PLUTARCH'S CONTRADICTIONS*

BY

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For one to find inconsistencies and contradictions in the works of so voluminous an author as Plutarch should not cause any surprise. After all, various discrepancies have been discovered in most writers and with much less literary output than Plutarch's. Yet, a closer examination of his contradictions shows that, as a rule, they are neither products of carelessness nor lapses of memory. One may then tend to believe that they simply reveal Plutarch's change of mind on a particular issue; this, however, is not so likely, and in any case it is hard to prove, given our inability to put his writings into an undisputed chronological order.[1] The *Quellenforschungen* of the last century would explain the contradictions by sedulously discovering sources for everything Plutarch wrote and ascribing his inconsistencies to them, that is to say to Plutarch's incompetence and failure to realize the disparity of the material on which he was drawing (cf.Brenk,3ff and nn.*ib.*).Fortunately, more recent scholarship on Plutarch has moved decidedly away from this tendency.

Similarly, others would connect his contradictions with his so-called eclec-

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The following works will be hereafter cited only by the author's name: D. Babut, *Plutarque et le Stoicisme* (Paris 1969); R. H. Barrow, *Plutarch and his Times* (London 1967); F. E. Brenk, *In Mist Apparelled. Religious Themes in Plutarch's Moralia and Lives* (Leiden 1977) and (Brenk 2), 'A Most Strange Doctrine: *Daimon* in Plutarch', *CJ* 69 (1973) 1–11; R. Flacelière, *Oeuvres morales* 1,1 (Budé 1987) VII–CCCXXIV and (Flacelière 2) 'Plutarque et la Pythie', *REG* 56 (1943) 72–111; H. A. Moellering, *Plutarch on Superstition* (Boston 1963); J. Oakesmith, *The Religion of Plutarch* (London 1902); D. A. Russell, *Plutarch* (London 1973) and (Russell 2) 'On Reading Plutarch's *Lives*', *G&R* 13 (1966) 139–154; K. Ziegler, *Plutarchos von Chaeroneia* (Stuttgart ²1964) = *RE* XXI,1 (1951) col. 636–962.

[1] The objective criteria on which C. P. Jones based his study 'Towards a Chronology of Plutarch's Works' (*JRS* 56 [1966] 61–74) are sound, but not without pitfalls. See Babut, 145 n. 3 (the case of a possible mistaken identity) and 116 n.1, where he expresses some reservations about Jones's conclusions. On the other hand, in authors so prolific as P. careful judgement and evaluation of internal evidence can be equally fruitful.

ticism, and it is perhaps true that, insofar as his works "semblent... parfois le rendez-vous de toutes des doctrines",[2] such conflicts are almost inevitable. Plutarch, however, is not an eclectic in a philosophical sense[3] and, as this paper will try to show, he very seldom, if at all, is drawn unawares into contradictions on account of the disparity of his conflicting sources. Are then his discrepancies to be assigned to some confusion in his own mind or to excited overstatements under pressure, as some scholars (e.g. Moellering, 136) have implied with special reference to his theological inconsistencies? This is partly, but only partly and with many qualifications, true. So, in the following pages I propose to discuss a number of Plutarch's contradictions and then suggest another factor to which these contradictions should, in my view, be attributed.

Before embarking on the task, however, some qualifications are necessary. I shall not concern myself with factual contradictions and other inconsistencies which are due either to Plutarch's sources in the *Lives* or to his defective understanding of them or, more generally, of the period with which he is dealing.[4] I shall not, for example, discuss discrepancies of the kind that occur between the *Life* of Kimon, where it is Kimon who lays the foundations of the long wall (13.6) , and the *Life* of Themistokles, where it is Themistokles who inaugurates the work (ch. 19) ; nor the inconsistencies found between the *Life* of Pelopidas and the *De genio Socratis*, as regards some details of the Theban conspiracy to free the city from Spartan domination;[5] nor indeed such contradictions as the one underlying the accounts of Demosthenes' and Phokion's Macedonian policies which, although diametrically opposite, are both approved by Plutarch, if implicitly, in the respective *Lives*.[6]

Again, I shall not discuss the rhetorical contradictions, as they are completely understandable in essays of an epideictic nature. Speaking, for instance of the virtue or fortune of Alexander, Plutarch first seems to concede to fortune (τύχη) all his military successes,[7] and a few paragraphs later wonders whether there is any single aspect of his activity that could be ascribed to fortune (340F).[8]

One might also find that some views seemingly endorsed by Plutarch, particularly in his *Quaestiones Convivales* but also in other dialogues, do not square with his known beliefs, or are somewhat different from his treatment of the same topics in a more systematic way elsewhere. But it is perhaps hazardous to charge him with inconsistency in these instances, because we cannot always be certain which speaker, or which *dramatis persona*, represents Plutarch's opinion.[9] Several of his writings, for example, bear witness to the fact that Plutarch always favoured simplicity and frugality;[10] and yet on the topic whether simple food or a variety of food is more easily digested, and therefore preferable, one gets the impression that Plutarch agrees with the advocate of variety (660Dff).[11] On the other hand, it is quite possible that Kleombrotus' views in the *De defectu oraculorum* were to some extent

[2] O. Gréard, *De la morale de Plutarque* (Paris ^{2}1874) 69.

[3] Almost all German scholars from Zeller onwards would label P. an eclectic, Ziegler not excepted (col.302/940). See also L. Robin, *La pensée grecque* (Paris 1963) 11 and J. R. Hamilton, *Plutarch Alexander. A Commentary* (Oxford 1969) xix. On the other hand, Babut (pp. 5–7, 529) completely denies this characterization, at least so far as P.'s relation to the Stoics is concerned, while, in my view, Barrow's (p. 72) clarification of how the terms 'eclectic' or 'syncretist' are to be understood in the case of P. is exactly to the point: "If these terms mean that he was willing to borrow, if he thought fit, from any system of philosophy, they are applicable; if they mean that he wedded borrowed elements into a system of his own, they are incorrect". Cf. also Oakesmith's remark on p. 180 below, and for the problem of philosophical eclecticism in general see J. M. Dillon–A. A. Long (ed.), *The Question of "Eclecticism"* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London 1988).

[4] This is an accusation commonly brought against P., and it is indeed true that P. "rarely makes an effort to grasp the historical background" (F. H. Sandbach in *CAH* XI, 700) and presents us "a millenium of history almost unshaded by sense of social or moral change" (Russell 2, 142). On this topic see also A. J. Gossage's remarks in T. A. Dorey (ed.), *Latin Biography* (London 1967) 64–5 and cf. B. Bucher–Isler, *Norm und Individualität in den Biographien Plutarchs* (Bern–Stuttgart 1972) 74init. But H. A. Holden was right to point out that P.'s lack of historical and political insight, though doubtless a fault, "must be considered as the natural consequence of the purely ethical aim of his biographies" (*Plutarch's Lives of the Gracchi*, [Cambridge1885] xi).

[5] For these inconsistencies see Ph. H. de Lacy – B. Einarson, *Moralia* VII (Loeb 1959) 363 n.b. To take another example, in the *Life* of Artaxerxes (29.7) Tiribazus the conspirator resists his arrest and fights to death, whereas in 168E he eventually surrenders himself. Compare also the different reasons for which a bride nibbles a quince in *Sol.* 20.4 and in *Quaest. Rom.* 279F.

[6] Contrast also *Demetr.* 8.1 with *Phok.* 23, *Per.* 11.5 with 19.1, and cf. A. W. Gomme, *A Historical Commentary on Thucydides* vol. 1 (Oxford 1959) 72f. (Also earlier *ib.* 63 n. 2).

[7] *De fort. aut virt. Alex.* 339A. But P. also says that the qualities of character which enabled Alexander to overcome Darius were not the work of τύχη;.

[8] Cf. also A. E. Wardman, *CQ* 5 (1955) 97f. and 100. For the inconsistencies between P.'s essays on Alexander and the *Life* proper see also Hamilton, xxxi f.

[9] But Brenk (p.85) goes too far when he says that, even in cases where P. speaks for himself, "we cannot be sure that the opinion put in his own mouth is the one most acceptable to him".

[10] Cf. 123D (ἀεὶ μὲν ὑγιεινότερα σώματι τὰ εὐτελέστερα), 125F, 150C–D, 158A, 406C–D, 609A, 644B, *C.Ma.* 6.2, *Kim.* 14.4, *Ages.* 14.1, *Kleom.* 13.1, *Tib. Gr.* 2.4, *Arist–C.Ma. Comp.* 4.5, *Ag., Kleom.–Gr. Comp.* 4.5 etc.

[11] I cannot see why D. Tsekourakis ('Vegetarianism in Plutarch's *Moralia*', *Aufst. u. Nied. d. röm. Welt* [*ANRW*] 36.I [1987] 389) takes P.'s remark in 660E as supporting the advocate of simple food, i.e. food of one kind, in this discussion. Note the more elaborate views of the variety-advocate and his appeal to Plato in 664A.

compatible with those of Plutarch himself. This will be discussed further below (p.185 and n.148; cf. also n.133).

In another much more interesting 'Table-talk' Lamprias (and in this case there can be little doubt that Plutarch uses his brother as his own mouthpiece) draws our attention to the harm involved in pleasures related to our sight and hearing as, for instance, when we watch debased spectacles or listen to degenerate music. Those who yield to such pleasures, he says, err out of ignorance of the harm done to their faculty of judgement, i.e. to the rational part of their *psychē* (706A–B) , whereas those who yield to other pleasures (related to our senses of taste, touch and smell) go amiss because of incontinence (705C: τῶν περὶ τὰς ἡδονὰς ἁμαρτανομένων, τὰ μὲν ἀκρασία τὰ δ' ἄγνοια ποιεῖ καὶ παρόρασις). We note that the words ἀκρατής, ἀκρασία, ἀκόλαστος, ἀκολασία are used indiscriminately in this discussion,[12] but in the *De virtute morali* Plutarch makes a clear distinction between *akrasia* and *akolasia* and asserts that, contrary to what we have just heard, faults related to pleasures and desires are due either to *akrasia* (when the reason fights the passion but is finally overcome by it) or to *akolasia* (when the reason does not resist but allies with the desires and is their advocate).[13]

On another occasion speakers examine reasons why the Pythagoreans would mostly abstain from fish. Plutarch believes that this practice arose from their regard for justice, since fish give man no excuse for treating

[12] Cf. 705D: τούτους (i.e. those who yield to the pleasures of sight or hearing) ἐκείνων οὐδὲν ἧττον ἐμπαθεῖς ὄντας καὶ ἀκολάστους ἀκρατεῖς ὁμοίως οὐ καλοῦμεν. See also earlier in 705C where *akrasia* is replaced by *akolasia* in the next line. Aristotle, however, would not agree with that view of Lamprias (Plutarch?); cf. *EE* 1230b ff and esp. 1231a23: περὶ δὲ τὰς δι' ὄψεως ἢ ἀκοῆς ἢ ὀσφρήσεως ἡδονὰς οὐθεὶς λέγεται ἀκόλαστος ἐὰν ὑπερβάλλῃ.

[13] Cf. 445E: ἡ δ' ἀκρασία τῷ μὲν λόγῳ σῴζει τὴν κρίσιν ὀρθὴν οὖσαν, τῷ δὲ πάθει φέρεται παρὰ τὴν κρίσιν ἰσχύοντι τοῦ λόγου μᾶλλον. ὅθεν διαφέρει τῆς ἀκολασίας· ὅπου μὲν γὰρ ἡττᾶται τοῦ πάθους ὁ λογισμὸς ὅπου δ' οὐδὲ μάχεται, καὶ ὅπου μὲν ἀντιλέγων ἕπεται ταῖς ἐπιθυμίαις ὅπου δ' ὑφηγεῖται συναγορεύων .... The inconsistency noted is perhaps due to the different character of the respective works. In the *Quaest. Conv.* terms are used loosely in a conversational manner, but the *De virt. mor.* is a philosophical treatise requiring a more technical vocabulary and closer definitions of terms. In substance, however, *akolasia* is a form of ἄγνοια (see the passage from the 'Table-talk' above 705C), for earlier it is related to false judgement. 445D: αὕτη (i.e. *akolasia*) μὲν γὰρ ἔχουσα καὶ πάθος καὶ λόγον, ὑφ' οὗ μὲν ἐξάγεται τῷ ἐπιθυμεῖν πρὸς τὸ αἰσχρόν, ὑφ' οὗ δὲ τῷ κακῶς κρίνειν προστιθεμένου ταῖς ἐπιθυμίαις καὶ τὴν αἴσθησιν ἀποβάλλει τῶν ἁμαρτανομένων. The same distinction between *akrasia* and *akolasia* is also made by Aristotle. Cf. *EN* 1146b20f, 1187a17, 1151a24 and *EE* 1231a25. For Aristotle's influence on P. in the sphere of Ethics see n. 121 below.

them badly as land-animals may do.[14] This agrees with what Plutarch says of the Pythagoreans in the *De sollertia animalium*, namely that they made a practice of kindness to animals in order to inculcate humanity and compassion in general (959F: οἱ Πυθαγορικοὶ τὴν πρὸς τα θηρία πραότητα μελέτην ἐποιήσαντο πρὸς τὸ φιλάνθρωπον καὶ φιλοίκτιρμον· ἡ γὰρ συνήθεια δεινὴ τοῖς κατὰ μικρὸν ἐνοικειουμένοις πάθεσι πόρρω προαγαγεῖν τὸν ἄνθρωπον). But in this same treatise Pythagoras is also represented as teaching that, by making away with animals which are not useful but harmful to us, we can profit without being unjust (964F: αὖθις δὲ Πυθαγόρας ἀνελάμβανε, διδάσκων ὠφελεῖσθαι μὴ ἀδικοῦντας· οὐ γὰρ ἀδικοῦσιν οἱ τὰ μὲν ἄμικτα καὶ βλαβερὰ κομιδῇ κολάζοντες καὶ ἀποκτιννύοντες).[15] This is perhaps a Plutarchean rather than a Pythagorean attitude, although the evidence from Pythagorean writers is somewhat inconsistent on this point.[16] In any case, in a long passage from Porphyry (*De abstinentia* 3.18) attributed to Plutarch, the modification supposedly made by Pythagoras above is removed: Plutarch here questions the Stoic belief that God created animals for the use of mankind (*fr.* 193.59 Sandbach [Teubner/Loeb]. Cf. Arnim, *SVF* 2.1152ff.) and wonders what use we are to make of flies, mosquitoes, bats, scorpions and the like (*fr.* 193.80) ; and if the Stoics admit exceptions to the rule that all animals have been created for our benefit, still we do not escape the charge of injustice, if we are allowed to harm not animals supposedly created for our use, but products of nature on a par with ourselves (*fr.* 193.89: οὐδὲ ἐκφεύγομεν τὸ ἀδικεῖν, ἐπιτιθέμενοι καὶ χρώμενοι βλαβερῶς τοῖς οὐ δι' ἡμᾶς ἀλλ' ὥσπερ ἡμεῖς κατὰ φύσιν γεγενημένοις).

To return to the *Quaestiones Convivales*: Did Plutarch approve of flute-playing at a dinner-party? His position is not very clear. In one place he appears to believe that so long as the flute-player performs decently it is fine (704C: κομψὸν ἦν ἀκρόαμα τὸ πρῶτον) ; but once he starts accompanying his music with licentious movements also carrying away the guests to such disgraceful conduct, he is certainly to be guarded against (704Dff).[17] On

[14] See 729E and cf. 995F, where one of P.'s arguments against eating flesh is that such a practice would make us more humane towards our fellow-men. Cf. also 959Df, 997Eff.

[15] To be precise, this, as well as the previous remark (959F above), is made by Autobulus, but we can hardly doubt that in this essay Plutarch "speaks through the authoritarian voice of his own father". (W. C. Helmbold in *Moralia* XII [Loeb 1957] 313). Tsekourakis agrees (p. 384–5) but, rather surprisingly, claims that Autobulus does not refer his beliefs to Pythagoreanism (p. 382). See, however, 959F and 964F above.

[16] Cf. Porphyry, *De abstinentia* 2.2, 3.26–27; Iambl. *V.P.* 85, 108; Diog.Laert. 8.12–13, 20, 23. For the relationship between P. and the Pythagoreans, as regards the reasons for meat-abstinence, see Tsekourakis's interesting study (n. 11) and cf. Brenk, 65ff.

[17] A similar position occurs again in 712F–713A: τὸν δ' αὐλὸν οὐδὲ βουλομένοις ἀπώσασθαι

another occasion he regards the philosopher who leaves a party in order to escape the music of a flute–girl as ridiculous (710E) ; for this is, as he says,[18] the most appropriate place to sport with such pleasures, and so he disagrees with Euripides' suggestion that music ought to be employed in cases of mourning for consolation rather than at dinner–parties, which are a joyful situation in themselves (*Medea* 190ff). By contrast, in his *Conjugalia praecepta* Plutarch is in full agreement with Euripides (143C–D: ὀρθῶς ὁ Εὐριπίδης αἰτιᾶται τοὺς τῇ λύρᾳ χρωμένους παρ' οἴνον· ἔδει γὰρ ἐπὶ τὰς ὀργὰς καὶ τὰ πένθη μᾶλλον τὴν μουσικὴν παρακαλεῖν ἢ προσελκύειν τοὺς ἐν ταῖς ἡδοναῖς ὄντας) , while in another 'Table–talk' he is against flute or lyre–music by itself, i.e. without accompanying words (713B: ... οὔτ' ἂν αὐλοῦ ποτε καθ' αὑτὸν οὔτε λύρας μέλει χωρὶς λόγου καὶ ᾠδῆς ἐπιτρέψαιμι). Nor is necessary, he continues, to introduce this kind of entertainment when our fellow–guests are capable of entertaining each other with their talk and so enjoy themselves without needing amusement from other sources.[19] This additional and unnecessary amusement, he goes on, is a sort of tastelessness (ἀπειροκαλία) and boorishness (ἀγροικία) , as was the case with Artaxerxes' gift to Antalkidas, when the former sent to the latter a wreath of roses and crocuses dipped in perfume; for thus the natural odour of the flowers was destroyed (713E). Yet, in the *Lives* of Pelopidas and Artaxerxes Plutarch repeats the same story, but in order to stress the honour conferred by this act, not its tastelessness.[20]

We saw above how Plutarch now agrees and now disagrees with Euripides' opinion concerning the use of music.This double exploitation of the same quotation is far from being unique.[21] With reference again to Euripides,

τῆς τραπέζης ἔστιν· αἱ γὰρ σπονδαὶ ποθοῦσιν αὐτὸν ... καὶ διεξῆλθε τῶν ὤτων καταχεόμενος φωνὴν ἡδεῖαν ἄχρι τῆς ψυχῆς ποιοῦσαν γαλήνην ... ἄν γε καὶ αὐτὸς τὸ μέτριον διαφυλάττῃ μὴ παθαινόμενος μηδ' ἀνασοβῶν ... .

[18] As a matter of fact, in this particular 'Table–talk' we have a dialogue between a Stoic sophist and a Stoic philosopher, Philip, who apparently represents P.'s opinion. Cf. also Babut, 258fin.

[19] Cf. 527B and Plato, *Prot*. 347C–D. By contrast, when some strife or acute rivalry amongst the guests threatens to spoil the party, μάλιστ' ἂν οὖν ἀκροαμάτων εἴη καιρὸς ἐν συμποσίῳ (713E–F).

[20] Cf. *Art.* 22.2 and *Pel.* 30.6. (Also Athenaeus 48E). But in the *Life* of Artaxerxes at least, Antalkidas is quietly criticized as being an apt person for the exquisite treatment that he received.

[21] Brian P. Hillyard (*Plutarch De audiendo: A Text and Commentary* [New York 1981] xxvf) rightly observes that the use of quotations, *exempla* and allusions is central to P.'s technique of persuasion. He further makes a distinction between quotations employed to lend authority to what he is saying and quotations simply ornamental, which sometimes fail to make precisely the point required.

there are two instances in the *Moralia* where Plutarch explicitly disapproves the view that εἴπερ γὰρ ἀδικεῖν χρή, τυραννίδος πέρι / κάλλιστον ἀδικεῖν (*Phoenissae* 524). In the *De aud. poet.* these and some similar lines are characterized as wicked and untrue (18E: μοχθηροὶ ... λόγοι καὶ ψευδεῖς) , while in his *De tuenda sanit. praec.* Plutarch is more straightforward: "εἴπερ γὰρ ἀδικεῖν χρή, φησὶν ὁ Θηβαῖος οὐκ ὀρθῶς λέγων, τυραννίδος πέρι" etc. (125D). In the *Comparison* between Nikias and Crassus, however, Plutarch is not so categorical but rather compromising. If wrong must be done, he says there, using the same quotation, one should not abandon justice for something trivial but only for something really great (4.3: ἀλλὰ πολλοῦ τιμητέον τὸ ἀδικεῖν, μὴ ῥᾳδίως μηδ' ἐπὶ τοῖς τυχοῦσιν ὥς τι φαῦλον ἢ μικρὸν προϊεμένους τὸ δίκαιον). In his treatise *De cohibenda ira*, to take another example, Plutarch disagrees with the epic line "ἵνα γὰρ δέος, ἔνθα καὶ αἰδὼς" (*Cypria fr.* 20,Kinkel) and contends that the exact opposite is true, namely that "in those who revere there is engendered the kind of fear that corrects behaviour" (Helmbold's translation–Loeb).[22] Yet, in the *Life* of Kleomenes Plutarch attributes the Spartan custom of honouring fear to their belief that it was fear of ill-repute that chiefly kept their constitution together (9.2) ; and he continues: καὶ τὴν ἀνδρείαν δέ μοι δοκοῦσιν οὐκ ἀφοβίαν, ἀλλὰ φόβον ψόγου καὶ δέος ἀδοξίας οἱ παλαιοὶ νομίζειν ... διὸ καὶ καλῶς ὁ εἰπών. ἵνα γὰρ δέος etc. (9.4–6).[23] Another quotation of which Plutarch now approves and now disapproves is Herodotus' opinion that women put off their modesty along with their undergarments. In the *De audiendo* he apparently refers to it with approval, when he compares women with the young adolescents who, "as soon as they lay aside the garb of childhood, lay also aside their sense of modesty and fear" (Babbitt's transl.–Loeb).[24] But in the *Conjug. praec.* he clearly expresses his disapproval; Herodotus was wrong, protests Plutarch, to have said such a thing; on the contrary, a virtuous woman puts on modesty in the place of the removed garment.[25]

[22] 459D: οὐ γάρ, ὡς ὁ ποιητὴς εἶπεν, ἵνα γὰρ δέος ... ἀλλὰ τοὐναντίον αἰδουμένοις ὁ σωφρονίζων ἐγγίνεται φόβος.

[23] Cf. Plato, *Euthyphro* 12B: ἐγὼ οὖν τούτῳ διαφέρομαι τῷ ποιητῇ ... οὐ δοκεῖ μοι εἶναι, ἵνα δέος, ἔνθα καὶ αἰδὼς ... ἀλλ' ἵνα γε αἰδώς, ἔνθα καὶ δέος εἶναι· ἐπεὶ ἔστιν ὅστις αἰδούμενός τι πρᾶγμα καὶ αἰσχυνόμενος οὐ πεφόβηταί τε καὶ δέδοικεν ἅμα δόξαν πονηρίας; Although P. here approves of the epic verse with which Plato disagrees, he in substance concurs with Plato, as the context of the *Kleomenes* passage shows. Cf. also *Laws* 647A ff and Hyperides, *fr.* 210 (Jensen, Teubner).

[24] 37D: καὶ καθάπερ Ἡρόδοτός φησιν ἅμα τῷ χιτῶνι συνεκδύεσθαι τὴν αἰδῶ τὰς γυναῖκας, οὕτως ἔνιοι τῶν νέων ἅμα τῷ τὸ παιδικὸν ἱμάτιον ἀποθέσθαι συναποθέμενοι τὸ αἰδεῖσθαι καὶ φοβεῖσθαι ... εὐθὺς ἐμπίμπλανται τῆς ἀναγωγίας. Cf. Herodotus 1.8.3.

[25] 139C: Οὐκ ὀρθῶς Ἡρόδοτος εἶπεν ὅτι ἡ γυνὴ ἅμα τῷ χιτῶνι ἐκδύεται καὶ τὴν αἰδῶ·

Passages of this kind suggest that Plutarch is apt to modify and adapt his material according to the immediate requirements of the subject under discussion (cf.n.84 below). This tendency of his can be also seen elsewhere. There are, for example, three places where Plutarch agrees with Heracleitus that it is better for one to conceal than to reveal one's ignorance;[26] but in a fourth instance he suggests that a youth should rather set forth his ignorance in public and thus cure it (43D: τάχα μὲν γὰρ οὐδ' ἀμαθίην κρύπτειν ἄμεινον, ὥς φησιν Ἡράκλειτος, ἀλλ' εἰς μέσον τιθέναι καὶ θεραπεύειν).[27] There are also three places where Plutarch refers with approval to the Pythagorean precept "Choose the best life, and habit will make it pleasant".[28] But when he wants to emphasize the power and significance of wisdom for a virtuous conduct, he does not hesitate to disagree with Pythagoras. No, he says in the *De tranquillitate animi*, it is not habit that makes the best life sweet, but wisdom (τὸ φρονεῖν) that makes a life both best and most pleasant at the same time.[29] Similarly, when Plutarch wants to disparage emotions completely, he has no qualms in opposing even his 'divine Plato'.[30] In the *De virtute morali*, where one of his targets is the Stoic doctrine of *apatheia* and emotions are said to be even useful for our moral conduct (cf. 451Df, p.18 and nn.81–83) , Plutarch appeals with approval to Plato's simile of anger as sinews of the soul (449F: διὸ καὶ νεῦρα τῆς ψυχῆς τὸν θυμὸν ὁ Πλάτων προσεῖπε...),[31] but in the *De cohib. ira* he refers to the same simile with disapproval (457B–C: οὕτως ἐκ τοῦ λυπουμένου τῆς ψυχῆς καὶ

τοὐναντίον γὰρ ἡ σώφρων ἀντενδύεται τὴν αἰδῶ.

[26] See *fr.* 95 (*DK*[6]): ἀμαθίην γὰρ ἄμεινον κρύπτειν. Cf. 439D, 644F, *fr.* 129 (Sandbach). Also 613B.

[27] Cf. Stobaeus 3.1.175: κρύπτειν ἀμαθίην κρέσσον ἢ ἐς τὸ μέσον φέρειν.

[28] 123C: Ἑλοῦ βίον τὸν ἄριστον, ἡδὺν δ' αὐτὸν ἡ συνήθεια ποιήσει. Cf. also 602C and (somewhat changed) 47B. For the strength and efficacy of habit in connection with the Pythagoreans see also 729E, 959F, 995F (p. 157 and n. 14 above).

[29] 466F: Οὐ γὰρ ἡ συνήθεια ποιεῖ τοῖς ἑλομένοις τὸν ἄριστον βίον ἡδύν, ὥς τις εἶπεν, ἀλλὰ τὸ φρονεῖν ἅμα τὸν αὐτὸν βίον ποιεῖ καὶ ἄριστον καὶ ἥδιστον. H.Bröcker (*Animadversiones ad Plutarchi libellum* περὶ εὐθυμίας [Bonn 1954] 71f) argues, but not convincingly in my opinion, that P.'s differentiation here is due to his anti-Stoicism, and relates this passage with 1073C–D and his lost essay Περὶ συνηθείας πρὸς τοὺς Στωικούς (Lampr. Catal. 78). See also Babut, 36ff and 95 n. 4. Note further (in connection with the above passage) that whenever P. disagrees with someone, whom he otherwise holds in high esteem, he is reluctant to name him. Cf. also the case of the quotation from Plato to be mentioned next (457C).

[30] Cf. *Per.* 8.2 and 120D (ὁ θεῖος Πλάτων).

[31] Cf. *Rep.* 411B: ...ἕως ἂν ἐκτήξῃ τὸν θυμὸν καὶ ἐκτέμῃ ὥσπερ νεῦρα ἐκ τῆς ψυχῆς... . Philodemus, however, attributed this simile to the Peripatetics. Cf. *De ira* 31.31 (Wilke, Teubner): ἔνιοι γοῦν τῶν Περιπατητικῶν... ἐκτέμνειν τὰ νεῦρα τῆς ψυχῆς φασι τοὺς τὴν ὀργὴν καὶ τὸν θυμὸν αὐτῆς ἐξαιροῦντας.

πάσχοντος ἀνίσταται μάλιστα δι ἀσθένειαν ὁ θυμός, οὐχὶ νεύροις, ὥς τις εἶπε, τῆς ψυχῆς ἐοικώς, ἀλλ' ἐπιτάμασι καὶ σπάσμασιν ἐν ταῖς ἀμυντικαῖς ὁρμαῖς σφοδρότερον ἐξανισταμένης).[32] We can say, therefore, that some of Plutarch's contradictions, and especially those regarding his different attitude towards the same quotation, arise from the different demands of his various subjects. But was Plutarch aware of these contradictions and if so, as I think he was, what made him disregard the fact completely? The answer to this question will manifest itself as we proceed.

Plutarch's attitude towards Epicurus and the Stoics[33] produces some of his most interesting inconsistencies and contradictions. It has been aptly observed that in his anti–Stoic and anti–Epicurean essays Plutarch uses the Stoics to belabour the Epicureans and the Epicureans to belabour the Stoics,[34] but apart from such polemics Plutarch echoes Epicurean and especially Stoic views in a good many places of his work. To start with the former, he employs Epicurean arguments to combat superstition in the *De superstitione*,[35] while in the *[Consol. ad Apoll.]*, the Plutarchean material, if not the authorship, of which cannot perhaps be excluded,[36] death is seen from the Epicurean point of view; to say nothing of the fact that, however anti-Epicurean Plutarch was,[37] it was the Epicurean ideal of life that is mostly pursued by his collocutors in the *Quaestiones Convivales* (Oakesmith, 41 n.1). But let us look into some passages more closely.

In the *De fraterno amore* Plutarch promptly endorses the widely held view that after the gods one ought to honour one's own parents. We owe this favour to them in return for their favours to us, when they were bringing us up (479F).[38] Now this view is not essentially different from the Epicurean

[32] A correction of Plato's opinion follows almost immediately. 457D: τὸ δ' ἐν τῇ ψυχῇ στῆσαι κατὰ θυμοῦ τρόπαιον... μεγάλης ἐστὶ καὶ νικητικῆς ἰσχύος, ὥσπερ νεῦρα καὶ τόνους ἀληθῶς ἐπὶ τὰ πάθη τὰς κρίσεις ἐχούσης. As Moses Hadas notes (*The Review of Religion* VI [1942] 272), when P. "finds himself at variance with his master, he does not oppose him openly but tends to make peculiar combinations and emphases of Platonic doctrine". On the above passage see also M. Pohlenz, *Hermes* 31 (1896) 332.

[33] For P.'s relationship with the Stoics see Babut's thorough and excellent study (p.1*); for his relationship with the Epicureans see Flacelière, CXXXIII–CLII and *id., Epicurea, H. Bignone* (Genova 1959) 197–215.

[34] H. Cherniss, *Moralia* XIII.2 (Loeb 1976) 371. Cf. also K. M. Westaway, *The Educational Theory of Plutarch* (London 1922) 38 n. 1.

[35] Cf. Flacelière, *Sagesse de Plutarque* (Paris 1964) 19.

[36] Cf. J. Hani, *Plutarque. Consolation à Apollonios* (Paris 1972) 27f. Also F. C. Babbitt, *Moralia* II (Loeb 1934) 105.

[37] On the whole P. was very critical of the Epicureans. But J. J.Hartman's verdict "Epicuream sapientiam totam destruit nullamque eius partem relinquit integram" (*De Plutarcho scriptore et philosopho* [Lugduni Batavorum 1916] 609) is an exaggeration. Cf. n. 35 above.

[38] P. closely follows Plato's *Laws* here. See also *Cor.* 36.2 (τὸ δ' εὐεργεσίας ἃς εὐεργετοῦντο

belief, quoted in the *De amore prolis*, that, contrary to the world of animals, human affection is not disinterested, but one loves with the prospect of some advantage (495A: τῆς ἀνθρωπίνης φύσεως μόνης μὴ προῖκα τὸ στέργειν ἐχούσης μηδ' ἐπισταμένης φιλεῖν ἄνευ χρείας). Yet in this essay, where Plutarch tries to show that human affection for children is greater than that of the animals for their offspring, he criticizes the Epicurean view (495A–B and esp.B: Ἀλλ' οὔτ' ἀληθὴς ὁ λόγος οὔτ' ἄξιος ἀκούειν).[39] Moreover, he appeals to the opinion of the poet Euenus that for a father a child is always a cause of fear or pain[40] and observes that, in spite of that, people do not cease rearing children, especially those who least need them, namely the rich. (For the rich would have no difficulty in finding someone to look after them in their old age — 497A). No, Plutarch asserts, parents do not love and labour for their children in order to reap advantages from them in their old age; most parents die before their sons come to some prominence (496E–F), while sons, on the other hand, feel no gratitude and do not honour their fathers, even when they are going to inherit a huge property; for they regard the inheritance as their due.[41]

Although Plutarch is on the whole critical of Epicurus, we sometimes find him recommending things which he otherwise censures in the context of his anti-Epicurean treatises. In the preface of the *Non posse*, for instance, he claims that those who undertake to correct other philosophers must first study their works carefully and "not mislead the inexperienced by detaching expressions from different contexts, or by attacking mere words apart from the things to which they refer" (Einarson's and De Lacy's transl.).[42] It is, therefore, surprising to see in another treatise (an educational one at that!) that Plutarch is openly in favour of interpolations in, re–writings of, and additions to poetical texts, if a moral lesson is thus to be gained (*De aud. poet.* 33C: Ὅθεν οὐδ' αἱ παραδιορθώσεις φαύλως ἔχουσιν...).[43] So, he not only quotes with approval an interpolation made by Antisthenes in the text

παῖδες ὑπὸ τῶν τεκόντων σέβεσθαι καὶ τιμᾶν οὐκ ἀνδρὸς ἔργον ἐστὶ μεγάλου καὶ ἀγαθοῦ;) and cf. Kock III, *adesp.* 371.

[39] Earlier he appeals to the verse μισθοῦ γὰρ ἀνθρώπων τίς ἄνθρωπον φιλεῖ; (Kock III, *adesp.* 218). For the same criticism see also *Adv. Colot.* 1123A.

[40] 497A: ἦ δέος ἦ λύπη παῖς πατρὶ πάντα χρόνον. (*fr.* 6. – Diehl, 94; West, 65).

[41] 497B: οἱ μὲν γὰρ παῖδες χάριν οὐδεμίαν ἔχουσιν οὐδ' ἕνεκα τούτου (i.e. for the sake of inheriting) θεραπεύουσιν οὐδὲ τιμῶσιν, ὡς ὀφείλημα τὸν κλῆρον ἐκδεχόμενοι.

[42] 1086D: ...μηδὲ φωνὰς ἀλλαχόθεν ἄλλας ἀποσπῶντα καὶ ῥήμασιν ἄνευ πραγμάτων ἐπιτιθέμενον παρακρούεσθαι τοὺς ἀπείρους. Cf. also 1108D.

[43] Note moreover that the time–distance between the two works is probably not great. The *Non posse* was written just after the *Adv. Colot.* (cf. 1086D), which was composed between 97 and 99 A.D. (See Jones, 72 and cf. K–D Zacher, *Plutarchs Kritik und der Lustlehre Epikurs, Eine*

of Euripides' *Aeolus*[44] and amendments to verses of Euripides and Sophocles made by Cleanthes and Zeno respectively, but also goes on to suggest amendments of his own to quotations from dramatic writers (33Dff).

In the same treatise there is a further swerving from consistency and from Plutarch's known beliefs and practices. At one point he appears to disapprove of allegorical interpretations of poetry, in cases where the poet shows clearly what he means (19Aff), and warns that an allegorical interpretation is potentially dangerous, because it may distort the real meaning of a story (19E: οὕς, i.e. μύθους, ταῖς πάλαι μὲν ὑπονοίαις ἀλληγορίαις δὲ νῦν λεγομέναις παραβιαζόμενοι καὶ διαστρέφοντες ἔνιοι...).[45] These injunctions are not, of course, in harmony with his own extensive use of allegory, especially in his *De Iside*,[46] nor with his beautiful allegorical myths in the Platonic manner in some other essays.[47] But despite his disapproval, he accepts the reality of the use of allegories, and only a few paragraphs later in the same treatise Plutarch says that one of the teacher's tasks is to teach the young how to recognize poetical personifications and allegories (23Aff).

Poetry, says Plutarch at another point, is an imitation of human lives and characters and as no one is perfect[48] but all are liable to passions, false opinions and sundry forms of ignorance, poetry imitates all these and so the young should be taught not only to praise but also to condemn a poem

Kommentar zu Non posse 1–8 [Kônigstein 1982] 14: *Non posse* and *Adv. Colot.* "sind sachlich und zeitlich eng verknüpft"); the *De aud. poet.* was possibly composed also c. 100, since it is not certain that the unnamed dead child of the *Consol. ad uxor.* 600F was Soklarus, for whom the *De aud. poet.* was partly written (cf. 15A). See Jones, 71, who, however, prefers a much earlier date for this essay (and so does Babut, 93, but for other reasons), and contrast T. Sinko, *Symbolae chronologicae ad scripta Plutarchi et Luciani* (Cracow 1947) 35.

[44] To Euripides' line τί δ' αἰσχρὸν εἰ μὴ τοῖσι χρωμένοις δοκεῖ; (Nauck, fr. 19), Antisthenes is said to have added at once: αἰσχρὸν τὸ γ' αἰσχρόν, κἂν δοκῇ κἂν μὴ δοκῇ.

[45] Babut (p. 375) is probably right in maintaining that P. silently criticizes the Stoic allegories here. Cf. also Russell (p. 81) and note Plato's rejection of such allegories in *Rep.* 378D–E and *Phaedr.* 229C–E. See also *[De vit. et poes. Hom.]* (Bernardakis) 92fin, 96, 100–102.

[46] For the use of allegorical interpretation as theological method see J. Hani, *La religion égyptienne dans la pensée de Plutarque* (Paris 1976) 121ff, and cf. J. G. Griffiths, *JEA* 53 (1967) 79–102 and *Plutarch's De Iside et Osiride* (Swansea 1970) 100. As for P.'s selective use of allegory see Moellering, 96ff.

[47] Notably in his *De sera* (563Bff), *De genio Socr.* (589F ff) and *De facie* (940F ff). It should be noted, however, that P.'s myths are hardly allegorical in the sense criticized in the *De aud. poet.* (cf. Plato's rejection of those allegories in n. 45). For P.'s use of myths and a detailed analysis of the above myths, see Y. Vernière, *Symboles et mythes dans la pensée de Plutarque* (Paris 1977) 57ff. For the last two cf. also W. Hamilton, *CQ* (1934) 24–30 and 175–82.

[48] This is a cardinal tenet of Plutarch. Cf. *Kim.* 2.4 (χαλεπόν ἐστι, μᾶλλον δ' ἴσως ἀμήχανον, ἀμεμφῆ καὶ καθαρὸν ἀνδρὸς ἐπιδεῖξαι βίον), *Kleom.* 16.8, *Di.* 2.5-6, *Aem.* 34.7–8, 36.6–9, *Moralia* 25C–D, 104C, 115E, 474A, 481F, 964D–E.

depending on its contents. For he who, enthralled by the fame of a poet or a poem, admires and accommodates himself to everything, just as those who would imitate Plato's stoop or Aristotle's lisp, becomes unwittingly inclined to be lured by what is base.[49] In a somewhat similar vein Plutarch says in the *De Iside* that it is not the beard or the threadbare cloak that make a philosopher.[50] But how could these utterances square with what Plutarch regards as a sign of moral progress in the *De profectibus in virtute*? Only then, he maintains in that treatise, can we believe that we are truly making progress, when we begin to love good men so much that, as we admire and adore not only our paragon's words but also his appearance, gait, look and smile, we are eager to adapt ourselves accordingly.[51]

To return to Plutarch's inconsistency, prompted by his anti–Epicureanism. The *De superstitione* clearly shows that he regarded superstition as a worse evil than atheism. For, as he remarks, atheists simply do not believe in the existence of gods, whereas the superstitious believe that gods do exist and are evil.[52] But apart from this essay, which is indeed both youthful and rhetorical, Plutarch attacks superstition, with more or less vigour, in a good many places in his writings[53] and Koets is certainly right in saying that "whenever Plutarch uses the word *deisidaimonia* he means a religiosity which he disapproves of".[54] This fact, therefore, may suggest, that what we have in the *De superst.* — at least so far as his attitude towards superstition is concerned — is a firm belief rather than just a manifestation of a "virulence agressive de la jeunesse".[55] Yet, when he deals with Epicurus, Plutarch takes a different view. Superstition, he says in the *Non posse*, ought to be removed from our belief in the gods, but, if this proves impossible, we should not cut away both together and thus kill the faith which most people have in the gods.[56] Now Babut maintains (p.523) that these two essays mark the two extremes of one and the same doctrine, and that the different character of the respective works is enough to explain the emphatic condemnation of superstition in the first and that of atheism in the second. He also claims that these two extremes are never unilateral, but they always presuppose a counterpart which, whether explicitly or implicitly, is always present in the author's mind; and he adduces as evidence several references[57] in which Plutarch indeed takes an equidistant stance from superstition and atheism. On these observations one could object: a) that the condemnation of superstition in the *De superst.* is far more emphatic than the condemnation of atheism in the *Non posse*; b) apart from the above references of equal condemnation, there are as many cases where Plutarch speaks scornfully of superstition only (see n. 53), whereas one can find no unilateral attack against atheism in his writings. This does not mean that Plutarch preferred atheism to superstition;[58] it only means that, while consistently holding superstition in contempt (cf. also its connection with the barbarians in n.53), he regarded atheism simply as an error of judgement. Flacelière,on the other hand, noticing the late date of the *Non posse*, revives an older view, mostly advanced by German scholars,[59] and believes that there was a development in Plutarch's religious attitude and that under the influence of his priesthood and time he gradually became more mystic and pious (and by implication more tolerant of superstition) as he grew older (p.CLI, and Flac. 2, p.110–11). The development theory, also shared by Russell (p.80), Vernière (n.47, p.XV) and others, seems to have obtained, but it should not escape us that in the *De Iside* (355D,378A,379E), which is even later than the *Non posse* (cf. Jones, 73) —and, what is more important, a sober and

[49] 26B: ὁ δὲ πάντα θαυμάζων καὶ πᾶσιν ἐξοικειούμενος καὶ καταδεδουλωμένος τῇ δόξῃ τὴν κρίσιν ... ὥσπερ οἱ τὴν Πλάτωνος ἀπομιμούμενοι κυρτότητα καὶ τὴν Ἀριστοτέλους τραυλότητα, λήσεται πρὸς πολλὰ τῶν φαύλων εὐχερὴς γενόμενος.

[50] 352C: Οὔτε γὰρ φιλοσόφους πωγωνοτροφίαι ... καὶ τριβωνοφορίαι ποιοῦσιν. Cf. also 52C.

[51] 84E: "Οταν οὖν οὕτως ἀρχώμεθα τῶν ἀγαθῶν ἐρᾶν ὥστε ... καὶ σχῆμα καὶ βάδισμα καὶ βλέμμα καὶ μειδίαμα θαυμάζοντες αὐτοῦ καὶ ἀγαπῶντες οἷον συναρμόττειν καὶ συγκολλᾶν ἑαυτοὺς ὥμεν πρόθυμοι, τότε χρὴ νομίζειν ἀληθῶς προκόπτειν. See further 84F.

[52] See especially 167B–E, 169Ff, 170Ff and cf. his approval of the Euripidean line from *Bellerephontes* (Nauck, *fr.* 292):"εἰ θεοί τι δρῶσι φαῦλον, οὐκ εἰσιν θεοί." (21A. Cf. also 1049E).

[53] See mainly 26B, 34A, 53E, 54C, 140D, 145C, 552A, 556B (n. 117 below), 579Ff, 1051E 1128D, *Marc.* 5.7, *Nik.* 23, *Nu.* 22.11, *Caes.* 63.11, *Aem.* 1.4, *Tim.* 26.3, *Per.* 6.1, 38.2, and the references in n. 57 below, where he equally attacks both superstition and atheism. Note also that P. tends to associate superstition with barbarians, while he tries to exonerate the Greeks from it. (See 756C, *Marc.* 3.6, *Pel.* 21.5, *Alex.* 2.9, *Sert.* 11.6, and cf. my article in *WS* 20 [1986] 234f). But these attacks are not at variance with P.'s known piety, for, as he affirms, the superstitious vilify the gods through the qualities they attribute to them. See previous note and cf. Oakesmith,179ff.

[54] P. J. Koets, Δεισιδαιμονία. *A Contribution to the knowledge of Religious Terminology in Greek* (Purmerend 1929) 78.

[55] So R. Klaerr, *Oeuvres Morales* II (Budé 1985) 246.

[56] 1101C: Δεῖ μὲν γὰρ ἀμέλει τῆς περὶ θεῶν δόξης ὥσπερ ὄψεως λήμην ἀφαιρεῖν τὴν δεισιδαιμονίαν εἰ δὲ τοῦτ' ἀδύνατον, μὴ συνεκκόπτειν μηδὲ τυφλοῦν τὴν πίστιν, ἣν οἱ πλεῖστοι περὶ θεῶν ἔχουσιν.

[57] 66C, 164E, 171E, 355D, 378A, 379E, *Cam.* 6.6, *Alex.* 75.2.

[58] Although in *De comm. notit.* 1075A P.'s polemical fervour against the Stoics makes him prefer for a moment the atheists to the Stoic theology. But see on this Babut, 460 n. 3.

[59] Cf. R. Volkmann, *Leben, Schriften und Philosophie des Plutarch von Chaeronea* (Berlin 1869) vol. 2, 260ff; R. Schmertosch, *De Plutarchi sententiarum quae ad divinationem spectant origine* (Leipzig 1889 — "certe aliter Plutarchus iuvenis sensit, aliter senex" in Griffiths [n. 46] 25 n. 2); R. Hirzel, *Plutarch* (Leipzig 1912) 8–10.

not a polemical treatise — Plutarch again assumes an equidistant position between superstition and atheism; to say nothing of the fact that it is in this late (perhaps his very latest) work that Plutarch, supposedly given to mysticism and demonology by then according to the development theory, undertakes to rationalize the Egyptian mythology.[60]

But here is another inconsistency with regard to superstition. In the *Life* of Solon Epimenides is praised for taking away the harsh superstitious practices of the Athenians and making them more decorous in discharging their religious duties, whereas in the *Life* of Numa Plutarch appears to approve of a somewhat opposite legislation, since Numa employed superstition to subdue and humble the minds of the Romans.[61] And above all, how are we to reconcile Plutarch's outright condemnation of superstition in the *De superst.* with the apparent demonology of his Delphic dialogues, his eschatological myths, his emphasis on and, in all likelihood, his belief in dreams, prodigies, oracles, omens and the like? This is too thorny a question to discuss here in any detail but, irrespective of the development theory, I would basically side with Erbse[62] in maintaining that there is almost nothing in the *De superst.* that cannot be paralleled to similar utterances of Plutarch elsewhere in his writings;[63] and I also believe that Plutarch's position in that

[60] In 353E, for example, P. claims that there is nothing irrational, fabulous or prompted by superstition in the rites of the Egyptian priests; and then he goes on to give a rationalistic explanation of two clearly superstitious practices of them. Another weak point of the development theory is, as Brenk (p. 65ff) has rightly observed, its apparent incompatibility with P.'s early Pythagorean mysticism as expressed in the *De esu carnium* and the *De sollertia animalium* (cf. also Brenk 2, p. 2 n. 5). On the other hand, R. M. Jones's (*op. cit.* n. 69, p. 27) opinion that it is in the *Non posse* that we have P.'s true convictions is even less endorsed by evidence, while Klaerr's (n. 55, p. 245) view that P.'s attitude changes from the *De superst.* (atheism is preferable to superstition) to the *De Iside* (atheism and superstition are equally condemned) and then to the *Non posse* (superstition is preferable to atheism) defies the relative chronology of the last two works. Pertinent to this discussion in general are Oakesmith (p. 179ff), Moellering (106ff) and H.Adam, *Plutarchs Schrift Non posse suaviter vivi secundum Epicurum* (Amsterdam 1974) 49–50.

[61] Contrast *Sol.* 12.6–8 (... καὶ φόβοι τινὲς ἐκ δεισιδαιμονίας ἅμα καὶ φάσματα κατεῖχε τὴν πόλιν ... οὕτω δὴ μετάπεμπτος ... 'Επιμενίδης ... εὐσταλεῖς ἐποίησε ταῖς ἱερουργίαις ...) with *Nu.* 8.4. (... ἐπηγάγετο τὴν ἀπὸ τῶν θεῶν βοήθειαν ... ἔστι δ' ὅτε καὶ φόβους τινὰς ἀπαγγέλλων παρὰ τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ φάσματα δαιμόνων ἀλλόκοτα καὶ φωνὰς οὐκ εὐμενεῖς, ἐδούλου καὶ ταπεινὴν ἐποίει τὴν διάνοιαν αὐτῶν ὑπὸ δεισιδαιμονίας. (Cf. Livy 1.19.1–5). For superstition as a political device see also 580A, *Sert.* 11.6f, *Eum.* 13.4–5 and, possibly, *Marc.* 6.11.

[62] H. Erbse, 'Plutarchs Schrift περὶ δεισιδαιμονίας', *Hermes* 80 (1952) 296–314.

[63] See mainly references in n. 53 above and cf. Brenk, *ANRW* [n.11] 260. Morton Smith (in H. D. Betz, *Plutarch's Theological Writings and Early Christian Literature* [Leiden 1975] 1 and 4 n. 4), who, as discreetly as Hartman (n. 37, p. 113), questions the Plutarchean authorship of the *De superst.*, tries to refute Erbse but not very convincingly. Moellering (p. 133–34) is also against Erbse, although he admits "the consistent loathing with which

essay does not really contradict the importance he attaches to dreams, oracles etc.[64] and, perhaps, not even his possible belief in evil *daimones*, for nowhere in this essay does Plutarch combat the belief in the existence of *daimones*; what he does combat and ridicule is the fear of them. Nor is there any clear distinction between gods and *daimones* in the *De superst.*[65] His demonology was not superstitious according to his own understanding of the term (cf. Griffiths, 26) and, in any case, what he attacks in the *De superst.* is an excessively irrational attitude and practice that disparages the Divine and humiliates man, not a religious faith that stresses human frailty and enhances the power of God, nor a philosophical attempt to resolve the problem of evil in the world. I shall return to this point later.

His relation with the Stoics is more complex. For, although Plutarch is also critical of their main doctrines, he resorts, much more frequently than in the case of Epicurus, to the Stoic arsenal to buttress his own opinions[66] and sometimes he appeals, either explicitly or implicitly, to Stoic teachings even in his anti–Stoic essays. For some this is a sign of his misunderstanding of Stoicism;[67] Babut, on the other hand, may be basically right when he insists that Plutarch was a determined adversary of Stoicism throughout his life.[68] At least, this is what a devoted Platonist — and Plutarch was a devoted Platonist[69] — must have thought of himself.

Plutarch regards *deisidaimonia*" (p. 73, cf. also p. 154), but Brenk (p. 14) has come out — at least partially — on his side. Cf. also Griffiths, 26.

[64] There is not, for example, a close relationship between P.'s belief in the apparitions of Dion and Brutus (*Di.* 2.3–6,55; *Br.* 36.6ff) and his description of the superstitious man under the influence of such visions in *De superst.* 165E–166A. For the importance attached by P. to dreams, portents etc., see Brenk, chs 9 and 10, pp. 184–235.

[65] See notably 165B and 171C and cf. Erbse, 298ff. But also in the *Non posse* 1092C superstition is a ταράττουσα ἔννοια περὶ θεῶν. Cf. also 1101D–E.

[66] See especially his *De aud. poet.* and cf. Babut, 88f.

[67] As, e. g. for Barrow, 103f. That P. misunderstood and misinterpreted the Stoics is also the opinion of Ziegler, who censures him with particular harshness. (Cf. col.119/756:" ... der mangelnde wissenschaftliche Ernst und die Unzulänglichkeit dieser Kritik an der Stoa. So viel Lahmheit, so viel streitsüchtige Voreingenommenheit nicht nur, sondern auch tatsächliches Missverstehen der Gedankengänge des Gegners ... "). But Cherniss is right to point out that P.'s account of the Stoic doctrines and even his manipulation of them, so as to serve his polemic, does not prove that he was "ignorant of their systematic philosophy and incapable of understanding what was intended by it" (n. 34, p. 404); although in his introduction of the *De comm. notit.* he, to some extent, retracts this. (*ib.*, 655: "Plutarch sometimes clearly misunderstands or misinterprets Stoic doctrines"). For a brief discussion of this problem and references to other scholars see also *ib.*, 401 ff.

[68] *Cf.* pp. 265ff, 529, 531. But see A. A. Long's qualifying remarks in his review of Babut's book in *CR* 22 (1972) 28 and cf. Cherniss, 369: "This opposition, extreme as it was in fundamental issues, did not imply disagreement with every Stoic attitude and tenet".

[69] Cf. Volkmann (n. 59), 8: "Den Höhepunkt aller Philosophie erblickt Plutarch in der

Now his amiable and courteous attitude towards contemporary Stoics could be satisfactorily explained away by an appeal to the goodness and kindness of Plutarch's own nature;[70] his eulogistic admiration for the younger Cato and his prompt recognition of the good results of Sphaerus' Stoic teaching in Kleomenes[71] are not quite compatible with the vehemence of his assaults against the Stoics elsewhere, but we could again accept Babut's distinction (pp.179–80, 267–68) between attacking ideas and attacking persons, as well as the generic difference between the *Lives* and the *Moralia*; we could also dispose of his almost enthusiastic comments on Stoic cosmopolitanism in the *De fortuna Alexandri* (329A–B), as well his remark that Alexander's conduct confirms the truth of the Stoic doctrine that whatever a wise man performs comprises all kinds of virtue,[72] as a usual rhetorical exaggeration.[73] But his treatise *De profectibus in virtute*, so far from being an epideictic oration, is in fact an anti-Stoic essay. Yet when Plutarch argues that, just as true love does not need witnesses but one enjoys its fruits even in secret, so should the lover of honour and wisdom have intercourse with virtue through his actions and keep his pride in himself, feeling no need for eulogists (80E: ... συνόντα διὰ τῶν πράξεων τῇ ἀρετῇ καὶ χρώμενον αὐτὸν ἐν ἑαυτῷ σιωπῇ μέγα φρονεῖν, ἐπαινετῶν καὶ ἀκροατῶν μηδὲν δεόμενον), he is somehow in line with the Stoic ideal of *autarkeia*.[74] And although at the beginning of this essay he impugns the Stoic teaching that there are no small and big vices, that badness is one and, unless one is absolutely perfect, one is bad,[75] he ends with the advice that we ought not to acquiesce

Philosophie Platos". And as Flacelière also remarks (p. CXXIV), despite his deep knowledge of all philosophical doctrines, P. "a toujours maintenu fermement sa pensée dans l'axe de celle de Platon, sans jamais perdre le cap". Cf. Russell, 63 and 69 ("a convinced Platonist"), but see also n.120 below. For a detailed study of P.'s Platonism see R. M. Jones, *The Platonism of Plutarch*, (Menasha Wisconsin 1916).

[70] Babut, 268f. Cf also Barrow, 147: "It was a mind essentially kindly, unwilling to think ill of anyone, tolerant... ". But he would not, perhaps, be so kind towards the Epicureans. See 399E, 420Bff, 720E–F, and cf. Russell, 66–7.

[71] Cf. *C.Ma.* 27.7: ... τοῦ φιλοσόφου Κάτωνος, ἀνδρὸς ἀρετῇ καὶ δόξῃ τῶν καθ' ἑαυτὸν ἐπιφανεστάτου γενομένου.; *Kleom.* 22.

[72] 332C–D: ἀλλὰ πᾶν ἔργον (i. e. of Alexander) ἐκ πασῶν ἔοικε τῶν ἀρετῶν μεμεῖχθαι βεβαιοῦντος αὐτοῦ τὸν Στωικὸν ἐκεῖνον λόγον ὅτι πᾶν ὃ ἂν δρᾷ ὁ σοφὸς κατὰ πᾶσαν ἀρετὴν ἐνεργεῖ. Cf. also n. 132 below.

[73] For to drive home his point the orator would glean from whatever source suited his purpose. One can also find several Stoic themes in the *De fortuna,* but Babut (p. 82–3) is right to dismiss these as mere *loci communes.*

[74] Cf. *SVF* 3.272. The Stoics moreover held that *aretē* is αὐτάρκης ... πρὸς εὐδαιμονίαν (*SVF* 3.685) Cf. also 3.49 and 208.

[75] 75F: πολλῶν ἀποριῶν ἐμπεπλήκασι τὴν φιλοσοφίαν, μεγίστης δὲ τῆς εἰς μίαν ὁμοῦ κακίαν πάντας ἀνθρώπους πλὴν ἑνὸς τοῦ τελείου τιθεμένης. See also earlier 75C–D and

in our failings, however small, but be always on our guard and vexed if vice finds its way even into the most insignificant of our errors (85E–F: μηδὲν ἔτι μικρὸν ἡγεῖσθαι τῶν ἐξαμαρτανομένων ἀλλ' ἐξευλαβεῖσθαι καὶ προσέχειν ... κἂν εἰς τὸ σμικρότατον ἡ κακία ποτὲ τῶν ἁμαρτημάτων ἐνδῦσα συγγνώμην πορίζηται). In other words, he, like the Stoics, seems to assume that true goodness is perfection.

It is in the same anti–Stoic essay also that he calls ἀπάθεια (a cardinal Stoic tenet)[76] a great and divine thing (83E: μέγα καὶ θεῖον),[77] while some paragraphs earlier he approves again, in his own diction this time, of the Stoic *apatheia* towards external goods.To remain unmoved and not be irritated by reports of someone's prosperity at the court or forum or through a profitable marriage is, he says, a sign that you are making ethical progress.[78] Are we then to weed out our πάθη, or are 'passions' even desirable — and, if so, to what extent — for one's ethical standing? And which passions — some or all of them? Plutarch is so inconsistent on this matter, that one may doubt whether he had himself reached a definite conclusion.[79] In one place he holds that all distempers and emotions of the soul are disgraceful (*De superst.* 165C: αἰσχρὰ μὲν δὴ πάντα τὰ τῆς ψυχῆς νοσήματα καὶ πάθη), but in another he speaks of only some emotions that are unhealthy and harmful (*De curios.* 515C: ἔστι τινὰ πάθη νοσώδη καὶ βλαβερὰ); and there is a third category consisting of emotions that are bad, but at the same time outgrowths, as it were, of a good nature such as excessive bashfulness, for example (*De vit. pud.* 528D: καὶ πάθη ψυχῆς ἐστιν οὐ χρηστὰ, χρηστῆς δὲ φύσεως οἷον ἐξανθήματα).

In the *De virt. mor.* also he criticizes the Stoic view that all emotions are errors and therefore "whoever grieves or fears or desires is guilty of error" (Helmbold – 449D. Cf. also *SVF* 3.501). In the same treatise, where Plutarch advocates, *inter alia*, what is more or less equivalent to the Peri-

cf. *SVF* 3.524ff and further below p. 21 and n. 132. For P.'s disbelief in man's perfectibility see n. 48 above.

[76] Cf. *SVF* 3.448 (φασὶ δὲ καὶ ἀπαθῆ εἶναι τὸν σοφὸν), 201, 1.449. Cf. also *[De vit. et poes. Hom.]* 134 (Bernard.): Οἱ μὲν Στωικοὶ τὴν ἀρετὴν τίθενται ἐν τῇ ἀπαθείᾳ.

[77] Cf. also *Publ.* 6.5 where P. comments on Junius Brutus' inflexibility in connection with the execution of his sons: ἦ γὰρ ἀρετῆς ὕψος εἰς ἀπάθειαν ἐξέστησεν <αὐτοῦ> τὴν ψυχὴν ἢ πάθους μέγεθος εἰς ἀναλγησίαν. οὐδέτερον δὲ μικρὸν οὐδ' ἀνθρώπινον, ἀλλ' ἢ θεῖον ἢ θηριῶδες.

[78] 78B: οὐ φαῦλον ἄν τι προκοπῆς εἴη σημεῖον ἡ πρὸς ταῦτα πραότης ἑκάστου καὶ τὸ μὴ ταραττόμενον μηδὲ κνιζόμενον ... ὁ γὰρ ἀνέκπληκτος ἐν τούτοις καὶ ἄτεγκτος ἤδη δῆλός ἐστιν εἰλημμένος ἧν προσήκει λαβὴν ὑπὸ φιλοσοφίας. (Cf. *SVF* 1.449). Note that in this essay ethical progress is identified with progress in philosophy.

[79] For P.'s attitude towards emotions, *apatheia* etc., see Babut's excellent treatment on pp. 321ff.

patetic notion of *metriopatheia*, i.e. emotion moderated and controlled by reason,[80] passions are not deadly enemies after all. We must only take our guard against excessive passions, because it is the excess that renders them harmful (452A–B). We are not, however, to eradicate them altogether, as the Stoics hold;[81] for when passions are moderate they can be put into the service of reason and help even to intensify the virtues: anger, for instance, will intensify courage, the hatred of evil will assist justice and so forth.[82] This is why, Plutarch continues, having realized the usefulness of the emotions legislators encourage through their constitutions the ambition and emulation of the citizens among themselves, while they also try to rouse and increase the bellicosity of their soldiers with trumpets and pipes.[83] This is the line of argument in the *De virtute morali*. But when Plutarch writes a special treatise on the control of anger, he is apt to maintain the exact opposite.[84] Courage, he says in the *De cohibenda ira*, does not need the bitterness of anger, for has been tempered by reason.[85] "Rage and fury" after all are "rotten and easily broken" (Helmbold). This is why the Lacedaemonians employ the playing of pipes to remove any anger from their fighting men , and before a battle they even sacrifice to the Muses in order that reason may keep abiding within them.[86]

But in dealing with the affection of anger Plutarch is far from consistent. In the same treatise he maintains that anger can be successfully checked in its beginning (454E). So he disagrees with the Peripatetic philosopher Hieronymus who believed that we have no perception of anger when it is coming into being, but only after it has established itself. And he appeals to Homer who portrays Achilles as being suddenly overcome by his grief (on hearing of Patroclus' death), but becoming slowly and gradually angry with Agamemnon (455A: θυμούμενον δὲ βραδέως τῷ 'Αγαμέμνονι).Yet in a fragment from his essay "On love" we read that love, contrary to anger, does not come suddenly and completely into being (*fr.* 137 Sandbach: ὁ ἔρως οὔτε τὴν γένεσιν ἐξαίφνης λαμβάνει καὶ ἀθρόαν ὡς ὁ θυμός, οὔτε...).[87] A similar inconsistency regarding anger can be also seen elsewhere. In the *De virt. mor.* Plutarch claims that the young are more "impetuous and fiery in their appetites" than the old because of the abundance and heat of their blood; by contrast, the old have small and weak desires, but their "reason increases more and more in vigour as the passionate element" of the soul "fades away together with the body" (Helmbold – 450F).[88] In the *An seni* also

[80] See esp. 451Bff. Cf. *[De vit. et poes. Hom.]* 135 (Bernard.): Οἱ δ' ἐκ τοῦ Περιπάτου τὴν ἀπάθειαν ἀνέφικτον ἀνθρώπῳ νομίζουσι, τὴν δὲ μετριοπάθειαν εἰσάγοντες.... See also Diog. Laert. 5.31 (ἔφη δὲ [i.e. Aristotle] τὸν σοφὸν ἀπαθῆ μὲν μὴ εἶναι, μετριοπαθῆ δέ.) and contrast with *SVF* 3.448 (n. 76 above). Approval of μετριοπάθεια in respect of grief is expressed in *[Consol. ad Apoll.]* 102D. But in the *De virt. mor.* P. does not use this term itself.

[81] Cf. *SVF* 3.443 ff. On the view that emotions should not be completely eradicated (after all, this is neither possible nor expedient, says Plutarch), see 443C and 451C (... καὶ σύμφυτον ἔχει [i.e. man] τὴν τοῦ πάθους ἀρχήν, οὐκ ἐπεισόδιον ἀλλ' ἀναγκαίαν οὖσαν, οὐδ' ἀναιρετέαν παντάπασιν ἀλλὰ θεραπείας καὶ παιδαγωγίας δεομένην. Read further *ib.*). Cf. also *[Consol. ad Apoll.]* 102C and *[De vit. et poes. Hom.]* 135 (previous note).

[82] 451E: ...τῷ λογισμῷ συμπαρόντα καὶ συνεντείνοντα ταῖς ἀρεταῖς ὁ θυμὸς τῇ ἀνδρείᾳ, ἡ μισοπονηρία τῇ δικαιοσύνῃ.... By contrast, as Babut has rightly observed (p. 324 n. 7), in the *De superst.* we read that a common accusation against all passions is that ταῖς πρακτικαῖς ὁρμαῖς ἐκβιαζόμενα κατεπείγει καὶ συντείνει τὸν λογισμόν (165C).

[83] 452B: ...ἐμβάλλουσιν εἰς τὰς πολιτείας φιλοτιμίαν καὶ ζῆλον πρὸς ἀλλήλους· πρὸς δὲ τοὺς πολεμίους σάλπιγξι καὶ αὐλοῖς ἐπεγείρουσι καὶ αὔξουσι τὸ θυμοειδὲς καὶ μάχιμον. Cf. also *fr.* 148,15 (Sandbach):< κατορθοῦσι δὲ μάλιστα> οἱ παραδεξάμενοι τὸν θυμὸν ὡς σύμμαχον ἀρετῆς, ἀπολαύοντες ὅσον αὐτοῦ χρήσιμόν ἐστιν ἔν τε πολέμῳ καὶ ... πολιτείαις. The association of anger with courage was in fact Peripatetic (cf. Cicero *Tusc.* 4.19.43: *Peripatetici ... iracundiam ... cotem fortitudinis esse dicunt*), although Aristotle would not regard rushing fearlessly in a state of 'passion' upon dangers as true courage, unless choice and motive were also present (cf. *EN* 1116b23ff and n. 85 below). Cf. also Philod. *De ira*, 32.

[84] As Babut has aptly remarked (*Plutarque de la vertu éthique* [Paris 1969] 172fin.), "P. ne s' est pas privé d' exploiter les mêmes materiaux dans des sens différents, voire opposés, selon les besoins du moment". This is his method also in the *Lives*. In each *Life*, C. B. R. Pelling observes (*JHS* 100 [1980] 131), "Plutarch selected the interpretation which suited the run of his argument". Cf. also Gossage (n. 4) 55–6.

[85] 458D–E: ἡ δ' ἀνδρεία χολῆς οὐ δεῖται· βέβαπται γὰρ ὑπὸ τοῦ λόγου. This is also the Aristotelian as well the Platonic view. Cf. Plato *Prot.* 360D (Ἡ σοφία ἄρα τῶν δεινῶν καὶ μὴ δεινῶν ἀνδρεία ἐστίν) , 350Cf, *Lach.* 195Aff, Arist. *EN* 1115b19 (καὶ γὰρ ὡς ἂν ὁ λόγος πάσχει καὶ πράττει ὁ ἀνδρεῖος) , 1116b3ff, b34 (οὐ δή ἐστιν ἀνδρεῖα [i.e. wild animals] διὰ τὸ ὑπ' ἀλγηδόνος καὶ θυμοῦ ἐξελαυνόμενα πρὸς τὸν κίνδυνον ὁρμᾶν) , *EE* 1229a1 (ἡ γὰρ ἀνδρεία ἀκολούθησις τῷ λόγῳ ἐστίν). For Aristotle's distortion of Socrates' thesis on *andreia* see J. A. Stewart, *Notes on the Nicomachean Ethics of Aristotle* (Oxford 1892) vol. I, 293 f.

[86] See also *Lyc.* 22–23 and cf. *[Inst. Lac]*. 238A–B. This practice of the Lacedaemonians, namely that they used flute–music at the battlefield in order to keep themselves calm and orderly and not to rouse their warlike spirit, as was the case elsewhere (see n. 83 and cf. Gellius 1.11.9), is well attested in antiquity. See mainly Thucyd. 5.70, Athen. 627Dff, Gellius 1.11.1–5, Val. Max. 2.6.2. But the evidence of 238A–B is somewhat contradictory. First we are told that their music and songs had κέντρον ... ἐγερτικὸν θυμοῦ καὶ φρονήματος καὶ παραστατικὸν ὁρμῆς ἐνθουσιώδους καὶ πρακτικῆς, then that καὶ οἱ ἐμβατήριοι δὲ ῥυθμοὶ παρορμητικοὶ ἦσαν πρὸς ἀνδρείαν καὶ θαρραλεότητα καὶ ὑπερφρόνησιν θανάτου, οἷς ἐχρῶντο ἔν τε χόροις καὶ πρὸς αὐλὸν ἐπάγοντες τοῖς πολεμίοις, and immediately afterwards that Lycurgus coupled fondness for music with military exercise ὅπως τὸ ἄγαν πολεμικὸν τῷ ἐμμελεῖ κερασθὲν συμφωνίαν καὶ ἁρμονίαν ἔχῃ.

[87] M. Pohlenz argues (*Göttinger Gelehrter Anzeiger* [1916] 548) that the above passage echoes Hieronymus' work on anger and is earlier than the *De cohib. ira* where P. opposes Hieronymus' view. But, as Russell (p. 80–1) has warned, "it is circular to deduce difference of date from difference of doctrine".

[88] See also *De lib. et aegr.* 9 (Ziegler–Pohlenz/Sandbach): ἐν νέοις ἀκμάζει τὸ ἐπιθυμητικὸν ... τοῖς μὲν γὰρ αἷμά τε θερμὸν ἐγκέκραται ... ὁ δὲ πρέσβυς τοῦ τε θερμοῦ προλιπόντος

Plutarch remarks that old age slackens and blunts some passions and desires, while some others it quenches and cools entirely (788F: τὰ μὲν ἀνίησι καὶ παραμβλύνει, τὰ δ' ὅλως ἀποσβέννυσι καὶ καταψύχει τὸ γῆρας). But in the *De cohib.* the picture changes; here we are told that the θυμοειδὲς (with which anger is so closely associated)[89] does not wither away spontaneously because of old age (453B: οὐ παρακμῇ τινι δι' ἡλικίαν ... ἀπομαραινόμενον), but because it receives the influence of excellent precepts. And further in the same treatise it is maintained that the weaker one's soul is the more irritable and prone to anger one becomes (457A–B: ἐν ταῖς μαλακωτάταις ψυχαῖς ἡ πρὸς τὸ λυπῆσαι ἔνδοσις[90] ἐκφέρει μείζονα θυμὸν ἀπὸ μείζονος ἀσθενείας). This is why women are more irascible (ὀργιλώτεραι) than men and so are the sick than the healthy, the old than men in their prime (καὶ γέροντες ἀκμαζόντων), the unfortunate than the prosperous. Anger therefore, concludes Plutarch, mostly arises from the pain and suffering of the soul on account of weakness.[91]

Yet, weakness and softness of the soul are not peculiar only to old men. In the *Life* of Coriolanus, for instance, Plutarch disapproves of Coriolanus' bitterness against the Roman populace, who rejected his candidacy for the consulship, and implies that his attitude was not a sign of ἀνδρεία, but evidence of ἀσθενείας καὶ μαλακίας, ἐκ τοῦ πονοῦντος καὶ πεπονθότος μάλιστα τῆς ψυχῆς ὥσπερ οἴδημα τὸν θυμὸν ἀναδιδούσης (15.5).[92] Plutarch's rejection of the Peripatetic view that anger is somehow connected with *andreia* (cf. n.83) also occurs in two places of the *De cohib.*[93] as well as in a fragment

ἤδη, ᾧ τὸ ἐπιθυμητικὸν ἀνεζωπυρεῖτο ... Cf. also Plato *Rep.* 328D (ὅσον αἱ κατὰ τὸ σῶμα ἡδοναὶ ἀπομαραίνονται, τοσοῦτον αὔξονται αἱ περὶ τοὺς λόγους ἐπιθυμίαι τε καὶ ἡδοναί.) and Arist. *Rhet.* 1389a7ff, 1390a11ff.

[89] On anger as an emotion related to desire see *De lib. et. aegr.* 1fin: ὅ γε μὴν θυμός, εἴτε τῆς ἐπιθυμίας ἐστὶν εἶδος κατ' ὄρεξιν ἀντιλυπήσεως ὑφιστάμενος εἴτε ἕτερόν τι καὶ διάφορον πολλάκις δὲ καὶ μαχόμενον πρὸς ἐπιθυμίαν πάθος. Cf. also Plato, *Rep.* 439E–440A, Arist. *De anima* 403a16 and *Rhet.* 1378a30, *SVF* 3.396, 416fin.

[90] Cf. references in previous note. Babut (p. 96–7) stresses particularly this point in order to show that, despite the apparent Stoic echoes of the *De cohib.*, P. does not follow the Stoics, since the latter associated anger with desire. But so, perhaps, did P. (see previous note). For the connection of anger with λύπη cf. also Philod. *De ira, fr.* A (Wilke).

[91] 457B: οὕτως ἐκ τοῦ λυπουμένου [μάλιστα] τῆς ψυχῆς καὶ πάσχοντος ἀνίσταται μάλιστα δι' ἀσθένειαν ὁ θυμός. In *Pel.* 21.6 the weak and wretched soul gives rise and harbours absurd and cruel desires (ἀσθένεια γὰρ καὶ μοχθηρία ψυχῆς ἐμφύεσθαι καὶ παραμένειν τὰς ἀτόπους καὶ χαλεπὰς ἐπιθυμίας.). Note that *mochthēros* can also mean 'suffering' and cf. n. 89 for the connection of *thymos* with desire.

[92] The same simile in 457A: ὡς γὰρ οἴδημα μεγάλης ἐστὶν ἐν σαρκὶ πληγῆς, οὕτως ἐν ταῖς μαλακωτάταις ψυχαῖς ... See 457A–B above.

[93] See 456F (... θυμοῦ κατανοεῖν φύσιν, ὡς οὐκ εὐγενὴς οὐδ' ἀνδρώδης οὐδ' ἔχουσα φρόνημα καὶ μέγεθος) and 458E (n. 85 above).

from his lost work "On anger". But the evidence from the latter is really quite contradictory. First, it is asserted that all human actions done under the influence of anger (ὀργῇ χρώμενοι) are of necessity blind,[94] senseless and entirely unsuccessful. In the sequel, however, Plutarch makes a rather strange distinction between the words θυμὸς and ὀργὴ and says that "those men do best who accept" τὸν θυμὸν ὡς σύμμαχον ἀρετῆς, ἀπολαύοντες ὅσον αὐτοῦ χρήσιμόν ἐστιν (fr.148.15), but "expel from their souls its abundance and excess", ὅπερ ὀργή τε καὶ πικρία καὶ ὀξυθυμία λέγεται, νοσήματα ἥκιστα ταῖς ἀνδρείαις ψυχαῖς πρέποντα (148.19. Sandbach's translation – Loeb).[95]

Let us conclude our discussion of particular passages by returning to Plutarch's relationship with the Stoics and examining his views on suicide, which the Stoics not only accepted, and in some cases encouraged, but also in several instances practised.[96] Plutarch, once more, is not consistent. In the *Demosth–Cic. Comparison* (ch.5) he deplores Cicero's disgraceful attempts to escape death, whereas he expresses his admiration for Demosthenes' well–prepared suicide. Similarly, commenting on Themistokles' death, he says that ἄριστα βουλευσάμενος ἐπιθεῖναι τῷ βιῷ τὴν τελευτὴν πρέπουσαν (31.5), while he indirectly criticizes Perseus for preferring, out of cowardice and *philopsychia*, to crown with his presence Aemilius' triumph instead of making away with himself (*Aem.* 34.3–4); his narratives also of the last hours of Brutus and the younger Cato unmistakably show respect and admiration for these men, although not, necessarily, for their very last act in particular.[97] In the *De tranquil. an.*, however, Plutarch is clearer. For the wise man, he tells us, if some great unforeseen disaster overtakes him, the harbour of rescue is always close "and he may swim away from his body, as from a leaky boat" (Helmbold).[98] Yet, when Plutarch attacks Epicurean

[94] This is also Stoic. Cf. 450C (*SVF* 3.390): ὁ Χρύσιππος εἰπὼν ὅτι τυφλόν ἐστιν ἡ ὀργή ... .

[95] From the above passage it would appear that *orgē* is a kind of *thymos*. But according to the Stoics *thymos* is a kind of *orgē* and especially its beginning. Cf. *SVF* 3.395: θυμὸς δὲ ὀργὴ ἐναρχομένη. (See also 394). Plato and Aristotle treat the two words as synonyms (see esp. *Rhet.* 1369a4–7 and b11) and so does P. in his *De cohib. ira* and elsewhere. Note moreover that the emotion of anger is characterized as νόσημα here, and cf. 165C (p.169 above) where πάθη are classed with νοσήματα.

[96] Cf. Musonius *fr.* 28 (Hense); Seneca *Epist.* 30.2, 58.35f, 70.16, 120.14f; Epict. *Dissert.* 1.24.20, 25.17f, 2.1.19; M. Aurel. 5.29, 8.47; *SVF* 3.757 ff.

[97] Cf. *Br.* 52, *C.Mi.* 67ff (cf. also 781D). Some other instances showing that P. did not condemn, but rather favoured suicide under certain circumstances: *Sert.–Eum. Comp.* 2.7–8, *Br.* 40.7–9, *Oth.* 15.5, 17, 18.3; *Moralia* 242D, 250A, 253B–E.

[98] 476A: ... παραλόγου δέ τινος καὶ μεγάλου καταλαβόντος καὶ κρατήσαντος ἐγγὺς ὁ λιμὴν καὶ πάρεστιν ἀπονήξασθαι τοῦ σώματος ὥσπερ ἐφολκίου μὴ στέγοντος. For the same similes (leaky boat, death=harbour) see also Nauck, *adesp.* 369, Cicero, *Tusc.* 5.40.117

materialism in the *Non posse* and focuses on the fact that this philosophy offers no source of help to those who have met with calamity, he notes (apparently with approval) that, contrary to the Epicurean view that since death is not to be feared no one needs to live in pain,[99] a shipwrecked voyager does not give up living but is kept from sinking by the hope that he will manage to swim through to safety.[100] In the *Life* of Kleomenes also, where both cases, for and against suicide are put forward, one has the impression that Plutarch sides with Kleomenes who regarded suicide as a sign of cowardice (31.9: ὁ δὲ πρὸς πόνους καὶ ταλαιπωρίας ἢ ψόγους καὶ δόξας ἀνθρώπων ἀπαγορεύων ἡττᾶται τῆς αὑτοῦ μαλακίας).[101] But in the *Comparison* with the Gracchi it is said of Kleomenes, who did commit suicide after all, that αὐτὸν εὐτόλμως ἀνεῖλε (3.1).

Our discussion so far has established, I think, that Plutarch makes conflicting statements on many subjects. This inconsistency is often prompted by the special demands of the topic with which he is dealing each time (cf. n.84) or, in other words, by the target he aims at, by the moral message he wants to convey. But what underlies this moralizing tendency, which so often

(next note), Seneca, *Epist.* 30.2, Longinus 9.7. See further 476B–C, where P. quotes with approval Eurip. *Bacchae* 498 (Λύσει μ' ὁ δαίμων αὐτός, ὅταν ἐγὼ θέλω), which he takes to refer to committing suicide. (So also Horace, *Epist.* 1.16.78–9).

99 Cf. Diog. Laert. 10.125, *Princ. doctr.* II and XX (Diog. Laert. 10.139 and 145), *Gnom. Vat.* 9 (Κακὸν ἀνάγκη, ἀλλ' οὐδεμία ἀνάγκη ζῆν μετὰ ἀνάγκης — cf.Sen. *Epist.* 12.10 or Usener's *Epicurea fr.* 487) and 38, Cic. *Tusc.* 5.40.117 (Usener, 499: *quid est tandem ... quod laboremus? portus enim praesto est [quoniam mors ibidem est] aeternum nihil sentiendi receptaculum*). The Epicureans, therefore, apparently allowed suicide, although there is also evidence to the contrary. Cf. Diog.Laert. 10.119, 126; Sen. *Epist.* 24.22 (Usener, 496: *ridiculum est currere ad mortem taedio vitae*) and 23 (Usener, 497–8); Lucr. 3.79 ff; *Gnom. Vat.* 38. Seneca was probably right: *obiurgat Epicurus non minus eos qui mortem concupiscunt, quam eos qui timent* (*Epist.* 24.22).

100 1103E: καίτοι νεὼς μὲν ἐκπεσὼν ἐπιβάτης διαλυθείσης ἐπ' ἐλπίδος ὀχεῖταί τινος ὡς γῆ προσέξων τὸ σῶμα καὶ διανηξόμενος. But P. fails to take into account the self-preservation instinct. On the other hand, Bröcker (n. 29, p. 177) and J. Dumortier (*Oeuvres morales* VII,1 [Budé 1975] 309fin.) believe that P. also opposes suicide in two places of his anti-Stoic essays (1042C and 1063C). But what P. does oppose there is not suicide as such, but the Stoic criterion for opting out for it, which is not the presence of good or evil but of things that are indifferent. See also Babut (p. 100 and n. 7 *ib.*) who regards even the passage from the *Non posse* as irrelevant (cf. also Adam [n. 60] 65 n. 103). Yet the context of this passage (see esp. the immediately preceding Epicurean belief: ὁ γὰρ πόνος ὁ ὑπερβάλλων συνάψει θανάτῳ — Usener, 448) as well as its imagery bring it very close to 476A (n. 98 above), which is definitely to the point.

101 For the same reasons Brutus had initially criticized Cato's suicide, but subsequent circumstances made him also change his mind. *Br.* 40.7: Νέος ... καὶ πραγμάτων ἄπειρος ... ἠτιασάμην Κάτωνα διαχρησάμενον ἑαυτόν, ὡς οὐχ ὅσιον οὐδ' ἀνδρος ἔργον ὑποχωρεῖν τῷ δαίμονι καὶ μὴ δέχεσθαι τὸ συμπῖπτον ἀδεῶς, ἀλλ' ἀποδιδράσκειν. Νυνὶ δ' ἀλλοῖος ἐν ταῖς τύχαις γίγνομαι.

pushes him even to glaring contradictions, is an important aspect of his personality itself, namely his practical spirit and observance of common sense. For Plutarch did not study antiquity for professional reasons or for antiquarian and scientific interest only, or out of a desire to be wise or even an innate yearning for truth; he mainly did so for a practical purpose, namely to glean from Greek and Roman literature as many moral lessons as he could, expound them in his writings and thus contribute to the moral edification and improvement of his contemporaries. The remarks of Trench[102] are very much to the point here. Plutarch's recommendations, he says, "are both practical and practicable. Practical because they bear directly on the matter in hand and are well adapted to bring about the results desired. And practicable for they make no difficult demand on men and are fairly within reach of all, who are seeking in earnest to shun evil". Plutarch appeals to humanity at large, as Oakesmith (p.208) has also remarked. The very titles of several of his essays[103] as well the emphasis which he appears to lay on minor virtues and vices[104] would suffice to manifest his practical ethics. His declamatory works 'On the fortune or virtue of Alexander' and 'On the glory of the Athenians' should also be considered in this connection; for it has been rightly argued that, however rhetorical, they may also reflect views really held.[105] One should further note that his attacks on the Stoics and Epicureans in his philosophical treatises are not on a strictly theoretical level, but more often concerned with the practical consequences of their respective doctrines (cf.p. 180f and pertinent nn.below). Even his Platonism contains a large empirical element and, perhaps, it is not fortuitous that the theory of ideas, that is to say the cornerstone of Plato's philosophy, is conspicuous by its almost complete absence from the extant works of Plutarch.[106] Finally, his so successful occupation with biography demonstrates from another an-

102 R. C. Trench, *Plutarch, his Life, his Parallel Lives and his Morals* (London ^{2}1874) 130.

103 "How to tell a flatterer from a friend", "How to profit by one's enemies", "How should young men study poetry", "On the control of anger", "Precepts concerning good health", "Marriage precepts", "Political precepts" etc.

104 As, e.g. on *praotēs*. Cf. J. de Romilly, *La douceur dans la pensée grecque* (Paris 1979) 275 ff; H. Martin Jr, *GRBS* 3 (1960) 65f; and my still unpublished doctoral thesis *Some Related Ethical Concepts in Plutarch* (London 1978) 61f. As for the minor vices or weaknesses, see P.'s essays "On garrulity", "On meddlesomeness", "On bashfulness", "On love of wealth" etc. Cf. also Greard (n. 2), 157ff, 186f, 326ff.

105 Cf. Russell 2, 141 n. 4. J. Cl. Thiolier (*Plutarque, De gloria Atheniensium* [Paris 1985] 22fin.) holds a similar view. See especially 345C (ἂν γὰρ ἀνέλῃς τούς πράττοντας οὐχ ἕξεις τοὺς γράφοντας) and 347E (οὐ γὰρ οἱ λόγοι ποιοῦσι τὰς πράξεις, ἀλλὰ διὰ τὰς πράξεις καὶ ἀκοῆς ἀξιοῦνται).

106 Cf. Westaway (n. 34) 36 n.1 and 232, and V. L. Johnson, *CJ* 66 (1970) 26ff and n. 7 *ib.*

gle Plutarch's practical spirit and morality. Since Ethics was the branch of philosophy that fostered especially the study of individual lives as exemplars of moral precepts,[107] the genre of biography suited perfectly the personality of Plutarch as, on the one hand, it satisfied his own deep interest in ethical matters and, on the other, it had, at the same time, a valuable practical purpose (cf. Gossage [n.4], 49), namely that of guiding people towards virtue by means of concrete, historical examples.[108]

Another indication, to be more specific, would be the very nature of some of his advice, the practicality of which is sometimes almost absurd and amounts to self–deception. In the *De tranquillitate*, for instance, he echoes the well-known commonplace that a sensible man is not to compare himself with his superiors and be depressed but rather with his inferiors and be cheerful;[109] and some paragraphs earlier we are advised that , since we cannot force circumstances to suit us, we must not only accept them, however they turn out, but also be prepared to take advantage of them.[110] Similarly, in the *Conjug. praec.* Plutarch appears to be more concerned about the stability of the wedlock than the happiness of the consorts. A wife, he says (140B), ought not to become indignant and angry at her husband's possible adventures with a *hetaira* or a maid–servant, thinking that it is his respect for her that makes him share his licentiousness with another woman; by the same token, if a wife happens to be of puritanical nature, uncompromisingly chaste or without charms, her husband is advised to consider that he cannot have a wife and a *hetaira* in one and the same woman (142C).

To maintain one's cheerfulness, Plutarch implies in the *De tranquillitate*, one should not be vexed by the faults and shortcomings of others (468Bff); several matters are administered by crooked natures and it is not one's duty to correct them (468C: τὸ μὲν οὖν ἀπευθύνειν ταῦτα μὴ νόμιζε σὸν ἔργον

[107] Cf. D. R. Stuart, *Epochs of Greek and Roman Biography* (Berkeley 1928) 121.

[108] Cf. *Aem.* 1.1: ...ὥσπερ ἐν ἐσόπτρῳ τῇ ἱστορίᾳ πειρώμενον ἁμῶς γέ πως κοσμεῖν καὶ ἀφομοιοῦν πρὸς τὰς ἐκείνων ἀρετὰς τὸν βίον ; but also *Demetr.* 1.6: ...οὕτω μοι δοκοῦμεν καὶ ἡμεῖς προθυμότεροι τῶν βελτιόνων ἔσεσθαι καὶ θεαταὶ καὶ μιμηταὶ βίων, εἰ μηδὲ τῶν φαύλων καὶ ψεγομένων ἀνιστορήτως ἔχοιμεν. Cf. further *Per.* 2.2–4 and *Arat.* 1.5. P.'s *Lives*, Westaway succinctly remarks (n. 34, p. 202), "form one long deliberate lesson in morality as drawn on history", or, as A. Wardman puts it, "The Lives are in general a study of aretē as it is active in the world" (*Plutarch's Lives* [London 1974] 94). See also Pelling (n. 84), 135.

[109] 470B: Καίτοι καὶ τοῦτο μέγα πρὸς εὐθυμίαν ἐστί, τὸ ... τοὺς ὑποδεεστέρους ἀποθεωρεῖν καὶ μή, καθάπερ οἱ πολλοὶ πρὸς τοὺς ὑπερέχοντας ἀντιπαρεξάγουσιν. Cf. also Democr. *fr.* 191 (DK[6]), Seneca, *De ira* 3.31, Teles 42.8 (Hense).

[110] See 467A–C and cf. 112E–F; Epict. *Dissert.* 2.5.3 f; Musonius *fr.* 38; Seneca, *De tranquil. an.* 10.1,4.

εἶναι).[111] These remarks are hardly, of course, in keeping with Plutarch's genuine interest in man's ethical improvement,[112] and we would attribute this and similar inconsistencies to the haste in which this essay was composed (see its preface), were it not for some other passages also manifesting a similar practical spirit in the extreme. The following is, perhaps, the limit that he reached in this respect. At one point of the *De capienda ex inim. utilit.* Plutarch says that the best way for someone to avoid envying his friends is to accustom himself to praising his enemies and feeling no pang at their prosperity; but in the very next paragraph he suggests that, in case there is no other way for a man to free himself from being contentious, envious or quarrelsome, he should accustom himself to being vexed and whet his contentiousness against his prospering enemies, so that he may not envy and maltreat his friends.[113]

So it is in passages like the above that Plutarch's practical spirit is most evident. Besides, in the contradictions, which we have already discussed, we frequently saw that it is practical considerations that virtually determine not only his position on various matters and situations but also his moral attitude. There is no need to introduce flute–performances in the symposium when the fellow-guests are enjoying their conversation; but if some strife or acute rivalry breaks out and threatens to spoil the party, then is the time for the host to introduce this kind of entertainment (cf. n.19). To take another example, it is his concern for the moral standards of the youth that makes him advocate the falsification of some verses which might lead the young astray, or the avoidance of allegories which he himself so much enjoyed employing. For the same reasons, we also saw, poets and poems are not to be evaluated on their artistic merits only but mainly on their moral contents (p.162f.).

In the *De cohibenda ira* it is the practical purpose of reducing anger by revealing it as a dreadful passion with not even one positive side–effect that makes Plutarch contradict his views on anger elsewhere (pp.160f., 171 above and nn., and cf. Babut, 96) and oppose even his 'divine Plato' (p.160 above

[111] Cf. Seneca, *De ira* 2.10.6 ff, *De tranquil. an.* 15.5 and Democr. (n. 109 above).

[112] "Plutarch's central interest is in helping people to lead good lives" — Sandbach (n. 4, p. 697–8); and Hartman comments (n. 37, p. 668) that P. "nihilque magni fecit quod non ad aeternam hominum pertineret salutem et felicitatem". Cf. also Gomme (n. 6), 56 n. 1 and Barrow, 82.

[113] Cf. 91A–B: ἀπωτάτω καθίσταται τοῦ φθονεῖν ... φίλοις ... ὁ τοὺς ἐχθροὺς ἐθισθεὶς ἐπαινεῖν καὶ μὴ δάκνεσθαι ... εὖ πραττόντων. 91E: ἀλλὰ μεῖζον καὶ κάλλιον, ὅτι τῷ δικαίῳ χρῆσθαι καὶ πρὸς ἐχθροὺς ἐθισθέντες οὐδέποτε μὴ προσενεχθῶμεν ἀδίκως ... τοῖς φίλοις. But see 92A–B: ἔθιζε σεαυτὸν δάκνεσθαι τῶν ἐχθρῶν εὐημερούντων, καὶ παρόξυνε καὶ χάραττε τὸ φιλόνικον ἐν ἐκείνοις θηγόμενον.

and nn. 31 and 32). It is the same practical spirit again that urges him now to attack superstition, on the grounds, *inter alia*, that the fear it engenders condemns man to complete inertia (165D: φόβων δὲ πάντων ἀπρακτότατος καὶ ἀπορώτατος ὁ τῆς δεισιδαιμονίας),[114] and now to appeal to it, if the various superstitious fears can shock the wicked and make them lead a better life.[115] As Moellering has remarked (p.153) "in his zeal to suppress vice and encourage the ethical life Plutarch is reluctant to bypass any emphasis which may contribute to his purpose. Besides, the precedent established by the myth of Er in the *Res Publica* of his esteemed master, Plato,[116] when combined with his thought that fear of punishment in Hades might have a desirable moral effect (cf. also p.141), must have pushed him with an almost irresistible impulse to compose something similar". Indeed, Thespesius, the hero of the myth of the *De sera*, undergoes a real metamorphosis; a glimpse of the underworld transforms him from a villain to a most honest and righteous person, and as this improved Thespesius, it could similarly improve others too (cf. Moellering, 155, Erbse [n.62], 303, Koets [n.54], 68). Hence the demonology of this essay,[117] which contrasts so strikingly not only with the *De superst.*, but also with his scorn and rejection of the traditional Hades in other writings.[118] On the other hand, the inactivity

[114] The fear springing from superstition is the most paralysing and incurable fear, because its object is not one particular thing but everything, since ὁ δὲ θεοὺς δεδιὼς πάντα δέδιε (165D).

[115] Cf. 1104B: ὥστε καὶ προσεμφορητέον ἐκείνοις [i.e. the wicked. So Pohlenz in Teubner — Einarson–de Lacy in Loeb: ἐκείνης] τῆς δεισιδαιμονίας καὶ κινητέον ἐπ' αὐτοὺς ἅμα τὰ ἐξ οὐρανοῦ καὶ γῆς δείματα καὶ χάσματα καὶ φόβους καὶ ὑπονοίας, εἰ μέλλουσιν ἐκπλαγέντες ὑπὸ τούτων ἐπιεικέστερον ἔχειν καὶ πραότερον. The above passage is in fact in the context of an anti–Epicurean polemic. But see also *Nu.* 8.4 (n. 61) and most notably the myth of the *De sera*. Moellering's (p. 68–9) equation of *deisidaimonia* with the scruples of one's conscience in 100F (... τῆς δὲ ψυχῆς [i.e. of one who lives in vice] πτοῖαι καὶ ὄνειροι καὶ ταραχαὶ διὰ δεισιδαιμονίαν) is ingenious, but P. cannot have used the word in this sense, as is shown by 165D–E and 166C where the context is almost identical. (Moellering notes the significant difference between 100F and 166C). In my view, 100F simply suggests the relationship between superstition and vice. See n. 117 below.

[116] See *Rep.* 614Bff and cf. *Gorg.* 523A ff, *Phaedo* 81–82 and *Laws* 905 B–C.

[117] But earlier in the *De sera*, where the demons of the Plutarchean underworld are given free rein and appear to gloat over discharging their duties (see esp. 567C), superstition is closely connected with manifestations of vice. Cf. 556B: ἀλλ' ὅπου φιλοπλουτία καὶ φιληδονία περιμανὴς καὶ φθόνος ἄκρατος ἐνοικίζεται μετὰ δυσμενείας ἢ κακοηθείας, ἐνταῦθα καὶ δεισιδαιμονίαν σκοπῶν ἀνευρήσει ὑποκαθημένην. This passage is one more indication that the *daimones* whom the superstitious man wrongly fears are not identical with the demons of the underworld. Cf. p. 167 and n. 65 above, and for the connection of superstition with vice see also 53E, 54C and 100F (cf. n. 115).

[118] Cf. *De aud. poet.* 16Eff (esp.17B: πάλιν αἱ περὶ τὰς νεκυίας τερατουργίαι καὶ διαθέσεις ὀνόμασι φοβεροῖς ἐνδημιουργοῦσαι φάσματα καὶ εἴδωλα ποταμῶν φλεγομένων καὶ τόπων ἀγρίων καὶ κολασμάτων σκυθρωπῶν οὐ πάνυ πολλοὺς διαλανθάνουσιν ὅτι τὸ

which fear dictates is obviously less harmful to other people than the activity of emotions. This could hardly have escaped Plutarch who was so much concerned with matters of good human relationships. Yet his practical mind cannot accept idleness and, therefore, makes him put aside for a moment the consequences of emotional activity. Similarly, he could not but have agreed with Heracleitus that it is better for one to conceal than to reveal one's ignorance. But in the *De audiendo* Plutarch is first and foremost a teacher with certain practical targets in mind. And how can a teacher help his pupils more effectively than by encouraging them to bring out into the open and discuss freely the matters that vex them most? So now he is sceptical about the rightness of Heracleitus' maxim; perhaps, he says, it may not be better to conceal one's ignorance, but rather set it forth in public and cure it (p.160 above). Finally, it is again his extreme practicality , combined with his attempt to belittle Nikias,[119] that makes Plutarch the moralist, who holds justice in the highest esteem (see, e. g., *Praec. ger. reip.* 808A–B), appear here to condone, contrary to his beliefs, even wrongdoing if it is inevitable for accomplishing some great military achievement (cf. p.159 above).

His rare deviations from Plato[120] and his occasional leanings towards the practical Ethics of Aristotle[121] are also a result of the same practicality and

μυθῶδες αὐταῖς πολὺ καὶ τὸ ψεῦδος ὥσπερ τροφαῖς τὸ φαρμακῶδες ἐγκέκραται.) and *Non posse* 1105B: καίτοι ταῦτα (i.e. the afterlife tortures etc.) οὐ πάνυ πολλοὶ δεδίασι, μητέρων ὄντα καὶ τιτθῶν δόγματα καὶ λόγους μυθώδεις.

[119] Cf. my article in *ICS* 13 (1988) 319ff.

[120] Consider, for instance, the argument and conclusion in the *Amatorius*, or his esteem for poetry (see also below p. 183). Gréard (p. 70) came as far as to maintain that, despite his Platonism, "sur des articles essentielles, sur le fond même de la doctrine, non seulement Plutarque s' écarte du maître, mais il le combat."; and T. R. Glover (*The Conflict of Religions in the Early Roman Empire* [London 1909] 110) believed that P.'s philosophy "was not Plato's, in spite of much that he borrowed from Plato, for its motive was not the love of truth" (but cf. n. 141 below). More recently, P.'s Platonism is disputed by Johnson (n. 106, p. 26f) and M. H. Dörrie ('Le Platonisme de Plutarque' in *Actes VIII Congrès* [Paris 1969] 519ff), who almost explicitly denies it altogether (p. 520: "sa propre pensée philosophique le conduisit à des conclusions que le platonisme officiel répudiait". Cf. also p. 529). In a later article Dörrie lays particular stress on the Pythagorean elements in P. (*Philomathes* — Ph. Merlan Festschr. [The Hague 1971] 39) but, as R. M. Jones has established (n. 69, p. 9), irrespective of any leanings towards other schools of thought, in his philosophical works P. uniformly follows Plato and "whatever elements have been added from other sources are not incompatible with his interpretation of Plato". One may add that P.'s departures from Plato are almost always connected with his intense practical bent and overwhelming moralizing outlook and never constitute a conscious effort to refute Platonic doctrines. Cf. n. 69 above.

[121] For the Aristotelian influences on P. see chiefly his *De virtute morali* and the pertinent studies of Babut (n. 84) and S. G. Etheridge (*Plutarch's 'De virtute morali'. A Study in extra–*

the ethical aims he wanted to serve. As Oakesmith aptly remarks, Plutarch's 'eclecticism' "is based upon the needs of the moral life" (p.220) and "was unified by the ethical aim which constantly inspired his choice" (p.211). And it was "his acutely practical bent" again that enabled Plutarch to play down and keep the mystical side of Platonism in check, despite the intellectual tendencies of his era.[122]

Being a Platonist (cf.n.69), Plutarch attacks with vehemence the materialistic systems of the Stoics and the Epicureans. But on account of his practical spirit he feels at the same time free on the one hand to glean from both whatever suits his purpose at any particular time and, on the other, to use the Stoics to combat the Epicureans and the Epicureans to combat the Stoics. Why should one live unknown and not engage in some political activity, as the Epicureans hold?[123] Had Themistokles lived unknown, Greece would not have repelled Xerxes, neither would Rome have been saved, if Camillus had lived thus. Epaminondas was of no benefit to the Thebans as long as they did not know him; but once he became known and was entrusted with authority, he saved his ruined city and even delivered Greece from subjection (*An recte...* 1129C). After all, Plutarch remarks elsewhere, the inactivity which the Epicureans preach is contrary to their doctrine regarding

Peripatetic Aristotelianism [Cambridge Mass. 1961]). Cf. also M. Pinnoy in *Zetesis* (E. de D. Strycker Festschr. [Antwerpen 1973]) 224f, and G. Verbeke in I. Düring and G. E. L. Owen (eds.), *Aristotle and Plato in the Mid-fourth Century* (Göteborg 1960) 236f. P.'s indebtedness to Aristotle is further evident in his *Lives*, of course, since Biography itself was practically developed into a literary genre by the Peripatetics. The extent of their influence on the biographies of P. is debatable, as the decisive evidence is lacking (cf. A. Momigliano, *The Development of Greek Biography* [Cambridge Mass. 1971] 19ff, and his 'Second Thoughts on Greek Biography' in *Mededelingen der Koninklijke Nederlandse Akademie van Wetenschappen aft Letterkunde* 34,7 [Amsterdam–London 1971] 9–10), but Russell 2 (p. 144) is probaly right when he says that "the Aristotelian ethical doctrines are the basis of Plutarch's views on character." See also Bucher–Isler (n. 4), 61 and 91, and cf. n. 13fin. above.

[122] So Oakesmith (p. 200 n. 2 and 213ff), who vigorously — and dexterously in my opinion — combats the views of those who regarded P. as a forerunner of Neoplatonism (e.g. Volkmann [n. 59] v. 1 p. 15, Trench [n. 102] 112 and, after Oakesmith, Glover [p. 111], D. W. Gundry [*Hibbert Journal* 44, 1946, 351] and Johnson [n. 106] 27). P.'s demonology, after all, had its roots in Plato and Xenocrates and, as Brenk 2 (p. 1) rightly holds, he was "much less a Neoplatonist... than is sometimes asserted" (cf. also *ib.*, 11 and Brenk, 6 n. 13). See, e.g., Pl. *Symp.* 202E and cf. Erbse (n. 62), 304ff and nn. *ib.* See also Flacelière, *Dion–Brutus* (Budé 1978) 15: "La démonologie, pour Plutarque, se fonde d' abord sur les conceptions de Platon." For the influence of Xenocrates see esp. *De Iside* 361B, *De def. orac.* 416Fff and cf. Brenk 2, 6f. On the other hand, Vernière's analysis of the Plutarchean myths leads her to the conclusion that P.'s demonology was mainly influenced by Pythagorean elements (n. 47, p. 265).

[123] See references in Usener's *Epicurea, fr.* 551 and cf. O. Seel, *Antidosis* — W. Krauss Festschr. (Wien 1972) 357ff.

pleasure, because on taking under consideration the exploits of men of action one is compelled to acknowledge that τῷ πρακτικῷ βιῷ τὸ ἡδὺ πλέον ἢ τὸ καλόν ἐστιν (*Non posse* 1098A). Besides, man's character becomes stiff and rusty on account of inaction and so not only will his inherent powers decay and perish as they are not used, but he will himself miss the opportunity of benefitting his fellow–men, which also yields much of the pleasure the Epicureans so eagerly seek for.[124] This is also why Plutarch objects to calls for the early retirement of public men, for just as rust corrodes iron, idleness will extinguish their qualities and render their excellence ineffective (*An seni.* 783F: καθάπερ ἰῷ σίδηρον ὑπ' ἀργίας τὴν πρακτικὴν ἀρετὴν σβεννυμένην περιορῶντας).[125]

As for the Stoics, it is his practical spirit again, his practicality as expressed in the observance of common sense, that mostly accounts for his attacks against them.[126] How, for instance, is it not contrary to common sense to believe that a bad man may become good without perceiving any difference?[127] Or that one who becomes wise even for a second is as happy as one who has been living all his life in virtue?[128] But having said that, the Stoics also hold that virtue (i.e. wisdom, for the two are identical in their philosophy — cf. *SVF* 3.557ff) lasting but a short time yields no profit; for what is the use of one's becoming wise just before he dies?[129] And how is it not absurd that the foolish are ugly and only the wise are handsome? And even more absurd that, when the ugly become handsome, those who hap-

[124] For the Epicureans believed that τὸ εὖ ποιεῖν ἥδιόν ἐστι τοῦ πάσχειν (1097A and 778C). Why, then, refrain from political activity, which provides so many opportunities for conferring benefits?

[125] See further *ib.* 788B, 792B–C and cf. 1129C–D: ἡσυχία δὲ κωφὴ καὶ βίος ἑδραῖος ἐπὶ σχολῆς ἀποκείμενος οὐ σώματα μόνον ἀλλὰ καὶ ψυχὰς μαραίνει ... οὕτω τῶν ἀκινήτων βίων ... ἄν τι χρήσιμον ἔχωσιν μὴ ἀπορρεόντων ... φθείρονται καὶ ἀπογηράσκουσιν αἱ σύμφυτοι δυνάμεις. But P. fails to consider the case of unworthy or incompetent public men.

[126] See especially his *Stoicos absurdiora poetis dicere* and cf. Babbitt's remarks in *Moralia* I (Loeb 1927), 399. Occasionally, however, P.'s anti–Stoicism appears to ignore practical considerations. The view, for instance, in 964F (p. 157 above) that there is nothing wrong in killing injurious animals is more typically Plutarchean than that in his anti–Stoic fragment from Porphyry, where slaying any animal necessarily incurs the charge of injustice (*ib.*).

[127] *De Stoic. repugn.* 1043A: τὸν ἐκ φαύλου γενόμενον σπουδαῖον ἀγνοεῖν τοῦτο καὶ τῆς ἀρετῆς μὴ αἰσθάνεσθαι παρούσης ἀλλ' οἴεσθαι τὴν κακίαν αὐτῷ παρεῖναι, πῶς οὐκ ἐστιν ἀτοπώτατον; See also 75C–D and cf. *SVF* 3.539–41 (540: γίνεσθαι δὲ καὶ διαλεληθότα τινὰ σοφόν).

[128] *De comm. notit.* 1062A. See also *De Stoic. repugn.* 1046C–E and cf. *SVF* 3.54.

[129] 1062A: οὐδὲν εἶναί φασιν ἀρετῆς ὄφελος ὀλιγοχρονίου· τί γάρ, ἂν μέλλοντι ναυαγεῖν εὐθὺς ἢ κατακρημνίζεσθαι φρόνησις ἐπιγένηται; Cf. also *SVF* 3.210. The practical Plutarch would agree, I believe, with the Stoics on this. Cf. 337D: οὐκ ἐν τῇ κτήσει τῶν ἀγαθῶν ἀλλ' ἐν τῇ χρήσει τὸ μεγ' ἐστίν.

pened to be in love with them stop loving them? Such kind of love is unknown to common experience, Plutarch protests.[130] Their theory that nothing touches anything (*De comm. notit.* 1080D) or their belief that there is no present time but only past and future (*ib.* 1081C)[131] are also at odds with the common conception, and so is their cardinal doctrine on the unity of virtue.[132] For Plutarch's practical mind the Stoic teaching about the absoluteness of virtue and vice, necessarily excluding any intermediary stages between the two conditions, was quite incomprehensible. What is the use, he would think, of trying to improve oneself ethically, if one cannot be aware of any improvement? By such teachings, he protests, the Stoics are degrading goodness, if, although present, it does not make itself felt (*ib.* 1062B: τἀγαθὸν ἀρρεπὲς ποιοῦσι καὶ ἀμαυρόν, εἰ μηδ' αἴσθησιν αὐτοῦ ποιεῖ παραγενόμενον. Cf. n.127). So he writes a special essay (*De profectibus in virtute*) to combat this doctrine and indicate the signs by which one may practically become aware of one's progress in virtue.

As regards the complex question of Plutarch's demonology and especially his supposed belief or disbelief in evil *daimones* (on which evidence can be adduced for either case),[133] similar considerations would settle the matter more convincingly. On the one hand, a doctrine of *daimones* gives a practical solution to a variety of theological, educational and even philosophical problems. As Moellering observes (p.122), it could explain certain religious practices, notably oracles; it then purges Greek mythology of its more

[130] *ib.* 1073A: αἰσχροὺς μὲν γὰρ εἶναι τοὺς νέους ... καλοὺς δὲ τοὺς σοφοὺς ... καὶ οὐ τοῦτό πω δεινόν, ἀλλὰ καὶ τοὺς ἐρασθέντας αἰσχρῶν παύεσθαι λέγουσι καλῶν γενομένων ... τίς ἔρωτα γινώσκει τοιοῦτον ...; Cf. 1057A–1058A and *SVF* 1.221, 3.591, 619, 719. On this particular paradox see also Babut, *REG* 76 (1963) 61–63.

[131] See *SVF* 2.486 and 519, and cf. Sextus, *Ad Mathem.* 9.258–66.

[132] 1046E-F: τὰς ἀρετάς φασιν ἀνταχολουθεῖν ἀλλήλαις, οὐ μόνον τῷ τὸν μίαν ἔχοντα πάσας ἔχειν, ἀλλὰ καὶ τῷ τὸν κατὰ μίαν ὁτιοῦν ἐνεργοῦντα κατὰ πάσας ἐνεργεῖν· οὔτε γὰρ ἄνδρα φασὶ τέλειον εἶναι τὸν μὴ πάσας ἔχοντα τὰς ἀρετὰς οὔτε πρᾶξιν τελείαν, ἥτις οὐ κατὰ πάσας πράττεται τὰς ἀρετάς. See also nn. 72 and 75 above, and cf. *SVF* 2.349, 3.275, 295ff, 305–7, 310, and Seneca *Epist.* 93.

[133] The crucial passages are mainly *Di.* 2.6, *Pel.* 21, *De Iside* 361B and *De def. orac.* 416Fff, but scholars are far from concurring on their interpretation. G. Soury (*La démonologie de Plutarque* [Paris 1942] 141, 146, 150, 224) finds P.'s works as a whole full of evil *daimones*, and even Erbse (p. 309–10), although more reserved, leaves much of Soury's position unchallenged and admits that the older P. did make concessions to demonology. Griffiths (n. 46, p. 25) praises Soury's study but also points out the inconsistent demonology of the *De Iside*, whereas Babut (pp. 389ff and esp. 435), rather surprisingly, finds P.'s doctrines of *daimones* "parfaitement cohérent". Ziegler (col. 304/941–2) is very cautious about attributing to P. a belief in evil *daimones*, while Flacelière 2 (p. 72ff), Russell (pp. 76–8) and Brenk 2 (3f,11) clearly deny it. For a recent review of P.'s demonology see Brenk (n. 63) 275ff.

offensive elements by ascribing them to the activity of evil *daimones*;[134] thus it safequards the transcendent purity of God and it gives an explanation, at least a partial one, to the existence of evil by making it originate from those evil *daimones*.[135] On the other hand, Plutarch's demonology is a concession to popular beliefs. His common sense could not ignore common experience; and common experience in this respect was loaded with a widespread belief in demonic spirits that continually keep an eye on men , appearing in their dreams to advice or warn, protecting them as guardian angels but also envying them, molesting them, possessing them, demanding expiation rites from them — to say nothing about the particular flourishing of magic in Plutarch's time nor to insist on the relationship between the demonology of Plutarch and that of Plato and especially Plato's successor, Xenocrates (cf.n.123). "These aspects of popular religion", Moellering notes (p.123), "exercised such pressure that it was all but inevitable that some doctrine of demons would squeeze through into philosophy".[136]

Unlike Plato, Plutarch does not fear poetry.[137] On the contrary, his practicality enjoins that its study can be rewarding in many ways. And just as the Christian St. Basil will later write on how the young may derive benefit from reading the pagan literature of the Greeks (Πρὸς τοὺς νέους ὅπως ἂν ἐξ ἑλληνικῶν ὠφελοῖντο λόγων), the Platonist Plutarch writes on how the young should study poetry, where he advocates poetry as a good introduction to philosophy, since poems will accustom the young to seek the profitable in what gives pleasure (*De aud. poet.* 15F: Ὅθεν οὐ φευκτέον ἐστὶ τὰ ποιήματα τοῖς φιλοσοφεῖν μέλλουσιν, ἀλλὰ προφιλοσοφητέον τοῖς ποιήμασιν ἐθιζομένους ἐν τῷ τέρποντι τὸ χρήσιμον ζητεῖν καὶ ἀγαπᾶν).[138] And further in the same treatise he will urge that in studying poetry our primary concern should not be the vocabulary (we had better leave that to the grammarians), but ἐκεῖνα μᾶλλον πιέζειν οἷς ἅμα τὸ χρήσιμον καὶ πιθανὸν

[134] Another way of purging was through allegorical interpretations, of course, and Moellering, rather gratuitously, wonders (p. 96ff) why P. does not use allegory also in the *De superst.* But that would have defeated the purpose of this treatise, as Moellering himself admits.

[135] Cf. *Di.* 2.6, *De Iside* 369D, *De def. orac.* 414D–421E, esp. 417C–E.

[136] For the influence of popular beliefs on philosophical systems, cf. W. Förster, 'Daimon' in G. Kittel, *Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament* II (Stuttgart 1935) 3ff.

[137] For the banishment of poets from the Platonic ideal state see *Rep.* 398A–B, 568B, 595Aff, 607Bf and cf. *Laws* 817Aff; and for P.'s deviation from Plato in this respect cf. Oakesmith, 79 and n. 2 *ib.* But note that in his attempt to purge Greek poetry (pp. 162f. and 177 above), P. follows Plato.

[138] See also further *ib.* 32E: οἱ δὲ παῖδες, ἂν ὀρθῶς ἐντρέφωνται τοῖς ποιήμασιν, καὶ ἀπὸ τῶν φαύλους καὶ ἀτόπους ὑποψίας ἐχόντων ἔλκειν τι χρήσιμον ἀμωσγέπως μαθήσονται καὶ ὠφέλιμον. Cf. also 41E–42A and 467C.

ἔνεστιν.[139] Similarly, the student of philosophy is advised to pay more heed to the essence than to the form of what he reads or hears and to attend more carefully to subjects involving τὸ χρήσιμον καὶ σάρκινον καὶ ὠφέλιμον than to those having something difficult or odd (*De profect. in virt.* 79C).

Finally, even philosophy, which Plutarch adored and devotedly served in all his life, was not merely a theoretical occupation for him; nor was it regarded as the culmination of the restlessness of human mind or as the most serious expression of man's metaphysical striving, but it was mostly seen from the practical point of view.[140] He approached philosophy, says Glover (n.120, p.89–90), "not with the true philosopher's purpose of examining his experience, but rather with the more practical aim of profiting by every serviceable thought or maxim which he could find".[141] On the other hand, because his metaphysical questions had found their answer in his deep piety, his philosophy was in the main not far removed in the heavens but present upon earth, where its findings could be applied to direct man's life towards virtue. Dörrie accepts that,[142] but he proceeds further and alleges that P. saw philosophy not only as a guide for this life, but also as a means of gaining the eternal one as well. (Perhaps this was also Hartman's view, cf. n.112 above). This "sotériologie de Plutarque", which Dörrie regards as "le point culminant" of Plutarch's thought , can hardly, in my opinion, be compatible with Plutarch's intellectual attitude in most of his writings.[143] Plutarch would agree with the Stoics that philosophy is the art of living (613B: τέχνην περὶ βίον),[144] and in one of his essays he asserts that its teachings are not

[139] *ib.* 31E. For P.'s attitude to poetry in general see Ziegler (col. 308/945f) and J. W. H Atkins, *Literary Criticism in Antiquity* (London 1952) v. 2 p. 312f. Cf. also F. M. Padelford's interesting — if biased against P. — introduction in his *Essays on the Study and Use of Poetry* (New York 1902).

[140] Cf. Seneca, *Epist.* 16.3 (*philosophia ... non in verbis sed in rebus est*) and see also Ps–Plut. 8A: ὁ δὲ θεωρητικὸς [i. e. βίος] τοῦ πρακτικοῦ διαμαρτάνων ἀνωφελὴς [ἐστι].

[141] Yet, the Platonic (rather Socratic) suggestion in *Apology* 38A (ὁ δὲ ἀνεξέταστος βίος οὐ βιωτὸς ἀνθρώπῳ), which Glover associates with the purpose of the true philosopher (*ib.* p. 90 n. 1), is hardly at variance with P.'s approach to philosophy. See further below about the practicality of Socrates' philosophy and cf. n. 146.

[142] *Op. cit.* n. 120, p. 528: "La philosophie de Plutarque présente, par ce trait caractéristique, un aspect éminemment pratique ... pour lui, la philosophie est en premier lieu, et toujours, *magistra vitae*; c' est-à dire qu' elle conduira l' homme à maîtriser la vie."

[143] For the practical and moralizing aims of P.'s philosophy see also Hamilton (n. 3, p. XXI: "for Plutarch the prime task of the philosopher was to lead himself, his pupils and friends ... to *aretē* and to happiness which depends upon it"), Ziegler (col. 305/942fin), and cf. the beginning of the famous eulogy of philosophy in Cicero's *Tusc.* 5.2.5., with which P. would no doubt have agreed: *o vitae philosophia dux! o virtutis indagatrix, expultrixque vitiorum!*

[144] Cf. Epict. *Dissert.* 1.15.2, Clemens, *Paedag.* 2.25.3 and Cic. *Acad. pr.* 2.8.23 (*sapientiam, artem vivendi*). Cf. also *Tusc.* (previous n.). On 613B above F. Fuhrman, *Oeuvres morales*

meant to create statues bound to stand still on their pedestals, ἀλλ' ἐνεργὰ βούλεται ποιεῖν ὧν ἂν ἅψηται καὶ πρακτικὰ καὶ ἔμψυχα καὶ κινητικάς ὁρμὰς ἐντίθησι καὶ κρίσεις ἀγωγοὺς ἐπὶ τὰ ὠφέλιμα (*Maxime cum princ...* 776C).[145] The object of the philosophy of Socrates, says Plutarch elsewhere, was also practical; it did not aim at discovering any metaphysical principles but at recognizing one's own vices and getting rid of them.[146] Neither did Socrates separate goodness from usefulness; on the contrary, he is said to have often invoked a curse upon those who regarded virtue as incompatible with utility.[147]

What was, then, the relationship between philosophy and religion for Plutarch? For he was also of a deeply religious nature, as the frequency and the manner with which he treats matters pertaining to religion (oracles, omens, sacrifices, dreams etc.) clearly show. He wrote a commentary on *Timaeus*, the most religious of Plato's works, while his own most serious and, perhaps, most important essays are similarly concerned with religious matters (cf. the Delphic dialogues, *De Iside, De sera* etc.). His priesthood at Delphi is a further evidence — an active manifestation in fact — of his profound interest in religion. I would not go as far as Oakesmith in maintaining that religion is the overriding factor in Plutarch's thought and writings, but I would share his view that Plutarch can be fully understood "only when regarded in the light supplied by a knowledge of his religious beliefs" (p.ix–x). Plutarchists are divided on the question whether Kleombrotus' opinion that the end of philosophy is theology (*De def. orac.* 410B: φιλοσοφίας θεολογίαν ... τέλος ἐχούσης) represents Plutarch's own view;[148] but

IX,1 (Budé 1972), notes that this was a Stoic definition of philosophy, "particulièrement des Stoiciens posterieurs." But according to P. A. Clement, *Moralia* VIII (Loeb 1969), it was established "among the early Stoics."

[145] Cf. 84A: καὶ ... τὰς κρίσεις ἐπὶ τὰ ἔργα μετάγειν καὶ τοὺς λόγους μὴ λόγους ἐᾶν ἀλλὰ πράξεις ποιεῖν. Cf. also 80E (p. 168) and n. 140 above. As Greard put it (p. 329):"La morale de Plutarque est, à proprement parler, une morale en action".

[146] Cf. 516C: φιλοσοφίαν ... ἧς ἦν τέλος ἐπιγνῶναι τὰ ἑαυτοῦ κακὰ καὶ ἀπαλλαγῆναι. Cf. also Ps–Plut. 7D–8B. As M. Pohlenz has put it (*Gestalten aus Hellas* [München 1950], 684), philosophy for P. was "eine Seelenheilkunde" (cf. Ziegler, n.142 above); but this belief was already Socratic as well as Stoic. Cf. 1051B: τὴν κακίαν ... διὰ τοῦ φιλοσοφεῖν ἀναιρῶν [i. e. Chrysippus].

[147] This was also Stoic. Cf. *SVF* 1.558 (=Cic. *De offic.* 3.11 and Clemens, *Strom.* 2.21.3) and esp. Cic. *De leg.* 1.33: *recte Socrates exsecrari eum solebat qui primus utilitatem a iure seiunxisset.* But see also Plato *Alc.* I 116D: τὰ δίκαια ἄρα ... συμφέροντά ἐστιν.

[148] Hartman (n. 37, pp. 187f, 325f, 439, 683f),for example, and Flacelière 2 (p. 110–11) accept it as P.'s, whereas Hirzel (n. 59, p. 11 n. 10) and Russell (p. 75ff) deny it. Cf. also Brenk, 91 n. 7 and Brenk 2, 6. But why should Kleombrotus represent P. only here and not in the exposition of his doctrine on *daimones*?

if we accept that it does, the predominantly practical aim of his philosophy is lost.[149]

If then we take all the foregoing into due consideration, Plutarch's contradictions should neither perplex nor disconcert us. His observance of common sense, his overwhelming moralistic outlook and–above all–his keen practical spirit are more than enough to explain away the majority of them. As for those inconsistencies which, perhaps, still resist this explanation,[150] one has but to consider the unresolved issues in one's own mind and then ask why an inquiring but also undogmatic intellectual such as Plutarch, living in an era of brisk ideological ferment and amalgamation, should not have made different — even at times conflicting — pronouncements[151] on issues that still remain uncertain. On account of his inconsistencies some will question "whether the sum of his ideas will hold together at all" (Glover, p.90), or maintain that his opinions,"like his character and his written work as a whole seem to defy synthesis."[152] Others, more appropriately, will point out his open–minded approach to "opposing notions and ideas, letting his thoughts fall now one way and now the other ... making those judgements which his observations elicit ... and admitting the truth just when and where he finds it" (Johnson [n.106] 37). Plutarch may indeed react in differing ways and with varying moods to many complex issues, but his overall ethical purpose and the unmistakable spirit that informs his writings as a whole harmonize the discordances and give coherence to his work despite the inconsistencies.

[149] Cf. my objections to Dörrie's thesis (p. 184 above) and n. 143. According to Russell (p. 75), for P. as well as for Plato even theologia "is bound by patterns of morality".

[150] Take, for example , his utterances on *tychē* , on account of which P. has been described as a schizophrenic (Brenk, 163). But is it legitimate to compare P.'s opinions in the *Lives* with his utterances in epideictic orations as Brenk (p. 161f) does? Cf. p. 155 above.

[151] Cf. B. Latzarus, *Les idées religieuses de Plutarque* [Paris 1920] 8: "Plutarque vit à un moment de trop grande effervescence intellectuelle pour être simple."

[152] L. Pearson in reviewing Barrow's book in *CJ* 63 (1968) 238.

PROPERZ, VATES ODER HARUSPEX? ZU SEINEM POLITISCHEN UND POETISCHEN SELBSTVERSTAENDNIS

VON

BARBARA FEICHTINGER

In der Elegie 3,13 des Properz fällt ein für seine Selbstdarstellung bemerkenswerter Aspekt auf: 3,13,59 bezeichnet sich der Dichter als *verus haruspex*. In der augusteischen Zeit, da der *vates*-Begriff in der Deutung, die ihm Varro gegeben hatte, von Vergil und Horaz in ihrer Selbststilisierung verwendet, an Dimension gewinnt, darf diese Wortwahl des Properz nicht sogleich als vom Zufall diktiert abgetan werden.[1] Vielmehr wird eine nähere Betrachtung des Gesamtwerkes zu klären haben, ob sich der Dichter hier bewußt abgrenzt.

Seine Selbstbezeichnung als *haruspex* scheint sich einerseits von seiner Herkunft aus dem etruskisch-umbrischen Grenzgebiet herzuleiten, das schwer unter Octavian zu leiden hatte, und zu einer antiaugusteischen Haltung zu führen. Andererseits wird zu zeigen sein, daß Properzens Leitbild, Kallimachos, dieses Konzept des "nüchternen" Dichter-Propheten mitbestimmt hat.

I. *VATES – HARUSPEX:* DICHTERISCHES SELBSTVERSTÄNDNIS IM SPANNUNGSFELD DER AUGUSTEISCHEN EPOCHE.

Elegie 3,13 thematisiert den Topos der Verdorbenheit der Zeit durch allzu großen Luxus, eine Klage, die sich in vielen Genera und in manchen Perioden der römischen Literatur findet und unter den Zeitgenossen des Properz stark an den Horaz der Satiren erinnert. Der Elegiker verwendet, gleichfalls traditionell und konventionell, den Gegensatz von integrer Vergangenheit und schändlicher, korrupter Gegenwart. Oberflächlich betrachtet, scheint er sich damit in den Dienst des auch sittlich ausgerichteten Restau-

[1] H. Dahlmann, 'Vates.' *Philologus* 97 (1948) 337-353 = ders., *Kleine Schriften,* Hildesheim 1970 (= *Collectanea* 19) 35-51; E.Bickel, 'Vates bei Varro und Vergil,' *RheinMus* 94 (1951) 257-314; J. Newman, *The Concept of Vates in Augustan Poetry,* Bruxelles 1967 (= *Coll. Latomus* 89).

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