Injustice and instability in Plato's *Republic*: the case of the timocracy and its rulers

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ABSTRACT

This paper argues that the timocracy, the first of the four corrupt regimes described in Plato's *Republic*, is a fragmented regime ruled by individuals with fragmented and unstable characters. The deterioration of the elements forming the positive cycle that links the good nature of Callipolis' guardians and the good quality of their education causes three levels of instability in the timocracy: the compresence of elements belonging to three different regimes, the destruction of the guardians' unity due to the emergency of the *oikos*, and the split of the *oikos* in which the timocratic man grows up.

Keywords: *Republic*, timocracy, soul, instability, fragmentation

https://doi.org/10.14195/2183-4105_25_4

INTRODUCTION

In Books 8 and 9 of Plato's *Republic* Socrates describes the four deviant regimes and the four corrupt individuals that he believes to exemplify the corruption of justice. The timocracy, the oligarchy, the democracy and the tyranny mark the four successive stages of Callipolis' decline. Corresponding to them, the timocratic man, the oligarchic man, the democratic man, the tyrannical man illustrate the four types of corruption that the soul experiences after it loses the state of harmony justice gives to it. The state of harmony enjoyed by the just souls of Callipolis' rulers is an effect of the proper functioning of a cycle that also ensure the stability of the city. The good nature of its rulers and the good education they receive mutually reinforce and improve each other in a cycle that perpetuates itself until one of its components deteriorates for independent reasons and causes the decline of the other component too.

In this paper I will turn my attention to the timocracy, the first regime that becomes established after the elements that constitute this cycle deteriorate. The first section of the paper will provide important background information for my argument by outlining the link scholars have seen between individuals and their surrounding environment in the *Republic* and showing that Socrates clearly assumes the existence of this link when he insists on the importance for Callipolis' stability of the virtuous cycle between the good nature of the guardians and their good education.[1] The main focus of the paper will be on the effects that the collapse of this virtuous cycle causes on the timocratic regime and its rulers. I will argue that the timocracy turns out to be a fragmented regime and the timocratic rulers prove to be individuals with fragmented and instable characters.

INDIVIDUALS AND THEIR SURROUNDING ENVIRONMENT: A RELATION OF MUTUAL INFLUENCE

A relation of mutual influence can be detected in the way in which individuals and their surrounding environment are portrayed in the *Republic* to interact with each other. Lear highlights this relation by describing the two processes that in his view govern it: internalization and externalization.[2] Internalization is the ability of the human mind to be shaped by the external environment and to be moulded by the influence to which it is exposed.[3] One clear indication of the importance given to this principle in the *Republic* is the great care dedicated to education: between Books 2 and 3 (376e1-398b9) over twenty-two Stephanus-pages are occupied by the criteria that Socrates sets out for the stories suitable for the education of the future guardians.[4]

Externalization is the reverse process to internalization.[5] Individuals project their ideas onto the environment they inhabit and shape it with them. Culture and cultural products are instances of this process. The activity that the philosopher is described to do in Book 6 (500b8-d10) is one further example of externalization.[6] After gaining knowledge of the perfect order of the Forms and moulding his character according to it, he undertakes to transpose this order into the habits and characters of the citizens of the city he rules. Whether or not carried out by a philosopher, externalization is a pervasive phenomenon, as lines 435d8-436a3 clearly show:

> Well, then, we are surely compelled to agree that each of us has within himself the same parts and characteristics as the city? Where else would they come

> from? It would be ridiculous for anyone to think that spiritedness didn't come to be in cities from such individuals as the Thracians, Scythians, and others who live to the north of us who are held to possess spirit, or that the same isn't true of the love of learning, which is mostly associated with our part of the world, or of the love of money, which one might say is conspicuously displayed by the Phoenicians and Egyptians.[7]

People exteriorize their customs and habits and shape with them the environment in which they live. A community receives its character from the character of the people who form it and a clear correspondence can be detected between the characters of the individuals and character of the communities formed by them. Although people externalize their character, a community does not receive its character from each of its members, as emerges from the following passage:

> And do you realize that of necessity there are as many forms of human character as there are of constitutions? Or do you think that constitutions are born "from oak or rock" and not from the characters of the people of those cities that tip the scales, so to speak, and drag the others along with them? (544d5-e2)[8]

While a community is constituted by people with different characters, the character displayed by a community itself is not some sort of average between the different characters of the many citizens who live in it, but it is the character of those citizens that are successful in shaping the character of the whole community.[9] Callipolis illustrates this point clearly: it is wise in virtue not of all of its citizens but only of the philosophers, who are most able to shape the character of the city due to the leading position they occupy in it.

While Lear believes that identifying the processes of internalization and externalization paves the way to the solution of most of the difficulties concerning the city-soul analogy,[10] I will now direct my interest to a passage in which Socrates outlines a link that implies awareness of the existence of a mutual influence between individuals and their surrounding environment. In lines 424a5-10 Socrates openly acknowledges the existence of the connection between the education imparted to Callipolis' guardians and the excellence of their character:

> And surely, once our city gets a good start, it will go on growing in a cycle. Good education and upbringing, when they are preserved, produce good natures, and useful natures, who are in turn well educated, grow up even better than their predecessors, both in their offspring and in other respects, just like other animals.

As long as the education provided to the guardians and their good nature remain linked to each other, they form a virtuous cycle. The guardians improve their nature through the education they receive, their improved nature ensures that the education available to the next generation of guardians is further improved, and the cycle re-starts with the new generation of guardians better placed than the preceding one.[11] By creating ever improving citizens who will gradually but constantly improve the education imparted to the coming generations, this cycle ensures Callipolis' stability.

As soon as this positive cycle is broken, both of its two elements are set on a path of

decline and the stability of the city is threatened. Education is no longer preserved on a path of incremental improvement and the nature of the guardians no longer refined by that education. Socrates shows full awareness of the fragility of this cycle and denounces the risk of actions that may deteriorate its elements. He warns that introducing changes to music would result in the alteration of the fundamental laws of the city (424c5-6). As the great care he dedicates to regulating it in Books 2 and 3 signals, the triad rhythm, melody and lyrics or, more generally, text, in which music consists, is as pervasive in the life of Callipolis' citizens as it was in that of ordinary citizens of any Greek *polis*, and it plays a crucial role in shaping the character that the guardians acquire through their education.[12] Changes to music are therefore bound to result in different characters. If the character acquired by the guardians changes, the norms and values that are so closely related to its formation will change with it. Different norms and values will in turn produce different laws. Different laws will change the education and the new education will form guardians even further removed from the excellence that they previously achieved. Preventing this vicious cycle from being initiated requires that the elements forming it be preserved from deteriorating due to external causes. To ensure the preservation of the quality of the education provided in Callipolis, Socrates entrusts the guardians with the task of preventing any potential changes to what can guarantee the stability of the laws of the city. Using the metaphor of building a bulwark in music (**φυλακτήριον**, 424d8), he indicates that it is of cardinal importance for the stability of the city that the guardians ensure that the sets of Callipolis' cultural values remain unchanged.

THE VIRTUOUS CYCLE DETERIORATES: THE TIMOCRATIC REGIME

While Callipolis' stability requires the virtuous cycle formed by the good nature of the people who are educated and the good quality of the education that these people receive, the four corrupt regimes that Socrates describes in Books 8 and 9 are examples of cities formed after the two elements constituting this cycle have deteriorated.[13] The timocracy, the oligarchy, the democracy and the tyranny illustrate how a city and the members of its ruling class become fragmented and instable when they are captured by a "monopoly of values" deviant from the justice promoted by Callipolis.[14] I will now turn my attention to the timocracy and try to show that the timocracy is a fragmented regime, and that the timocratic ruler displays an unstable and fragmented character.[15] By arguing that the fragmentation of a timocratic regime is matched by the instability of character displayed by its rulers, I will analyse a case in which environment and individual influence each other under the conditions existing after the deterioration of the elements constituting the virtuous cycle that ensures Callipolis' stability.

The timocratic regime is fragmented on three different levels.[16] Its first level of fragmentation is a consequence of its genesis. Arisen from the disintegration of Callipolis, the timocracy displays characteristics inherited from the previous order, characteristics anticipating the order that will replace it, and a few characteristics peculiar to itself. The decline of the excellence of the guardians creates the conditions for a conflict that causes the transition of the city into a timocracy. Due to the inability to identify the appropriate moment for reproduction, the guardians begin

to generate an increasing number of children with a nature below the required standard (546d1-3).[17] Since the most capable of these children are despite their deficient nature allowed to access the group of the guardians and perform the corresponding duties once they have become adults (546d3-5), education is no longer controlled as competently as it previously was (546d5-7). The ensuing decline of its quality results in a further decrease of the level of the following generation of guardians, who continue to loosen control over the access to their own group (546e7-547a2). The positive cycle ensuring Callipolis' stability has been reversed. More individuals from the bronze and iron races are admitted into the group of the guardians and the newly admitted members lower the standards of education further. At this stage, the conflict breaks out that Socrates invokes the Muses to retell (545d7-8). The increasingly numerous guardians possessing a deficient nature and presented as individuals from the bronze and iron races in the mythical narration of the Muses clash against the shrinking group of guardians who have preserved an excellent character and are portrayed to belong to the golden and silver races.[18] The conflict ends in a settlement. The faction of the guardians who possess a deficient nature and are driven by appetite obtains that houses and land are privatized and that the people previously protected as free citizens are reduced to subjects and dependants (547b7-c3); the guardians who still originate from the golden or the silver races and follow the leadership of reason succeed in reaffirming the duty of the ruling class to defend the city and be in charge of the activities connected to war (547c3-4).

Resulting from the compromise that ended the mythical conflict that disintegrated Callipolis, the timocracy retains four characteristics inherited from the previous order: the respect given to the rulers (547d5), the rulers' habit of organizing common meals (547d7), their refusal to engage in commercial or economic activities (547d5-7), and the importance they attach to gymnastic and war and warlike activities (547d7-8). This last characteristic was already observable in Callipolis but it was displayed by a different class: while gymnastic and war were cultivated by the auxiliaries, they become favourite activities of the ruling class in the timocracy. In common with an oligarchy, a timocracy has the love for money (548a5-6), although its way of loving is peculiar. Since in a timocracy private wealth cannot be acquired openly, money is gathered in secret and spent by men stingy with their own money but liberal with that of others (548a6-b5). Distinctive of the timocracy is the type of men it chooses for government. After the genuinely wise philosophers of Callipolis have been replaced by rulers whose wisdom is mixed and impure, the timocracy is bound to rely on aggressive men interested more in war than in peace (547e1-548a3).

A second level of fragmentation is caused by the emergence of the *oikos* in the timocracy. The existence of private houses where families can retreat and amass private wealth fractures the unity that bound the guardians in Callipolis. Around halfway through Book 5 (462a1-464d5, esp. 464c5-d5) Socrates explains that the commonality of women and children gives a crucial contribution towards creating unity among Callipolis' guardians. A strong sense of common belonging is felt when the same feelings are experienced in the same circumstances, and certain events are greeted with joy be all the members of a community while others grieve all of them. This identity of feelings is shared when all the members of a community refer the pronoun

"my" to the same objects or people. Sharing women and children renders every member of a generation of guardians a possible referent for this pronoun and creates the feeling of unity that binds Callipolis' ruling class. By contrast, Socrates warns (462b8-c4), the unity of a community disintegrates when in the face of the same event some people are cheerful while others mourn. Although he does not go into further detail, it is natural to suppose that the feeling of common belonging is fragmented under circumstances opposite to those that help to create it. When different citizens direct their care and affection to different objects and people, the disintegration of this feeling is triggered. The introduction of private property and the formation of the nuclear family lead the rulers of a timocracy to identify different objects and people as the referents of their care. The emergence of the *oikoi*, "private nests" (**νεοττιὰς ἰδίας,** 548a9) thus contributes substantially to disintegrating the sense of unity that bound the members of the ruling class when women and children were held in common in Callipolis.

A FRAGMENTED CHARACTER

A timocratic ruler both lives in a society that has lost the sense of unity shared by Callipolis' guardians and retreats in a private dimension which is itself fragmented.[19] The *oikos* in which he grows up is divided between opposing factions that exercise different influences on him. This dividedness is the third level of fragmentation to which the timocratic ruler is exposed and the one that is more directly responsible for the instability of his character and the change of it into that of a fully-fledged timocratic ruler. Portrayed with traits reminiscent of those of comedy characters', the people surrounding the young timocratic man exert opposing influences on him:[20] his father nurtures his reason while his mother, the house servants and gossipers feed his appetite and render his spirit more aggressive.

Despite the lack of details provided on the father, it is possible to make some tentative inferences on his character and the influence he exerts on his son. The father of the timocratic man is said to be a good man (549c2) who fosters the development of reason in his son (550d1-2) but avoids active engagement in the political life of the not well-governed city (549c2) in which he lives. Given that he is said to foster the development of reason in his son, it is natural to assume that the father of the timocratic man possesses himself a soul led by reason. Although a reason-led soul renders him virtuous, his virtue fails to be as accomplished as the one displayed by Callipolis' philosophers. The type of city in which he lives and the life he lives in it suggests us why. Although his city is different from Callipolis, it is also unlikely to be a fully developed timocracy as it is the stage for the action of the father of the timocratic man, not of the timocratic man himself. Rather, this city seems to reflect the stage immediately following the conclusion of the conflict that split the group of the guardians. Due to the unorderly situation existing in the newly formed city, the father of the timocratic man decides to avoid active engagement in political life and to accept the diminished social status derived from retirement into the private sphere (549c1-5). This choice suggests the intention to avoid *philopragmosynē*, and it invites the reader to compare and contrast him with a philosopher operating in Callipolis. According to the indications given in Book 4 (434c7-11), justice consists in *oikeiopragia*, which on the political level prescribes that every citizen carries out his or her own duty and that alone.

The crucial duty of a philosopher in Callipolis is to participate in the government of the city after completing the long curriculum studiorum that the city organised for him or her. By contrast, the city where the father of the timocratic man lives neither takes any steps to educate the citizens who will be later occupy positions of leadership nor does it impose any obligation on the members of its ruling class to participate actively in the government of the city when they are adults. By refraining from entering the political life of an unorderly city, the father of the timocratic man avoids the risk of engaging in *philopragmosynē*, but he also remains incapable of reaching the level of virtue that the philosopher-rulers achieve in Callipolis by fulfilling the function the city designs for them.

If these inferences are correct, the virtue possessed by the father of the timocratic man is less than fully accomplished. He possesses a soul led by the rational part, but he does not carry out the function fulfilled by a member of the ruling class of a well-governed city. Although he refrains from *philopragmosynē*, he lives a life retired from the political scene. Given his imperfect virtue, it is plausible to assume that the support he is able to give to his son will be limited. He will act as a conservative force that helps the rational part to retain a role of leadership in the soul of his son, but the effectiveness of his action will be undercut by the lack of prestige of his diminished social position.

While the rational part of the soul of the young timocratic man is ineffectively fostered by his father, spirit and appetite receive support from his mother, the home servants and the gossipers heard on the street. His mother has a barrage of criticism against her husband. She feels that her status is diminished by her husband's hesitation in holding high offices (549c7-8). Since he does not fight back against public and private offences, she blames him for his lack of resolve (549d2-3). She complains that he does not enrich himself like other members of the ruling class, albeit secretly, do (549d1-2). Disappointed for all these reasons, she denounces her husband to her son as "unmanly" (*ἄνανδρος*, 549d6) and "too easy-going" (*λίαν ἀνειμένος*, 549d7). These recriminations are highly likely to exert on the soul of the young timocratic man an effect contrary to the one produced by his father: instead of stabilizing the precarious state of his soul, they encourage a change towards a new relationship among its three parts. The leadership of the rational part is weakened by the denigration of the only person who fosters it. At the same time, his mother's complaints about a lost status and the appeal for brave behaviour strengthen spirit while the talk of money renders appetite stronger.

A similar effect is caused by the comments made by the house servants. Observing their master's passivity, they encourage the young timocratic man to be more of a man (*ἀνὴρ μᾶλλον*, 550a1) than his father and to proceed against those who have damaged the family financially or otherwise once he has become an adult (549e2-550a1). Like the mother's, these comments contribute to diminish the role that the rational part plays in the souls of the young timocratic man. While the belittlement of his father further weakens the rational part of his soul, the invitation to behave more bravely strengthens spirit and the prospect of financial reparation renders appetite stronger.

Further agents that contribute to the weakening of the rational part in the soul of the young timocratic man are the gossipers he hears on the street. They slander "the people who mind their own business" (*τοὺς μὲν τὰ*

αὑτῶν πράττοντας, 550a2) whereas they praise those who are ready to get involved in any kind of affairs. The phrase "the people who mind their own business" suggests why these slanders are detrimental to the rational part of the soul of the young timocratic man. In Book 4 this phrase occurs multiple times to describe the conduct Callipolis' just citizens engage in (433a8, b4, b9) and the behaviour adopted by each part of a just soul (441e1, 442b1, 443b2). By slandering "the people who mind their own business," the gossipers diminish those people who display a type of behaviour reflective of a soul led by the rational part. When heard by the young timocratic man, these slanders are then likely to exert a weaking effect on the rational part of his soul.

The young timocratic man grows up in a fragmented regime in which he is exposed to the contrasting influences of a divided *oikos*. Since these influences are unequal in strength and intensity, they modify the balance among the parts of his soul. Although in his youth his soul is controlled by the rational part, spirit and appetite continue to gain strength and size from the external environment while he grows up.[21] The support that the rational part receives from his father becomes insufficient to balance the increase in size of spirit and appetite fed by his mother, the house servants and the gossipers. As an effect of this incremental growth, spirit breaks the alliance it previously had with reason and begins to lean towards appetite.[22] At this stage, the young timocratic man "settles in the middle and surrenders the rule over himself to the middle part—the victory-loving and spirited part" (550b5-7).[23] The transition is complete. The now fully-fledged timocratic man clearly manifests the main character traits that spirit generates: he is high-minded and ambitious (ὑψηλόφρων τε καὶ φιλότιμος, 550b7).

Even after spirit has taken control of his soul, the timocratic man continues to display a fragmented and instable character. The main traits of his character clearly reflect the role of leadership that spirit has acquired, but they are complemented by other traits divergent from them and there are still other traits in his character that continue to change. The timocratic man oscillates between being "a lover of ruling and a lover of honor" (549a3-4) and "very obedient to rulers" (549a3), "harsh to his slaves" (549a1) and "gentle to free people" (549a3), "less well trained in music and poetry" (548e4-5) and "a lover of it" (548e5), ready to "love to listen to speeches and arguments" (548e5) and "by no means a rhetorician" (548e5-549a1).[24]

The fragmented character of the timocratic man does not cease to change even after he has reached adulthood and become part of the ruling class of the timocracy. His attitude towards money aptly illustrates it.[25] He is portrayed to "despise money when he's young but [to] love it more and more as he grows older" (549a9-b2). Some aspects of the already described genesis of his character helps us to understand the dynamics of this change. In his early childhood, the young timocratic man is open to the influence of a father who does not proceed against those who cause financial damage to the family. Observing his father's behaviour, the young timocratic man learns to attach little importance to money. While growing up, he keeps hearing his mother and the house servants level criticism at a father who prefers to accept financial losses over actively taking action against the debtors. Along with a sense of revenge, the timocratic man begins to develop a growing attachment to money. When he becomes an adult, his desire for money is likely to have become quite intense while his childhood memories have

not vanished completely. The environment of a regime in which spirit, not appetite, is dominant completes the process of shaping the attitude towards money of the timocratic man. Forbidden to acquire wealth openly, he grows an even stronger attachment to money and directs this conservative impulse towards the money he has himself amassed. The concomitant memory of a time when he saw his father treat money lightly remains alive in his mind and preserves in him a taste for wild expenses as long as the money used for them is not his own.

CONCLUSION

If I have defended my thesis convincingly, I hope to have shown that the timocratic ruler and the timocratic regime are instances of the instability caused by the deterioration of the elements forming the virtuous cycle that links the good nature and the good education of the rulers in Callipolis. The timocracy is a fragmented regime and its nature is mirrored by the fragmented and unstable character of its rulers. Formed after the disintegration of Callipolis, the timocracy displays three levels of fragmentation. First, it includes relicts from a previous order, elements anticipating the subsequent regime and a few elements peculiar to itself. Second, the emergence of the *oikos* disintegrates the sense of unity that bound the members of the ruling class in Callipolis. Third, the *oikos* in which the timocratic man grows up is itself split into different factions that exert contrasting influences on him. Living under these conditions, the timocratic man comes to reflect the fragmentation of the environment surrounding him. The character he develops reveals contrasting traits and is subject to steady change.

The analysis of the timocracy I have presented in this paper contributes to the growing interest in the corrupt regimes described in the Books 8 and 9 of Plato's *Republic*. It focuses specifically on one regime and proposes a detailed discussion of how a phenomenon common to all the four corrupt regimes unfolds in it: the fragmentation of its society and the instability of its rulers. This phenomenon had already been noted by scholars but not yet made object of in-depth analysis. To complete a detailed description of its manifestation, the results I am presenting in this paper need to be supplemented by the analysis of the phenomenon in the oligarchy, the democracy and the tyranny.

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ENDNOTES

1 Lear 1992.

2 Lear 1992. According to Lear, the existence of a mutual influence between individuals and their surrounding environment plays a key role in providing the foundation for the city-soul analogy because it creates the isomorphism between the city and the soul that is the ultimate basis for the analogy between them. Ferrari 2003 rejects the view that there is an isomorphism between the city and the soul, and he denies that the process of externalization described by Lear plays a role in explaining what in his view is merely an analogical relationship between the city and the soul. As he maintains, "internalization is never invoked in order to ground the city-soul analogy" (52) and "the text does not permit us to break through the barrier of the parallelism to a direct causal-psychological connection with the corresponding societies" (52). However, Socrates explicitly says at 435d8-436a4 and at 544d5-e2 that the habits of a city derive from the behavioural patterns of the citizens inhabiting it. If, following Ferrari, we translate the clause "οὐχὶ ἐκ τῶν ἠθῶν τῶν ἐν ταῖς πόλεσιν, ἃ ἂν ὥσπερ ῥέψαντα τἆλλα ἐφελκύσηται" (544e1-2) "[the characters of the people who live in the city] which tip the scale, as it were, taking the rest with them," and we take the clause to "express the generalization that individual characters in a city outweigh every other factor when it comes to determining the overall character of the city" (49), we may be left wondering whether the characteristics of a city are transmitted to it by its ruling class or by other groups of people. However, it remains difficult to deny that the lines immediately preceding this clause ("Or do you think that constitutions are born 'from oak or rock' and not from the characters of the people who live in the cities governed by them?," 544d5-e1) as well as the passage 435d8-436a4, quoted below, state that the characteristics of a constitution are transmitted to it by the people who inhabit the city, however this transmission takes place and whatever group of people within a city does the transmitting.

3 Lear 1992, 186-190.

4 In the *Republic* the term "guardians" indicates the members of Callipolis' ruling class before the philosophers are separated from the auxiliaries (374e1, 374e9, 375a3, and passim). In this paper I will use this term to indicate the philosophers and the auxiliaries collectively even after they have been divided into two different classes.

5 Lear 1992, 190-193.

6 Ferrari 2003 denies that the philosopher's ordering of the city according to the model provided by the forms involves externalization. Instead, he argues, "they [the philosophers] look to the forms directly, and regulate the city after that pattern, just as they look to that pattern to regulate their own souls (484c, 500d, 501b) […] Philosophers do not serve up to the city the rational order of the forms that they have cooked in their souls. The twin procedures of regulating oneself and one's city are lifelong and go on at the same remove from the forms" (101-102). But the identity between the habits of the city and the habits of the philosophers exists irrespective of whether it reflects an external model. Even if they order the city by looking at the forms, the philosophers have first shaped their souls after the pattern of the forms. Moreover, whatever the original pattern is, the identity between the customs in the city and those in the philosophers' souls is a direct effect of their activity.

7 Unless otherwise stated, the translations of Plato's *Republic* are from Grube 1992.

8 Despite the alternative proposal of Ferrari 2003 (see footnote 4), I leave Grube and Reeve's translation unchanged because it is perfectly possible (as

Ferrari acknowledges) and it yields a sense coherent with the view I am endorsing.

9 Lear 1992, 195-197. The process of externalization described by Lear can be seen as providing a foundation to Williams' predominant section rule according to which "a city is F if and only if its leading, most influential, or predominant citizens are F" (Williams 2006, 112).

10 Lear 1992, 197-207.

11 See Reeve 1998, 260 for some considerations on how this cycle unfolds at its very early stages, when its two components are not yet in an optimal state. When a philosopher acquires a position of leadership in a not well governed city, his soul too has a level of harmony inferior to the ever increasing one it will reach after he has started to order the city and the virtuous cycle between nature and education has been established.

12 For an account of the concept of *mousike* and its significance in Greek culture see Koller 1963, 5–16.

13 Annas 1981, 295 questions the choice of the four corrupt regimes used in the *Republic* to illustrate the degeneration of justice. First, she laments that it is left unclear whether this choice is normative or intended to describe historic realities. Second, she argues that the choice of these four regimes is arbitrary and the parallel description of the corrupts regimes and the corrupt men requires the problematic assumption that corruption takes the same form in regimes and people. Irrespective of considerations about the arbitrariness of the instances chosen for description, Irwin 1995, 281-282 observes that the analysis of the corrupt souls complements the description of the behaviour of the just soul, previously left incomplete in important respects due to the absence of a fully articulated account of the Form of the Good.

14 Frede 2011, 202. Annas 1981, 295 maintains that the transition from Callipolis to the timocracy and from a corrupt regime to the next is presented as a historical process. On a very different line, Frede 2011 argues that the aim pursued by Plato in describing the stages of the decline of the just city is to illustrate the *Idealtypen* created on the political and on the individual levels by the set of corrupt values dominating in each of the four cases analysed.

15 The timocracy is also called by Socrates "timarchy" (545b8, 550d2) and "Cretan or Laconian" constitution (544c3, 545a3). For a discussion of the relation between the timocracy, Sparta, its idealisations in the Sparta-like city of Magnesia described in the Plato's *Laws*, see Calabi 2005, 282-293.

16 Calabi 2005, 278-279 maintains that the fragmented character of the timocracy is caused by the prevalence of spirit, which inherently oscillates between obedience to reason and indulgence to appetite. But fragmentation is not an exclusive characteristic of the timocracy. While spirit undeniably has the ability to follow either reason or appetite depending on the education it has received, oligarchy, democracy and tyranny are also marked by conflicts between opposing values.

17 The inability to identify the appropriate moment for reproduction is presented as a consequence of the philosophers' failure to establish "the geometrical number" (546c7) that regulates the cycle of human fertility. This failure is in turn interpreted by Annas 1981 as a sign that "Plato is symbolically expressing the idea that no ideal can ever fully be realized" (296). Vegetti 2005 argues that the guardians' failure suggests the impossibility of subjecting an entity existing in the realm of becoming to a complete rational control (144-145). Campese 2005, 191-192 follows a similar line. For recent attempts to determine the numerical value of the "geometrical number," see Blössner 1999, 10-86 and Callataÿ 2005, 172-176.

18 The mention of the golden, the silver, the bronze and the iron races refers back to the Noble Lie, which Socrates introduces in Book 3 (415a-c) to instil in Callipolis' citizens a sense of fraternity through their belief in the common descendance from the earth while at the same time providing a justification for the existence of different classes. While the Noble Lie does not contain an explicit mention of Hesiod, the addition of the words "which are Hesiod's [sc. races] and your own" in Book 8 (547a) invites the reader to compare and contrast the Platonic and the Hesiod myths. Calabi 2005, 265-268 provides an analysis of similarities and divergences between the two mythological narratives. For a view of the Noble Lie as an ideological tool aimed to advance a sense of unity among the citizens without consideration for equality see Schofield 2009.

19 Following Williams' predominant section rule and Lear's view (see footnote 3), I maintain that the timocratic ruler and the timocratic man are one and the same person and that the timocracy is ruled by individuals with timocratic souls, i.e. a soul led by spirit. Accordingly, by "young timocratic man" I refer to the same person who will be part of the ruling class of the timocracy when he becomes an adult. On a very different line, Ferrari 2003 argues that the rulers of the timocracy cannot be correctly identified as individuals possessing souls led by spirit. Since he contends that "the description of the various societies and the corresponding individuals run on parallel but entirely separate tracks" (50-51), he denies that the city-soul analogy can dictate that the rulers of a regime have souls corresponding to that regime. However, I believe (see footnote 23) that a comparison between the character traits of the timocratic man and those of the timocratic ruler confirms that, at least in the case of the timocracy, it is correct to identify the rulers with individuals possessing souls corresponding to the regime they rule.

20 Campese 2005, 202-210 highlights similarities between the portrayals of the *oikos* in which the young

timocratic man grows up and the representations given of it in the Old Comedy and in the New Comedy. E.g., in Aristophanes' *Clouds* we see a contrast between an ambitious wife and her less competitive husband, and a conflict between a father and his son eager to climb the social ladder. Slaves are portrayed to disparage their master or allay with his son and his wife to plot against him in Menander's *Epitrepontes*, *Aspis* and *Perikeiromene*.

21 Since the control over his soul is said to be handed over to spirit only at 550b5-7, it is natural to assume that his soul was previously controlled, albeit feebly, by reason.

22 Socrates clarifies in Book 4 (441e3-442b3) that the alliance between spirit and reason is instrumental to keeping appetite in check, thus ensuring that reason retains the role of leadership it occupies in a virtuous soul.

23 Irwin 1995, 285 maintains that the phrase "[the timocratic young man] surrenders the rule over himself to the middle part—the victory-loving and spirited part" gives an indication that the takeover of the leadership over the soul by spirit involves an agent other than spirit. He argues (287-288) that the ability to choose which part of the soul or which set of desires assumes the leadership over the soul is retained by reason, even when it abdicates its role of leadership due to a malfunctioning caused by a previous imbalance.

24 A survey of the character traits of the timocratic man shows close similarities with those of the timocratic ruler. The timocratic ruler is part of a group of men who are "more naturally suited for war than peace" (547e4-548a1) just as the timocratic man "doesn't base his claim to rule on his ability as a speaker or anything like that, but […] on his abilities and exploits in warfare and warlike activities" (549a4-7). Both of them are far from reaching the intellectual heights of Callipolis' philosophers. As the timocratic rulers are "simpler people" (547e3) who have "neglected the true Muse—that of discussion and philosophy," (548b8-c2) so the timocratic man is "less well trained in music and poetry" (548e4-5) and fails to behave "as an adequately educated person does" (549a2). If this comparison is convincing, it seems plausible to me to identify the timocratic man with the timocratic ruler. After the objections of Ferrari 2003, a systematic identification of the ruler of a regime with the man possessing the soul corresponding to that regime requires an extensive argument that includes, among other things, evidence that their identification is supported by the similarity of their descriptions also in the case of the oligarchy, the democracy and the tyranny. But it seems safe at this stage to conclude that at least the timocracy is governed by timocratic men, i. e. rulers who have souls led by spirit.

25 Ferrari 2003 detects a difference in the attitude towards money between the timocratic rulers and the timocratic man and considers this difference a clear reason for rejecting their identification with one another. As he observes, the timocratic rulers are "secretive and stingy with their money, and passionate about it (548a-b); the timocratic man, by contrast, begins by being openly contemptuous of it in his youth and ends by openly enjoying it (547d)" (66). However, the text does not say that the way in which the aging timocratic man enjoys money is open. It says that the timocratic man will "love it more and more as he grows older" (549b1-2). On this basis the description of the timocratic rulers and that of the timocratic man can be seen as agreeing on a central point and supplying further details that do not seem mutually incompatible. Both the timocratic man and the timocratic rulers are said to love money. Details are added on the secretive manner in which timocratic rulers have to deal with money in a regime that, being centred on the pursuit of honour, can be easily expected to display an ambivalent attitude towards money. Non inconsistently with this information, the timocratic man is said to develop an interest in money that increases with age, but not ever to put a love for money at the top of the hierarchy of his values. If this consideration is plausible, the attitude towards money is not an objection against identifying the timocratic ruler with the timocratic man or maintaining that the timocracy is ruled by timocratic men.