HERACLITUS, PLATO, AND THE PHILOSOPHIC DOGS (A NOTE ON \textsc{Republic} II, 375E-376C)

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\textbf{RESUMO:} Este artigo focaliza uma instância negligenciada da recepção platônica de Heráclito na República (II, 375e-376c), e tenta mostrar que é provável que a passagem de Platão seja uma alusão a B 97 de Heráclito («Os cães ladram para quem eles não conhecem») e B 85 («É difícil lutar contra o thymos, pois o que se almeja com isso se paga com ψυχή»). A principal reivindicação é que com o uso que faz da imagem de cães, Platão volta os seus olhos para Heráclito, e convida a explorar de a possibilidade que pelo menos alguns elementos da Kallipolis de Platão possam derivar de Heráclito - especialmente alguns fragmentos éticos e políticos. Uma breve pesquisa acerca desses elementos sugere haver uma profunda afinidade filosófica entre os dois autores em diversas áreas importantes (como a chamada «psicologia moral» e o «intelectualismo ético»), e questiona o lugar comum da interpretação tradicional de Heráclito como um defensor da moral aristocrática.

\textbf{PALAVRAS-CHAVE:} Platão, Heráclito, cães, thymos, phylakes, demos, polloi, aristoi.

\textbf{ABSTRACT:} The paper focuses on a neglected instance of the Platonic reception of Heraclitus in the 	extit{Republic} (II, 375e-376c), trying to show that it’s likely that Plato’s passage makes an allusion to Heraclitus’ B97 (“Dogs bark at whom they don’t know”) and B85 (“It’s difficult to fight θυμός, for what it longs for it pays with ψυχή”). The main

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Although the influence of Heraclitus on the ancient philosophical tradition can be taken for granted as a matter of fact, it’s often hard to pin it down with enough precision in every instance. Possibly one of the most revealing test cases is Plato, in whose written works there is a deeply-embedded, opaque image of Heraclitus, widely acknowledged in the \textit{Cratylus} and the \textit{Theaetetus} (which contain seven of the nine explicit mentions by name in the dialogues and attribute him certain famous doctrines). Actually, the presence of Heraclitus in Plato goes far beyond these two dialogues, and can be detected in a considerable number of the writings in the \textit{Corpus Platonicum}. As a rule, Plato doesn’t quote Heraclitus much and when he does, he doesn’t give his words exactly and fully, but adapts them to his own context, substantially transforming the originals. Scholarship has not been particularly keen on detecting the relevance of Heraclitus’ art and thought in the \textit{Republic}, although it might turn out to be important for a right understanding of Plato’s own philosophical message at several crucial points of the argument (particularly books V-VII). In what follows, I will not even attempt a rough general sketch of the latter aspect, but will deal instead with just one instance of the reception of Heraclitus in book II (375e-376c). This note sets out to show
claim is that Plato’s use of the image of dogs looks back to Heraclitus, which invites an exploration of the possibility that at least some elements of Plato’s kallipolis might derive from Heraclitus – particularly from some ethical and political fragments. A brief survey of these suggests a deep philosophical affinity among the two authors in several important areas (as the so-called ‘moral psychology’ and ‘ethical intellectualism’), and questions the commonplace traditional interpretation of Heraclitus as a defender of aristocratic morality.

**KEYWORDS:** Plato, Heraclitus, dogs, thymos, phylakes, demos, polloi, aristoi.

that it’s likely that Plato’s passage on the philosopher’s dogs makes an allusion to Heraclitus (DK22 B97: “Dogs bark at whom they don’t recognize”). In what concerns the interpretation of Heraclitus enigmatic *dictum*, Plato seems to give a different side of the philosophy of the Ephesian, suggesting an anthropological (ethical and political) context of application. I’ll argue that Plato’s use of the image of dogs looks back to and sheds light on Heraclitus’ thought, and explore the possibility that some elements of Plato’s kallipolis might be connected to ideas in Heraclitus. Inter-textual analysis calls for a fair assessment of the relevant texts of both authors, which is not an easy task, each one of them being difficult to interpret in their own right. The influence of Heraclitus on Plato and the Platonic reception of Heraclitus constitute a territory not often visited by interpreters and commentators, sometimes slippery and always full of hermeneutical challenges. So: Cave canes!

The project of designing in thought an ideal polis is conceived precisely in book II of Plato’s *Republic* (369c ff.), as the course that the search for the nature of justice must follow, yielding as a general answer (in book IV, 443c-d) the inner ἀρμονία both of the soul and the city. A quick look at book II as a whole shows an obvious surfacing of a well-known (though not unique) Heraclitean theme, in the specific criticism of Homer and Hesiod, leading to censorship and eventual banishment of politically incorrect poetry from the καλλίπολις — as it is later called (V, 527c2) —, because of the harmful effects of the immoral and false depiction of the gods in their mythological tales⁵. Pre-Socratic influences here should include Xenophanes⁴ in the first place, but a harsh attitude towards the founding fathers of Greek παιδεία — extended to Xenophanes himself — is also very conspicuous in some Heraclitean fragments⁵. Plato’s own criticism of traditional poetry comes up as part of the initial development of the appropriate παιδεία for the young Guardians (φιλάκτες, introduced at 374d). At this early stage of the long narrative argument these “Guardians” refer to the emerging class of professional soldiers in the “luxurious” or “swollen” city⁶, resulting from the fast-growing needs of the imagined community of citizens and a combination of factors such as overpopulation, the consequent need to make war, and the principle of division of work according to each one’s natural abilities. Later on, an élite of philosopher-kings will gradually develop out of these primitive Guardians (who will be then distinguished from the shepherds, and referred to as “helpers”⁴), and eventually become the ruling class, coming into full view in book V. For the time being, besides the producers and craftsmen, there is only this class in charge of warfare (offensive and defensive), which will be expected to enforce law and order within the state, and to act always with the interest of the whole city in mind.

Before getting to the question of the rearing, training and right education of the Guardians, the interlocutors face the preliminary problem of the mere possibility of breeding good watch-dogs for the city, fierce and ‘high-spirited’. At 374a-b, Socrates insists that in every case, whether horse, dog or any other animal, there’s no couragelessness without a high-spirited nature; for, he tells the impetuous Glaucon:

Don’t you know spirit (θυμός) is an invincible thing that no one wants to fight with, and that its presence makes every soul (ψυχή) fearless and unconquerable in the face of every danger?⁴

Socrates’ revealing connection of θυμός and ψυχή anticipates the moral psychology of book IV, where ψυχή is the broader concept and θυμός is one of its constituent parts⁸. Perhaps significantly,
Socrates may be evoking a famous saying of Heraclitus (885): “It’s hard to fight passion (θυμός), for what it longs for, it pays with soul (ψυχή)”. That Heraclitus’ saying is in Plato’s mind here is suggested by the close lexical parallelism among Plato’s ἂμαχον τε καὶ ανίκητον θυμός and Heraclitus’ θυμὸς μάχεσθαι χαλεπόν, and reinforced by the idea of ψυχή as the epistemic subject and the moral agent, so prominently held by Plato’s Socrates.

The starting-point of our passage is the assimilation of the natures of the Guardians-to-be and dogs of a good breed (375a). Guardians should possess the same qualities as good dogs — gentleness towards those they habitually know (συνήθει καὶ ψυχή) and high-spirited” (μεγαλόθυμον), and that he finds such a character that is both “gentle and high-spirited” (παρόν και μεγαλοθύμιον ήθος, 375c5). Since these qualities have contrary natures (ἐναντίον γὰρ που θυμοειδὲς παρέχει φύσις, 375c5-6), and granting that without such a combination “a good Guardian will not come to be” (φιλόσοφος καὶ φιλομαθῆ αὐτὸν δεῖν εἶναι, τὸ θυμοειδεῖ), the argument comes to a standstill, concluding that guardianship would be “impossible” (ἄδυνατον, 375d1). (It’s worth noticing the inference requires additional premise, that of the mutual exclusion of contraries, which remains implicit.) Socrates pauses for a moment, going over what was said before and recognizing the difficulty. Before long, he finds the answer has been there all along, for the very image (εἰκὼν, 375d5) of the city-Guardians as dogs, he argues, provides a way out of the difficulty, and a solid basis for the possibility of good guardianship based on such a “nature” or “character”,

[Socrates] [375e] As you know, the character (τὸ ήθος) of dogs of a good breed is by nature (φύσιν) this: they are most gentle with those habitually around and who are better known (τοὺς συνήθεις τε καὶ γνωρίσιμους) to them, but they are the opposite way with those they don’t know (τοὺς άγνωστας).

[Glaucon] I know it well.

[Soc.] Then, this is possible, and we aren’t searching against nature (οὐ παρά φύσιν) for such a Guardian.

[Gl.] It doesn’t seem so.

[Soc.] Don’t you think that the man who is to be our Guardian still needs this: to become in his nature a lover of wisdom (φιλόσοφος τὴν φύσιν), besides being high-spirited (τὸ θυμοειδεῖ)?

[376a] [Gl.] What? I don’t understand.

[Soc.] This, precisely, you can see in dogs, and it’s something worthy of admiration in a beast.

[Gl.] What do you mean?

[Soc.] That when a dog sees a stranger, he gets angry (ὅπεν ἄγνωστον, χαλεπαίνει), even if he hasn’t received any harm from him. But when it’s someone known, he greets him (ὅπεν δ’ ἂγνωστον ἀντιστρέφεται), even if he never benefitted from him. Or have you never wondered about this?

[Gl.] I had not until now turned my attention to the matter. But it’s obvious that he behaves this way.

[Soc.] Still, it shows a fine quality [376b] of his nature (τὸ πάθος αὐτὸν τῆς φύσεως) and that he truly is a lover of wisdom (ὡς ἀληθῶς φιλοσόφων).

[Gl.] In what manner?

[Soc.] In so far as he distinguishes the friendly from the hostile aspect (แห้งν… φιλίν καὶ ἐχθρόν διακρίνει) by nothing else than by his knowing (κατακρίνειν) the one and his ignorance (ἀγνοεῖν) of the other. And how would he not be a lover of learning (φιλομαθῆς), since he defines the friendly and the alien by understanding and by ignorance (συνέσει τε καὶ ἄγνοια ὑμνεῖν τὸ τε συνείδη καὶ τὸ ἄλλοτρον)?

[Gl.] In no wise, he would not.

[Soc.] But lover of learning and lover of wisdom are the same?

[Gl.] The same, indeed.

[Soc.] Then, may we be confident in establishing this also for man, that if someone is likely [376c] to be gentle to familiars and friends, he must be by nature a lover of wisdom and a lover of learning (φιλοσόφων καὶ φιλομαθῆ αὐτὸν δεῖν εἶναι)?

[Gl.] Let’s establish this.

[Soc.] Then, he who is to become the fine and noble Guardian of our city shall be by nature a lover of wisdom, high-spirited (Φιλόσοφος δὴ καὶ θυμοειδῆς… τὴν φύσιν), quick and strong. 11

The philosophical significance of the passage has been often overlooked and minimized, with occasional exceptions. 11 The main point of
the comparison, prompted by the pun φυλαξ-σκυλάξ, seems clear enough: the natures (φύσεις, 375a7) that qualify to be good Guardians, besides being fierce, must also be gentle with one another and with the citizens. That is, they should be like dogs of a good breed, in so far as these exhibit a naturally gentle and ‘philosophical’ disposition, as shown by their ability to (successfully) distinguish friend from foe based solely on the criterion of knowledge and ignorance. Etymological word-play at 376b suggests two different senses in which the word φιλόσοφος (used here for the first time in the Republic) can be taken: as ‘lover of wisdom’ (or ‘friend of the wise’, the traditional reading) and as ‘wise about friends’ (an alternative that, however far-fetched as it may sound, makes good sense in context). The nature or character of dogs can be termed “philosophic” merely because it implies a gentler psychic disposition that tempers their fierceness, a cognitive and rational faculty to balance the blind force of θυμός. Since the double analogy of Guardians with dogs and of dogs with philosophers comes to the oblique identification of Guardians and philosophers, the final point looks like an early and somewhat comical preview of the central thesis of book V, that philosophy and kingship must coincide in the same individuals (473c-d). The way the idea is put forward here is clearly playful, and calling dogs “philosophers” doubtless has an ironical edge, but the image can hardly be just an inconsequential silly joke of Plato’s. For one thing, the likening of the Guardians and dogs is notoriously recurrent, and it anticipates especially important themes to be developed later on (i.e. internal conflict and harmony of the tripartite soul and the tripartite polis, centered in θυμός and personified by the Guardians as an intermediate social class and the detailed characterization of the philosopher-ruler). Plato’s would seem to be a positive use of the image, especially if it is a proleptic wink at the central thesis of Platonic political philosophy, that “philosophers become kings in the cities, or those whom are called now kings and rulers become philosophers” (473c11-d2). But Plato’s apparently straightforward positive use of the image may be more nuanced than would seem at first sight. It would be well to remember that the identification of philosophers and rulers (or, in more abstract terms, the conjunction of “political power and philosophy”, δύναμις τε πολιτική καὶ φιλοσοφία, 473d3) is in fact introduced as a paradoxical tenet (cf. 472a6: παράδοξον λόγον, 473e4: πολύ παρὰ δόξαν ἄφθονον ῥήθηται), and for good reasons (that is, not only because philosophical πολιτική would be the opposite of factual political practice, but also because the respective natures of the philosopher and the statesman are worlds apart).

Furthermore, there is a distinct possibility that Plato alludes at 376a to Heraclitus B97:

For dogs bark just at whom [or: ‘at what’] they don’t recognize.

This brief sentence was preserved by Plutarch (An seni resp., 787c), whose use of the imagery suggests the opposite type of behavior — being gentle with friends and acquaintances — in a social and political context. Strictly speaking, although it has often been thought to convey a criticism, the preserved sentence by itself does not voice an explicit value judgment (neither literally on dogs, nor metaphorically on men, nor in both senses on dogs and men at once). In fact, we know nothing of the original context, but Heraclitus is certainly taking up a Homeric theme. In Odyssey 14.30, Eumaeus’ guard-dogs bark loudly at Odysseus disguised as a beggar, and later (16.8-10), just before Telemachus arrives in Eumaeus’ place, still unrecognized, Odysseus says:

Eumaeus, some good comrade of yours is about to arrive
or at least some other acquaintance, since the dogs don’t bark,
but wag their tails. I hear footsteps.

Further on (at 17.326-327), Odysseus’ own dog, old Argos, is the only one who silently recognizes him, even in disguise and after twenty years. The sequential ordering of these passages is meaningful, as the first two set up the narrative climax of the third, which, in turn, anticipates the outcome of
Odysseus’ return, when he reveals his true self and slays the suitors. Whether or not Heraclitus echoes a popular saying \(^{19}\), B97 likely reflects a Heraclitean reading and appropriation of Homer. If so, in my view the Republic II passage would be presenting us with a rare instance of Plato reading Heraclitus and Heraclitus reading Homer, all at once. One crucial question is what exactly the Heraclitean use of the Homeric theme might have been. Given the literary antecedents, the Heraclitean sentence, even if complete by itself, still implies something like “but they welcome whom they know” (περισσαίον δὲ τὸν γνώριμον). Read this way, the primary focus seems to be on the ‘subjective’ side: dogs are clearly — even if only indirectly — presented as relatively intelligent agents. The kind of cognition implicitly attributed to dogs involves more than sensory perception, and must include memory (so perhaps it’d be better rendered by “re-cognition”) which eventually, through habitation, becomes experience. So, if B97 is in fact a criticism (as opposed to a factual observation of dog behavior), the sentence might be less about the fierce bark of dogs, than about why they bark. If an analogy is to work for such a hypothesis, dogs would have to be at fault, and fail to recognize a friend, someone they already know (rather than rightly identifying someone they’ve actually never met as a stranger).

It might be argued that, by the same token, Plato could just have taken the image directly from Homer. However, we can safely assume Plato knew first-hand Heraclitus’ book. This can be taken for granted, within the Republic itself (cf. 497e9-498b1\(^{21}\)), and even before (in dialogues such as Symposium, Phaedo, and Cratylus), while the fact of Plato’s knowledge of Heraclitus’ book is widely acknowledged for dialogues of later composition (e.g., Theaetetus, Sophist, and Laws). And, for what it’s worth, a handful of recurring key-terms further implicitly attributed to dogs involves more than sensory perception, and must include memory (so perhaps it’d be better rendered by “re-cognition”) which eventually, through habitation, becomes experience. So, if B97 is in fact a criticism (as opposed to a factual observation of dog behavior), the sentence might be less about the fierce bark of dogs, than about why they bark. If an analogy is to work for such a hypothesis, dogs would have to be at fault, and fail to recognize a friend, someone they already know (rather than rightly identifying someone they’ve actually never met as a stranger).

More clues are to be found at the other end of the Heraclitean legend. A later epigram\(^{37}\) that must echo this particular fragment turns Heraclitus’ words against himself, calling him “the divine dog who barked at the mob” (θεῖον υλακτητήν δήμου κῦνα)\(^{26}\), thus suggesting that the ordinary man of the δήμος (as opposed to the rulers, the powerful and the rich) is the object of the original comparison. However, the meaning of the word δήμος in Heraclitus B44\(^{29}\) is arguably not synonymous with “the many”, but refers instead to “the people” as the sum total of the free citizens, including both the many and the few\(^{30}\). The ironical qualification of “divine” doesn’t really strengthen the likelihood of B97’s being an aristocratic snarl aimed especially at the many, but it does imply that it voices an important and characteristic aspect of Heraclitus’ philosophical and political stance, and points to an anthropological scenario (rather than a purely zoological one\(^{31}\)), all the more so since the word θεῖον, instead of merely mocking his aristocratic arrogance, might mask an implicit third term, hinting at the idea of a proportional relationship, as some other fragments do\(^{32}\). If we assume the Platonic context may point at a similarly political application in the original, and try to picture what kind of city is depicted in the fragments, we get an image of Heraclitus’ polis as structured by a threefold proportional ratio: the many (πολλοί), referred to with and without the article), the aristocrats (ἀριστοκρατοί, B29, unnamed but alluded as “the few”, ἐλίγοι, at B104), and the true ἄριστος, the one man (εἷς) worth ten-thousand (B49) — the best according to Heraclitus’ stricter and markedly epistemic standards, at odds with actual practice in the real polis of Ephesus.
On the point that the many are the intended objects of the analogy, although very extended since ancient times and certainly still dominant today among scholars, comparison of B97 with a couple other fragments suggests the possibility that Heraclitus has in mind the aristocrats, not “the people”:

B29: For the best (οἱ ἄριστοι) choose a single thing instead of all, ever-flowing glory among mortals. But the many are satiated like cattle (κτήνεα).

B104: What is their intelligence or understanding? They believe the bards of the people and take the crowd as their teacher, knowing that ‘many are wretched, but few are good’.

The dominant interpretation of B29 reads it as Heraclitus’ enthusiastic endorsement of the aristocratic ruling class, a praise of the nobles for their superior choice of a single thing instead of all the rest (ἓν ἀντὶ ἁπάντων), and as a typical depreciation of the many, who are likened to “cattle” (κτήνεα). Now, whereas the latter point can be defensible (with the observation that it doesn’t necessarily entail attributing to Heraclitus an anti-democratic political position, and that a comparison of the many with cattle and dogs, although possible, seems prima facie unlikely), some objections can be raised against Heraclitus’ alleged aristocratic sympathies, in spite of what may appear at first glance. Besides his persistent criticism of the many, Heraclitus would seem to align himself on the side of the nobles mainly because of the assimilation of κλέος and ἕν, which is taken to validate allegedly shared aristocratic values. B49, “One (man) is <for me> (worth as) ten-thousand, if he were the best (εἷς <ἐμοὶ> μύριοι, ἕαν ἄριστος ἰ, where it should be noted that the reference is made conditionally and in the subjunctive, thus suggesting an ideal rather than a factual reality) and B33, “It’s also law to obey the will [or ‘counsel’] of one (man)” (νόμος καὶ βουλῇ πειθεῖται ἕνος) have often been invoked to reinforce that view. It’s questionable, however, to take ἄριστος in B33 so flatly, as if it merely meant an aristocrat. As far as any one man does personify the true ἄριστος, the best candidate must be the shadowy figure of Hermodorus, called “the ablest” (ὁνήματος) among the Ephesians in B121, where the political invective is class-blind: “All adult Ephesians would deserve to be put to death and leave the city to beardless boys.”

Furthermore, the object of the choice of “the best” in B29, “ever-flowing glory”, is said to be ἐν ἄντι ἁπάντων, “one thing instead of all”, implying a mutual exclusion which doesn’t match Heraclitus’ own conception of the rationality of unity and totality, paradigmatically expressed elsewhere as an identity, ἐν πάντα (B50), and as a cycle or a reversible relationship, ἕκ πάντων ἐν καὶ ἐξ, ἑνός πάντα (B10). The phrase κλέος ἀέναι might conceal an ironic reference to the aristocratic illusion of pursuing immortality through fame, following the model of the Homeric warrior. Even if Heraclitus is giving to the aristocrats a better grade than to the many, they still ultimately fail the test, for from the viewpoint of his ethical intellectualism, it is σωφρονεῖν, “being of a sound mind”, not “ever-flowing” fame, that is the mark of ἀρετή, “supreme excellence and wisdom”, according to B112. If αὐτῶν in B104 refers to the same men who are designated “the best” (οἱ ἄριστοι) in B29, then these are probably so called ironically. Ephesian aristocrats, or their political operators in the assembly, perhaps even the speakers against Hermodorus, seem better candidates than the mob to stand for Heraclitus’ barking dogs. Independently of what the reference of ὁ δοκιμώτατος is in B28a (“The most reputed of men knows and guards mere appearances”: δοκέοντα ὁ δοκιμώτατος γινώσκει, φυλάσσει), whether it targets an aristocratic type, or individual figures of famous poets (say, Homer or Hesiod), the two final verbs—which describe the worthlessness of the epistemic relationship of the most reputed wise man to mere appearances—go well with the image of the barking dogs.

B97 voices a connection between dogs not recognizing something or someone whose presence they perceive beforehand and reactively barking. This may plausibly suggest a number of things. For instance, that just as good dogs, men in general are prone to be mistrustful of people, things or ideas they aren’t familiar with (whence the need for
adequate rearing and training). Alternatively, Heraclitean dogs might be meant to illustrate a special (political) case of human ignorance, representing traditional figures (likely poets) or maybe even some contemporaries who reacted loudly in disapproval to Heraclitus’ ideas or sympathies. In a moral and social context, B85 (on the difficulty of fighting θυμός and paying with ψυχή) and B43 (on the need of extinguishing ὕβρις) might serve to paint a fuller picture. Perhaps more to the epistemic point, B72 complements the critical analogy of the barking dogs with men who live unaware of the λόγος, the supreme γνώσις:

From that with which they associate (ὁμιλοῦσι) most continuously, (the logos that rules all things) from that they differ (διαφέρονται), and the things they come across (οἷς ἐγκυρεῦσι) every day, these appear alien (ξένα) to them.

The Heraclitean characterization of human life as epistemic alienation is here phrased as a failure to recognize the known: the unspecified men who are the grammatical subject are said to “differ” from that which is most familiar, mistaking the evident for the alien and unknown. Marcovich thought that λόγος “seems to be personified here as a close friend of men”, but remains a stranger in their minds. They are hopelessly lost in confusion or sunken in deep oblivion, and don’t have the first clue about what they really know and what they don’t (although they will believe otherwise). A richer description of this strange ignorance puts the paradox in these terms:

B17: For many men don’t think straight (φρονέουσι) about such things as they meet with, nor do they know (γινώσκουσιν) after having learned (μαθόντες) them, but fancy (δοκέουσι) themselves they do.

The general paradox, already explicit in B1’s contrast of the λόγος and the ἀξύνετοι ἄνθρωποι, is thus carefully developed: that which is most knowable and always nearby, remains unrecognized (B72). Men are alienated from that which is ever present (τὸ μὴ δῦνό ποτε, B16), they make no sense of “such things as they meet with” (ἐπὶ τῶν ἀπουθέτων ἡμῶν), and fall painfully short of φρονίμης (B2) and γνώσεως (B56), prisoners of their own defective μαθησι καὶ self-serving δόξα (B17), believing themselves they know what they don’t. Not even the poets and sages reputed as wisest (B40, B42, B56, B57) would pass the epistemic test, and all are declared to be “separated from” or “cut off” from wisdom (σοφόν ἔστι πάντων κεχωρισμένον, B108).

With this sketch of the background in mind, I suggest the Heraclitean use of the image of dogs was meant to stress human epistemic alienation regarding the λόγος, mirroring and substantially modifying the Homeric treatment of the theme of an unrecognized Odysseus back in Ithaca. If the saying had a sharper edge and implied specifically a political criticism, aristocrats need not be excluded, and can reasonably be seen as equally likely targets as the many. Heraclitus’ political model is centered in the supremacy of the law and is structured by an axiological threefold proportional ratio: the many relate to the few as the few relate to the one. The middle term thus appears simultaneously as better than the lower extreme and as worse than the higher. The Platonic context suggests a very similar model in the image of the flock, the guard-dogs and the shepherd. Plato’s use of the image of dogs may be thus reminiscent, not only of Heraclitus’ image, but also of his political model. Both uses of the image are irreducible, but they are also strikingly similar, and this fact suggests a deeper, more complex philosophical affinity than the rather simplistic, negative and condescending view of Heraclitus with which Plato is usually credited, an affinity which can be substantiated by the texts themselves and considerably expanded. The task is waiting for an updated critical assessment from current scholarship.

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Endnotes

1 I’m referring to the so-called “Universal flux theory” (πάντα τέλος), which stems from Plato’s Cratylus and Theaetetus, but is not backed by Heracleitus’ ipsisimma verba. Plato’s image of Heracleitus’ river ( notions of πάντα τέλος) which often passes as genuine, is likely an imitation of Heracleitus B12, rather than an actual quotation or a close paraphrase of a different original version of the river-statement; cf. Hüls 2009. For a thorough and updated discussion of the issue, see Frontoretta (2012, 2013, p. 83-93), and his contribution in this volume.

2 Including the famous passages in the Sophist on the Iasian and Sicilian Muses and Euxinicus’ speech in the Symposium (where the reference to Heracleitus is unmistakable and explicit), as well as many others in which Heracleitus is alluded to (like the so-called ‘cyclic argument’ in the Phaedo, and Diotima’s treatment of mortal nature in the Symposium, possibly the most widely recognized). I’ve briefly touched upon some Platonian relevant cases, from Apology to Sophist, cf. Hüls (2003a; 2003b; 2009; 2011; 2013).

3 Cf. R. II, 477a ff. Criticism of the epic poets is a central issue for the first outline of what the right poetiae for the proto-guardians should be.

4 Cf. DK21 B10, B11, B21, B14, B15 and B16. Xenophanes’ criticism of Homer and Heiods is grounded on the failure of their anthropomorphic conception of the divine and their depiction of the actions of the gods as outright immoral. The explicit mention of the term ἀληθινή, as opposed to reason ( λογιστικόν), as opposed to reason ( λογιστικόν), the “healthy” one ( ἀγνοῦντι) at 372e. The explicit mention of θυμός as “being present in’’ psyché testifies to an intimate connection among the two. This fits closely enough the text of Heracleitus’ B85 (on which see below, note 24).

5 Indeed, θυμός as the seat of passions, feelings, and desires is the root idea in both the denominations of the spirited and desirous parts of the irrational soul ( θυμωδεὶς and τὸ επαίσχυντον), as opposed to reason ( ὁ λόγος and τὸ λογιστικόν) in book IV.

6 Plato, R. II, 375el-376el (my translation). I have suppressed the narrative references to both voices (’I said’, ’he said’), and italicized the words closest to the text of DK22 B97.

7 Many editions of the Republic pass over the passage in silence. Guthrie (1975, p. 450, n. 3) briefly summarized it and was satisfied to observe that Plato “had a sense of humour’. In Canudos (1945) view the image is of little significance; but cf. Tait (1949, p. 205, n. 3). Anna (1981, p. 80) found it “disconcerting” that Plato’s “sole ground” for his claim about the edducability of the Guardians “Is an analogy with animals”. See also Sinclair (1948); and Saxenhouse (1978, esp. p. 892-895). Ferraro (2007, p. 200-ff) recognizes the recurrence of the comparison of dogs and Guardians in the Republic, briefly paraphrasing the passage of book II, but is silent about the possibility that Heracleitus’ fragments 85 and 97 may be in the background there; later on (p. 188, n. 15), though, he insightfully brings in the image of the harmony of bow and lyre from Heracleitus B51 in his interpretation of the three-part soul at the end of book IV.

8 This can be further analyzed as ‘lover of knowing’ and ‘lover of the known’, cf. Tait (1949, p. 207).

9 Adam (1902, note ad loc) refers to Brandt ( Zur Entwicklung. D. Phil. Lehr. u. d. Seelenlehren, p. 10) who “ingeniously takes ὕποκουρον as = σοφοῦς τῶν φάλαξιν”.

10 It’s not easy to even make out what the primary relevant meaning of the term ὅμως is here (”anger” and ”heart” as the seat of desire and strong emotions- are the most recurring choices in translations); the semantic range covers the notions of the self, the seat of life, feeling and thinking, so in a large measure, the meanings overlap with those of ψυχή, to which it is linked and opposed here. The Heraclean image would seem to be about selfhood, and the hard battle, an inner one, roughly anticipating Plato’s contrast of rational and irrational parts of the human soul. Cf. Democritus B216, which must be a quotation of a and comment on this very fragment: ὅπως μάχοιται μὲν χαλκίδων ἀνδρὸς ἐρ χρώματε εἰς γεωτέρες εἰσεύεται. It’s thus tempting to read B85 together with B97; see notes 8 and 9 above about B85’s echo at 374a-b.

11 Cf. the relevant ‘psychic’ fragments: DK22 B45, B107, B115, B117 and B118.

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13 This was the opinion of Sinclair (1948). See further on the philosophic significance and importance of the passage, Tait (1949, p. 203-211).

14 I’m aware only of four authors that have noticed this. Adam (1903) does mark the possible reference to DK22 B97 (and to B85 at 374a-b, with a reference to Ast), after pointing to a couple of very interesting parallels in the Odyssey (16.4 and 14.30, see below), without further developing the issue; Lascaris (1958, p. 338-fl); and M. Pabon and Fernández Galiano (1981, notes ad loc.), following closely Adam.

15 Cf. the relevant ‘psychic’ fragments: DK22 B45, B107, B115, B117 and B118.
authentic, then this would be the earliest recorded use of the word φιλόσοφος in the Greek language — and the only one in the whole Pre-Socratic tradition! —, though it would not refer to Heraclitus' own procedure.

27 The epigram (Anthologia Graeca 7.479, framed as an epitaph for his tombstone) is attributed to Theodondas (3rd century B.C.): Πέτρος Ευγό το πάλαι γεγο καί ατρόπατος επιβίωξα / την Ηρακλείδου ένδον ἐχα κεφαλήν: / αὐν με τρέφει κροκόλα ἑνών ἐν γαρ ἄμια / παραισόν οὐκόν εὐνόη τεταίαν: / αγαλλία δε βροτοι, καί ἀγάπης περ άσεσα. / Θει ἀλάξαντες δήμον έχον κίνει. Καί, / Α' ο ουντον λαγον και παλον/ ἐπιτηδεύ ο Κυζικηνός φησι μὴ δυνηθέντα

28 A move which seems rather common-place and recalls a well-known version of his death (D. L. 9.4: Νεάνθης δ' ὁ Κυζικηνός φησι μὴ δυνηθέντα). I quote Diogenes Laertius' version (Strabo's is 815); B13: Heraclitean ethics loves to hide.

29 Clause, following the first as explained above, can now be rendered "and the unrecognized strangers are a mismatch for 'every' mortal man". The syntax admits more than one construction: "The best choice one thing, ever-flowing glory, instead of all mortal things" (with "万物流"

30 The only other Heraclitean use of the word is in B104, "if we mean, that the mass of mankind is beautiful because they don't recognize him.

31 Several Heraclitean fragments deal with animals in one way or another. Excluding B97, B67 (the comparison of the soul to the spider, in Latin and probably not genuine, pace Nussbaum 1972) and the lice of B56, here is a list: B44: A move which seems rather common-place and recalls a well-known version of his death (D. L. 9.4: Νεάνθης δ' ὁ Κυζικηνός φησι μὴ δυνηθέντα.

32 In particular, see B87 (about the internal distinction of a 'human' character — ἄριστοι — and a 'divine' one — ἀρχόμενοι — on the basis of γνώμης ἐξειβεν, B97 (featuring the ratio πανοπλίας/ανθρώπων). B82 and B83. Kahn (1979, p. 175) presents B97 together with B87 (on the fool who gets excited at every (scoriales, πουλίακες). B125: on the recognition of Heraclitus by the audience of his speech. Kahn (1979, p. 175) believes that the epigram (cf. B125: ἄριστοι λόγοι) is attributed to Theodoridas (3rd century B.C.): ἃνει αὐτοῖς πολλοῖς ὑπὲρ τοῦ νόμου ὅκωσπερ τείχεος: μὴ δοκεῖτε παρακαταλείπετε τοῖς ἄλλοις πᾶσιν ἑωυτῶν ὀνήιστον ἀνθρώπων γένει συμβάλλειν καὶ σωτήριον, ἀνθρώποις δὲ ἄποτον καὶ ὀλέθριον. The only other Heraclitean use of the word is in B104, "if we mean, that the mass of mankind is beautiful because they don't recognize him.

33 The epigram (Anthologia Graeca 7.479, framed as an epitaph for his tombstone) is attributed to Theodondas (3rd century B.C.): Πέτρος Ευγό το πάλαι γεγο καί ατρόπατος επιβίωξα / την Ηρακλείδου ένδον ἐχα κεφαλήν: / αὐν με τρέφει κροκόλα ἑνών ἐν γαρ ἄμια / παραισόν οὐκόν εὐνόη τεταίαν: / αγαλλία δε βροτοι, καί ἀγάπης περ άσεσα. / Θει ἀλάξαντες δήμον έχον κίνει. Καί, / Α' ο ουντον λαγον και παλον/ ἐπιτηδεύ ο Κυζικηνός φησι μὴ δυνηθέντα

34 DK22 B19: οἱ ἄριστοι λόγοι οἱ πολλοί, καί ἀντὶς ἀνθρώπων οί δε παλαιά κεκαρισμένα οὐκ οὔτε καὶ προστάτες καταλύεται. My rendering takes ἀνθρώπων as masculine: "ever-flowing glory among (or simply, of) mortal men". The syntax admits more than one construction: "The best choice one thing, ever-flowing glory, instead of all mortal things" (with ἄριστοι... ὑπέρ τοῦ νόμου) or "The best choice one thing instead of all, ever-flowing glory instead of mortal things", as if ἄριστοι was implicitly understood between ἄριστοι and ὑπέρ τοῦ νόμου... One could punctuate after ἄριστοι, as Mouravie (2006) does: "The best choice one thing instead of all, ever-flowing glory. But of mortal things the many are satiated like cattle". Cf. especially Sider (2013, p. 327): "The entire fragment has always been read as if the two clauses were in complete contrast, although there is in fact no evidence for a μὲν in the first clause. Thus, instead of a contrast between the upper and lower classes, as is usually understood, the second clause, following the first as explained above, can be now be rendered 'and the majority [sc. of them, the aristoi] glut themselves like cattle'. In other words, Heraclitean ethics loves to hide, εἰ ἄριστοι are not in fact ἄριστοι, and some of them are no better than εἰ πολλοί, the people they generally despise.

35 Thus, although Heraclitus may not be a friend of εἰ πολλοί, neither is he to be taken as a staunch defender of the upper classes."
from Marcus Aurelius: ὥς μάλιστα διηνεκῶς ὁμιλοῦσι,
[λόγῳ τῷ τὰ ὅλα διοικοῦντι] τούτῳ διαφέρονται, καὶ τῶς καθ’ ἡμέραν ἐγκυροῦσι, ταῦτα αὐτοῖς ξένα φαίνεται. Assuming it’s not a mere paraphrase, it’s hard to say how far the intended quotation extends to (i. e., if it includes λόγῳ and the final words or not); Marcovich considered the whole last clause as belonging to Marcus; he was certainly right concerning οἷς καθ’ ἡμέραν ἐγκυροῦσι, which looks like an echo of τοιαῦτα … ὁκοίοις ἐγκυρεῦσιν in B17 (see below, note 45). The point at the core of this criticism of the many is the paradox that they ignore what they already know, or to put it another way, the common (ξυνός) remains for them a stranger (ξένος). So even if the authentic text didn’t mention λόγος, Marcus’ Stoicizing interpolated reference to it is probably on the right track.

44 MARCOVICH, 1967, p. 18. It’s noteworthy the similar ambivalent use of the pronouns in both B72 and B97.


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