

Abstract for a “shorter” presentation in a “parallel” session (20 min.)

Phainesthai and Aletheia in the Republic

In the *Republic* the link between *aletheia* and *phainesthai* is of utmost importance. In different passages “truth” is defined by a juxtaposition with a “falsehood” consisting in a deceptive *appearance* of things. Such is the case in 380D (*phantazetai*), in 382A (*phantasma*), and 382E (*phantasia*). *Phainesthai* is therefore a characteristic feature of the *dokoumena*, that is of objects belonging to the lowest level of knowledge (e.g. 479B-480A and 509D-510A). This does not entail, however, that *phainesthai* should be understood as a mere error or deception. Its meaning is in fact much wider, and not only a negative one. Plato stresses how the whole ascent to the ideas takes place within the *phainesthai* of the *horoumena*. Each step undertaken by the *dialektike techne* (starting from *ta en hydasi phantasmata* and ending up with *tou phanotatou en horatoi topoï*) is related to different ontologic “appearances” of things (532C1 and 7-8). The same applies to the soul which hides behind its exterior aspect although being perceivable through a *blepein* (611B-612A): even here, Plato’s disavowal of visibility seems to lead to the establishment of another, “superior” kind of “what can be seen”.

The visibility arising from the *phainesthai* of things is therefore both mimetic (*concealing* truth: 596D-601E) and ontologic (*showing* that very truth: 523B-525B). It is intrinsically ambiguous, thus leading to very different ways of approaching it in modern scholarship. The literature dealing with *mimesis* in Plato’s *Republic* concentrated on the “falsehood” of appearance (i.e. H. Koller, *Die Mimesis in der Antike*, Bern 1954; G. Sörbom, *Mimesis and Art*, Uppsala 1966; U. Zimbrich, *Mimesis bei Platon*, Frankfurt *et al.* 1984; M. Kardaun, *Der Mimesisbegriff in der griechischen Antike*, Amsterdam 1993; S. Halliwell, *The Aesthetics of Mimesis*, Princeton/Oxford 2002; L. Palumbo, *Mimesis*, Napoli 2009), whereas the philosophers interested in the phenomenologic background of Plato’s ontology pointed out the “constructive” aspects of that very appearance (M. Heidegger, *Platons Lehre von der Wahrheit*, Bern 1947; H.-G. Gadamer, *Wahrheit und Methode*, Tübingen 1960; G. Deleuze, *Logique du sens*, Paris 1969; J.J. Wunenburger, *Philosophie des images*, Paris 1997). The present work aims at combining these two approaches, showing their complementarity in Plato’s polyvalent use of *phainesthai* (and of the connected nouns *phantasia*, *phantasma*, etc.) in the *Republic*.

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