



PREFACE

At some privileged moments in history human activity is extraordinarily intensified, time itself becomes extremely dense and the pace of man's progress in all fields of his being accelerates to a breathtaking degree¹. When such periods of heightened existence

¹ Velleius Paterculus, *Historiarum* Liber I §16.2 sqq.: quis enim abunde mirari potest quod eminentissima cuiusque professionis ingenia in ean<dem> formam et in idem *artati temporis* congruere spatium et, quemadmodum <eodem> clausa campo aliove saepto diversi generis animalia nihilominus separatea <ab> alienis in unum quaeque corpus congregantur, ita cuiusque clari operis capacia ingenia in similitudine et temporum et profectuum semet ipsa ab aliis separaverunt? una neque multorum annorum spatio divisa aetas per divini spiritus viros, Aeschylum Sophoclen Euripiden, inlustravit tragoediam; una priscam illam et veterem sub Cratino Aristophaneque et Eupolide comoediam; ac novam [comicom] Menander aequalesque eius aetatis magis quam operis Philemon ac Diphilus et invenere intra paucissimos annos neque imitandam reliquere. philosophorum quoque ingenia Socratico ore defluentia omnium quos paulo ante enumeravimus quanto post Platonis Aristotelisque mortem florere spatio? quid ante Isocraten, quid post eius auditores eorumque discipulos clarum in oratoribus fuit? adeo quidem *artatum angustis tempus* eorum ut nemo memoria dignus alter ab altero videri nequiverint.

(§17) Neque hoc in Graecis quam in Romanis evenit magis. nam nisi aspera ac rudia repetas et inventi laudanda nomine, in Acio circaque eum Romana tragoedia est; dulcesque Latini leporis facetiae per Caecilium Terentiumque et Afranium suppari aetate nituerunt. historicos et<iam>, ut Livium quoque priorum aetati adstruas, praeter Catonem et quosdam veteres et obscuros minus LXXX annis circumdatum aevum tulit, ut nec poetarum in antiquius citeriusve processit ubertas. at oratio ac vis forensis prefectumque prosae eloquentiae decus, ut idem separetur Cato (pace P. Crassi Scipionisque et Laelii et Gracchorum et Fannii et Servii Galbae dixerim), ita universa sub principe operis sui erupit Tullio, ut delectari ante eum paucissimis, mirari vero neminem possis nisi aut ab illo visum aut qui illum viderit. hoc idem evenisse grammaticis plasticis pictoribus sculptoribus quisquis temporum institerit notis reperiet, *eminentiam cuiusque operis artissimis temporum claustris circumdatam*.

reach their acme, great works are produced of transcendent significance, universal importance and permanent value, definitive norms of humanity for ever and ever. These works constitute “classicalness”. They are “old” on the very moment of their birth and ever “young” thereafter²: for they are born full of the momentous fullness of things mature, but are always fresh and juicy and resplendent, with the sparkle of newly emerged life in their eyes and limbs.

Of such character was eminently the Golden Age of Athens in the 5th century B.C., defining the classical for all (few) similar classical periods.

The fact of the rapid and meteoric ascent of Athens to the pinnacle of excellence and renown in human history was posed as subject of investigation in a following meeting of this series of symposia³. In the present one, whose Proceedings I am privileged to present in this volume, we rather concentrated on the nexus of questions revolving round a single, but crucial, theme, which both emphatically animated contemporary thinkers and other intellectuals at the time, and also keeps fascinating scholarly and philosophical research since then. This crucial theme is the *physis-nomos* controversy.

The issue preoccupied fifth century thinking to a degree that calls for specific explanation. It is also of plenipotential impact and complex articulation in its multiply structured dimensions of meaning. And it proves to provide a vantage point in adequately understanding a typically ancient Greek conception of order and rationality in societal settings as well as in the cosmic harmony at large.

The issue about what is natural and what is conventional in human systems, about what is given as in the order of things and what is introduced by stipulation, about what is the law of nature and what is

² Cf. Plutarch, *Pericles*, XIII: ὅθεν καὶ μᾶλλον θαυμάζεται τὰ Περικλέους ἔργα πρὸς πολὺν χρόνον ἐν ὀλίγῳ γενόμενα. κάλλει μὲν γὰρ ἕκαστον εὐθὺς ἦν τότε ἀρχαῖον, ἀκμῇ δὲ μέχρι νῦν πρόσφατόν ἐστι καὶ νεουργόν· οὕτως ἐπανθεὶ καινότης ἀεὶ τις ἄθικτον ὑπὸ τοῦ χρόνου διατηροῦσα τὴν ὄψιν, ὅσπερ ἀειθαλὲς πνεῦμα καὶ ψυχὴν ἀγήρω καταμεμιγμένην τῶν ἔργων ἐχόντων.

³ *Symposium Laureoticum*, July 2006, Sounion: *Mind, Might, Money: The Secular Triad in Golden Age Athens*.

merely a man-made regulation, about what is valid according to the essence of being and what only possesses a fiat validity – this issue intrinsically relates to the great question of the nature, foundation and *justification of power* in man's world. And there are inner correlations of the terms and structure of this relationship to corresponding parameters in the greater question about *cosmic and divine* world-order.

The fact and valuation of power, again, is intimately connected to two other primary factors in the constitution of classical awareness.

One is the *agonistical ideal of life*, the ultimate Greek experience of superlative merit and *excellence* as supreme value. For excellence in that experience imported enhanced power to effect things, and to effect them optimally.

The other is the nature of *just order*. Contrary to the *deontological* character of much modern theorizing about morality, we have to do in the classical world, and preeminently in its high classical period, with a decisively *ontological* ethics and politics. Justice is a question of digging deeper into the facts of existence, not getting out of them. It is a question of skipping the appearance of order, which may be accidental and unstable, in favour of the underlying arrangements that constitute stable harmony because they reflect, represent and flow from the essential determination of being. *A just order is the order that brings existence (individual and thus collective) to perfection* – and is the only one that can do it. And thus *justice and excellence and power and nature meet on one common foundation of complete beingness*.

Hence the title of the Symposium:

Φύσις and Νόμος:

Power, Justice and the Agonistical Ideal of Life in High Classicism

It is perhaps in this context worth repeating the identification statement for that symposium, as it set out some provisional articulation of its rich import.

“The fourth Symposium will be devoted to a fundamental re-examination of the bipolarity between physis and nomos in the context of 5th century B.C. philosophical thought. The proper

understanding of lawfulness (as cosmic or societal order), and its connection to rational regularity and intelligent finality, may profitably bear fresh sustained investigation. The physis-nomos antithesis has been one paramount form which intellectual queries and moral concerns regarding the concept, valuation and exercise of power took in the era of High Classicism. The relationship between power and justice in society is a crucial question implicating complex issues of excellence and ability (ἀρετή and τέχνη) on the one hand, of efficiency and success on the other, of the protection of the weaker members and communal cohesion on a third. A related focal point is whether optimizing individual perfection and maximizing social output laid converging or diverging claims on human energy, functionality, wellbeing and happiness. The foundation or otherwise of collective structures on individual interest is a further major subject of debate in this connection. As is the existence and preponderance of natural or conventional factors in man's systems. The inquiry can correlate to contemporary controversies as to the respective roles of competition and collaboration, and the corresponding values of personal antagonism and social peace (of ἀρετή and ὁμόνοια), the relative merits of an adversarial versus a consensual spirit in ordering human systems and coordinating human activities; also as to the openness or closedness of societal coexistence. In more general, cultural terms the theme of the Symposium will be the perceived Agonistical Ideal of Life esp. in classical times. Philosophically, it will revolve around the analysis of relevant views in 5th century Old Philosophy and, more prominently, in the New Philosophy Sophistic Movement, including also, or superadding, the Socratic contribution. In particular, Antiphon's thought, and positions discussed in Plato's Socratic dialogues, such as the Gorgias and the first book of the Republic, are expected to provide significant axes to the development of the overall argument of the meeting".

In the conference, participants worked out the implications of some aspects of this meaning-complex while also substantially enriching it by alternative approaches in still further dimensions.

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The Symposium was also the Institute's subscription to a programmatic culturally enriched Olympiad (Athens, 2004). In

ancient times, literary events of eminent importance were taking place in these athletic celebrations of religious feasts. Not so, except in name, in the modern “revival”. But we believed that by repeating the hallowed custom we might instigate emulation. So that the Olympic principle of *winning excellence* becomes again emblematic of the supreme value in all human endeavours - *perfection inherently leading to success and success naturally flowing from excellence*.

To this cultural offer there was a counter-offer by the *Municipality of Athens*, host of the 2004 Olympic Games, which sponsored the meeting and underwrote part of its bill. In particular, it is with pleasure that I wish to thank *Mrs. Dora Bakoyanni*, then Mayoress of Athens and now Minister of Foreign Affairs in the Greek Government, for her interest in, and support to, our contribution to the modern Athenian hour of honour.

Thanks are also imperatively due, and gladly extended, to a politician of discernment and distinction, to whom culture is life. *Mr. Demetrios Avramopoulos*, Minister of Tourism at the time and now of Health and Social Services, helped realise the Symposium Quartum, and since then has contributed substantially to the success of a sequence of following colloquia in the series.

The *Ministry of Culture* has been over the years a steady column of support for our undertakings in the Institute in all kinds of direct and indirect ways. It is with gratitude that I register here this support. In return I can just say that we are making, I believe, the best and most efficient use of it. To *Mr. Petros Tatoulis*, then Deputy Minister of Culture, special and personal appreciation and thanks are owed for his active interest in, and attentive help to, not only this particular forum, but to the varied international work of the Institute in general.

My friend *Mr. Petros Doukas*, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs and, at that time, Deputy Minister of Finance and National Economy, is a scholar-economist-politician who decisively illustrates in his triple vocation and in modern attire the classical values of statemanship. He is by word and deed the living proof that those values of knowledge-based-practical-efficiency are not mere museum pieces but effective instruments of rational activity. His long friendship, capital encouragement, and solid support, meets my grateful reciprocation, high appreciation and utter commitment to the furtherance of work on our common desideratum – how to turn hallowed but inactive

traditions of a dormant cultural heritage into efficacious, universal forces of present-day and future freedom and progress.

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The Symposium was held at the *Athens Ledra Marriott Hotel*. The exquisite venue no doubt helped create an atmosphere of sophisticated delight and relaxed abandon – appropriate background for our intensely focused, arduous investigations and debates. But most of all, it was the meticulous care of the personnel there for the smooth advance of our proceedings that left us exclusively concentrating on our essential business by making us forget the effort that was exercised in order to secure us our unperturbed enjoyment of our stay. My sincerest thanks go to *Ms. Angeliki Pagali*, head of the Sales Department, for the perfect cooperation that has also been tested again in the sequel with the same faultless results. *Ms. Zervoudaki*, *Ms. Zambouni* and *Ms. Stylianidou* worked in their respective capacities for the organizational success story that the meeting came to be. For such immaculately helpful functioning of a big, distinguished and high quality establishment, primary credit naturally accrues to the then General Manager of the Hotel, *Mr. Bob Jensch*.

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The *Argo Agency* was appointed to handle all travel arrangements for the conference. And they have done it impeccably. *Mrs. Eleni Apostolopoulou* was the person entrusted with the responsibility of detailed coordination, and she has proven a cardinal asset in the successful organization of the Symposium. Since then I also made use of their (and her) services on several occasions and a fruitful cooperation has developed as a result. They deliver uniformly on the highest standards. *Mrs. Apostolopoulou* is the paradigm case of professional reliability, inventiveness and efficiency. She is a real problemsolver, troubleshooter.

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Upon the conclusion of work in our meeting, we took a three-day archaeological excursion to Argolis. We stayed in Nauplion, and using it as a base we visited Mycenae, Tiryns, Argos, Epidaurus, Nemea and the corresponding museums. We also attended a performance of Euripides' *Hippolytus* by the National Theater of Greece in the ancient theater of Epidaurus. The weather was very hot indeed, but

the trip had been rewarding thanks to the specialist guidance that we enjoyed when visiting the sites and the museums in the persons of the various archaeologists working in the several places. I am deeply in debt (and I know that I am voicing the common appreciation of all participants) to *Ms. Zoe Aslamatzidou*, Directress then of the 4th Archaeological Ephorate in Nauplion and now of the 6th in Patras, for putting the scholarly talents and eminent sites of the Archaeological Service in Argolis at our disposal. Grateful thanks are also precious reserved for the archaeologists that conducted our in-depth acquaintance with the Argolic archaeology in the various places. As for Nemea, we had the privilege to be led around in the site and the exemplary Museum by the modern soul of the ancient sanctuary, Stephen Miller. I am grateful to him for the model explorative experience that he offered us.

Our stay in Argolis was organized and sponsored by the local Administration there. My thankful appreciation goes by right to *Mr. Sotiropoulos*, Governor of Argolis, *Mr. Anagnostaras*, Mayor of Nauplion, *Mr. Platis*, then Mayor of Argos, and, last but not least, *Mr. Tsiligiannis*, Mayor of Asklepeion where ancient Epidauros is located. They offered to our distinguished participants an experience that we all cherish.

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The indexes are the skilful work of *Mr. Cleanthes Zoumboulakis*. I look forward to our future and expanded collaboration in the Institute.

Our typesetter and printer's achievements speak for themselves in all our volumes. Let me just record the core-truth of the matter: *Antonis Papadonopoulos* is an *artist* (in the ancient Greek sense of the word) in full possession of his *τέχνη* and its secrets. And I do not know of any higher accolade.

About my secretary *Mrs. Aleka Bertsoukli*, to speak with proper measure is to speak in superlatives: so inestimable are her services and so incommensurate to the reality are my eulogies of her. Admiration for her professional expertise and appreciation of her commitment to, and care for, our longstanding common work vie with each other for precedence in my deep gratitude to her.

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Last and foremost. All is being done in these symposia for the sake of pure scholarship. They serve as means for the highest end of all intellectual endeavours, (the reasoned discovery of) truth. The wise are aware of the extreme pragmatic value of disinterested knowledge. To the deep commitment to disinterested knowledge of all participants I dedicate this volume. The achievement recorded here is of course theirs; theirs individually and as a temporary group locked in serious debate that week⁴.

Patras, November 14th, 2007

P.S. Finally a word of apology is in order for the delay in the publication of this volume. For months it was in Mr. Papadonopoulos' hands ready to go to print, waiting for my final touches and preface. A multitude of obligations and long absences kept me from doing this for too long. It is nobody else's fault.

⁴ Joerg Hardy was unable to come to the meeting due to ulterior necessity; he submitted his paper for publication. Richard Kraut did fully participate in the symposium; I could not obtain however his final version. I on my part refrained from editing his presentation as delivered in the meeting and including it in these Proceedings. Such are the varied ways of men- a marvel to behold.