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1912.
- Harrison, J., *Prolegomena to Study of Greek Religion*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1903.
- Hesiod, Hesiod. *I, Theogony, Works and days, Testimonia / edited and translated by Glenn W. Most*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, 2006.
- Hirzel, R., *Themis, Dike und Verwandtes; ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der Rechtsidee bei den Griechen*, S. Hirzel, Leipzig, 1907.
- Kahn, Ch. H., *The Art and Thought of Heraclitus*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1979.
- Monier, W. M.: *A Sanskrit English dictionary etymologically and philologically arranged with special reference to cognate Indo-European languages*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1964.
- Palmer, L. R., “The Indo-European Origins of Greek Justice”, *Transactions of the American Philological Society*, Vol. 49, (1950), 157-159.
- Plato, *Plato in twelve volumes. VIII. The Statesman — Philebus — Ion*; with an English translation by Harold N. Fowler and W. R. M, Harvard University Press, London, 1975.
- Plato, *Plato in twelve volumes. IX. Timaeus — Critias — Cleitophon — Menexenus — Epistles*; with an English translation by R. G. Bury, Harvard University Press, London, 1982.
- Plato, *The Republic*; with an english translation by Paul Shorey. Vol. 2, Books VI-X, Harvard University Press, London, 1946.
- Plato, *Plato in twelve volumes. Vol.XI, Laws Books I-VI / with an english translation by R.G.Bury*, Harvard University Press, London, 1984.
- Salamone, M. A., “Hipótesis sobre el origen etimológico de la palabra dike: la analogía del Horizonte”, *Logos. Anales del Seminario de Metafísica*, Vol. 46, Madrid, (2013), 307-327.
- Salamone, M.A., “The Aristotelian paradigm of distributive justice: the golden triangle”, in M. Adams and K. Boudouris (Eds), *Philosophy, Politics and Economics*, Iona Publications, Athens, 2014, 207-221.
- Vernant, J.P., *Pandora, la première femme*, Bayard, Paris, 2006.
- Vernant, J.P., *Los orígenes del pensamiento griego*, Paidós, Barcelona, 2011.
- Vlastos, G., “Equality and Justice in Early Greek Cosmologies”, *Classical Philology*, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, Vol. 42, 3, (1947), 156-17.
- Vlastos, G., “Solonian Justice”, *Classical Philology*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, Vol. 41, 2, (1946), 65-83