

reconnaître en lui un esprit vigoureux et indépendant, qui a su mettre à profit sa vaste culture<sup>(130)</sup> et les matériaux variés qu'elle lui fournissait pour donner forme à une vision du monde qui, sans témoigner du génie novateur des grands philosophes, n'en porte pas moins toujours la marque de sa personnalité<sup>(131)</sup>.

## TIME AS STRUCTURE IN PLUTARCH'S THE DAIMONION OF SOKRATES

Frederick E. BRENK

Plutarch uses time in a magnificent way in his dialogue on Sokrates and the Theban revolt. He utilizes time as a structure for the incorporation of the world of *daimones* (spirits) into our own world, especially as the daimonic manifests itself in history. The *daimones* are a key to unlocking the secret of Sokrates' *daimonion* (the 'daimonic' or 'supernatural thing') which guided his life<sup>(1)</sup>. The dialogue on Sokrates and the Theban revolt can be divided into three parts. First come the conversations over Sokrates' *daimonion*. These take up one day and the part of one night (linear human time, but with reference to daimonic time). Second is the 'historical' time of the Theban conspiracy against the Spartans in the year 379 BC<sup>(2)</sup>. This time is contemporaneous to the dialogue proper (the conversations) and belongs to one night ('historic', 'narrative' time, and 'time of suspense'). Finally there is the Timarchos myth

pp. 3343 et 3345, qui approuve la critique de Long. En sens contraire, H. DORRIE, *Le platonisme de Plutarque, Actes du VIIIe Congrès de l'Association G. Budé*, Paris 1968, p. 525; *Platonica minora* (n. 77), pp. 266 et 345 (cf. ci-dessus, n. 79); R. FLACELIÈRE, *CUF-M I*, p. CXXIII; Chr. FROIDEFOND, *Plutarque et le platonisme*, dans *ANRW II* 36.1 (1987), pp. 218 sq., 230; P.L. DONINI, *The History of the Concept of Eclecticism*, dans *The Question of 'Eclecticism'*, ed. J.M. Dillon - A.A. Long, Berkeley-Los Angeles-London 1978, p. 31; A. GRILLI, *Aspetti del rapporto tra Plutarco e lo stoicismo*, dans *Aspetti dello stoicismo e dell'epicureismo in Plutarco* (Atti del II Convegno di studi su Plutarco, Ferrara, 2-3 aprile 1987), ed. I. Gallo, Ferrara 1988, p. 10; J.M. DILLON, 'Orthodoxy' and 'Eclecticism': *Platonists and Neo-Pythagoreans*, dans *The Question of 'Eclecticism'*, pp. 103 sq.; F. BECCHI, *Virtù etica* (n. 1), pp. 33-34.

<sup>(130)</sup> Cf. P.L. DONINI, *Science and Metaphysics: Platonism, Aristotelianism and Stoicism in Plutarch's 'On the Face in the Moon'*, dans *The Question of 'Eclecticism'*, p. 144.

<sup>(131)</sup> Cf. M. ISNARDI Parente, *Plutarco contro Colote*, dans *Aspetti dello stoicismo* (n. 129), pp. 65-66 (à propos du *Contre Colotès*): "tutte le posizione filosofiche presenti nell'operetta, se non hanno talvolta il marchio dell' assoluta originalità, presentano però sempre uno stampo plutarcoo inconfondibile"; F. BECCHI, *Virtù etica* (n. 1), pp. 48-49.

<sup>(1)</sup> An earlier version of this article was published as *Tempo come struttura nel dialogo 'Sul Daimonion di Socrate' di Plutarco*, in *Strutture formali dei 'Moralia' di Plutarco*, ed. G. D'Ip-polito - I. Gallo (Atti del III Convegno plutarcoo, Palermo, 3-5 maggio 1989), Naples 1991, pp. 69-82. The editors kindly granted permission for the revised article to be printed here. For other later Platonist discussions of Sokrates' *daimonion* see H. DORRIE - M. Baltes, *Der Platonismus in der Antike III. Der Platonismus in 2. und 3. Jahrhundert nach Christus*, Stuttgart-Bad Cannstatt 1993, nos. 92, 84-85, 315-319.

<sup>(2)</sup> Recently, M. COOK, *Ancient Political Factions: Boiotia 404-395*, *TAPhA* 118 (1988), pp. 57-86, has analyzed the historical background of the period to which the personages of Plutarch's dialogue belonged. See also A. GEORGIADOU, *A Philological and Historical Commentary on the Life of Pelopidas by Plutarch* (diss. University of Illinois), Urbana 1990 [DA LI 1990-1991, p. 1218A], and *Bias and Character-Portrayal in Plutarch's Lives of Pelopidas and Marcellus*, in *ANRW II* 33.6 (1992), pp. 4222-4257, esp. 4222-4226; J. PASCUAL GONZÁLEZ, *Plutarco y su visión de la hegemonía tebana*, in *Estudios sobre Plutarco: Obra y Tradición*, ed. A. Pérez Jiménez - G. del Cerro Calderón, Málaga 1990, pp. 73-79; and C. FERONE, *A proposito di Plutarco, Pelopidas 7, 1-2 (Pheid. 209)*, in *Papiri letterari greci e latini*, ed. M. Capasso, Lecce 1992, pp. 273-279.

(daimonic time) consisting of 'mythical' events with very fluid time boundaries or markers, but occurring in two days and a night of our time<sup>(3)</sup>. Other times extraneous to the text itself are, for example, the time 'present' to Plutarch and his original readers, and the 'present' time in which each age takes up the work<sup>(4)</sup>. One can, then, speak of the 'present' related in the literary work, the 'present' of the narration within the work, and the 'present' of the reading of the work<sup>(5)</sup>.

Although a recent article has devoted great attention to the literary form of *Περὶ τοῦ δαιμονίου τοῦ Σωκράτους*, it barely touches upon the question of time<sup>(6)</sup>. In spite of the brevity of the treatment, however, it

<sup>(3)</sup> For the supernatural and time in general, see *Religion and Time*, ed. A.N. Balslev – J.N. Mohanty (Studies in the History of Religions, 54), Leiden 1993, esp. Introduction, pp. 1-13; J.G. HART, *Phenomenological Time: Its Religious Significance*, pp. 17-45 (esp. "Inner Time", "Birth and Death", "Sleep", pp. 21-45); and P. MANCHESTER, *Time in Christianity*, pp. 109-137. See also H.G. GADAMER, *The Western View of the Inner Experience of Time and the Limits of Thought*, in *Time and Philosophies*, Paris 1977, pp. 33-48; and G.E.R. LLOYD, in *Cultures and Time*, Paris 1976 (= *Les Cultures et le Temps*, Paris 1975), pp. 117-148.

<sup>(4)</sup> The Lamprias catalogue mentions a mysterious Alkidamas to whom the work is dedicated, considered a mistaken reference (cf. K. ZIEGLER, *Plutarchos von Chaironeia*, Stuttgart 1964<sup>2</sup>), p. 62, Lamprias cat., no. 69).

<sup>(5)</sup> S. BONZON, *Sur la 'mise en récit' du dialogue chez Platon*, in *La narration. Quand le récit devient communication*, ed. P. Bühler – J.-F. Habermacher, Geneva 1988, pp. 205-216, speaks of implicit 'times' for every "récit — lecture" and "repérage" (p. 215). All Plato's dialogues with "mise en récit" are set in the past (p. 206). Some modern writers are remarkable for apprehending past and present in one perception, e.g. Marcel Proust.

<sup>(6)</sup> A. ALONI, *Ricerche sulla forma letteraria del 'De genio Socratis' di Plutarco*, *Acme* 33 (1980), pp. 41-122. See also H. POURRAT, *Le sage et son démon* (translation É. des Places), Paris 1950; A. CORLU, *Plutarque. Le démon de Socrate*, Paris 1970; P.H. DE LACY – B. EINARSON, *LCL—M VII*, pp. 361-509; J. HANI, *CUF—M VIII*, pp. 37-129; M. RILEY, *The Purpose and Unity of Plutarch's 'De genio Socratis'*, *GRBS* 18 (1977), pp. 257-273; D. BABUT, *La doctrine démonologique dans le 'De genio Socratis' de Plutarque: cohérence et fonction*, *L'Information Littéraire* 35 (1983), pp. 201-205; *Le dialogue de Plutarque 'Sur le démon de Socrate'. Essai d'interprétation*, *BAGB* 1984, pp. 51-76; P. DESIDERI, *Il De genio Socratis di Plutarco: Un esempio di 'storiografia tragica'?*, *Athenaeum* 72 (1984), pp. 569-585; K. DÖRING, *Plutarch und das Daimonion des Sokrates (Plut., 'de genio Socratis' Kap. 20-24)*, *Mnemosyne* 37 (1984), pp. 376-392; A. BARIGAZZI, *Plutarco e il dialogo 'drammatico'*, *Prometheus* 14 (1988), pp. 141-163, esp. 141-154; D. BABUT, *La part du rationalisme dans la religion de Plutarque: l'exemple du 'De genio Socratis'*, in *ICS* 13.2 (1989) [*Plutarch. Robert Flacelière in memoriam*, ed.M. Marcovich – F.E. Brenk – J.P. Hershbell – P.A. Stadter], pp. 383-408; A. BARIGAZZI, *Una nuova interpretazione del 'De genio Socratis'*, *ibid.*, pp. 409-425.

contains some very acute observation and underlines two fundamental aspects of the concept. The first, which is amply developed, describes time in the dialogue as "ideal and antiquarian, an aristocratic contemplation of the past in its most ideal and sublime hour" (the liberation of Thebes from Spartan occupation), "an attitude in which one rejects the present" and not just because of the [supposedly] unarrestable decadence of the Boiotian economy in Plutarch's day<sup>(7)</sup>. In contrast, the Platonic dialogues usually depict a period relatively contemporary to their composition, in the springtime of enthusiastic attachment to Sokrates. In a brilliant manner, Plutarch, who undoubtedly was inspired by the *Phaidon*, combines a glorious moment of Theban history with the recollection of Sokrates' *daimonion*. Supposedly the world of men and *daimones* converged to an extraordinary degree in the person of Sokrates<sup>(8)</sup>.

The second aspect, which deserved more elaboration, is the atemporal model of *The Daimonion of Sokrates*. This is described as "a little elusive ... of another reality hypothesized or longed for", that "in a marvelous/fantastic code communicates to the entire work, in a sort of chain reaction, the touch of detachment from reality..."<sup>(9)</sup>. The quasi-atemporality of the dialogue's philosophical myth might suggest the existence of a time even further removed — the static, unchanging eternity of the Platonic Forms (or Ideas). One could also consider, in the context of *daimonic* time and atemporal models, the relative eternity of Homer's gods.

A difficult problem for the history of Greek philosophy is whether Greeks conceived of an eternity existing outside of time, a non-dura-

<sup>(7)</sup> A. ALONI, *art. cit.* (n. 6), p. 112 — connecting it also with the restrictive laws at the time of Domitian. Plutarch uses the past to great effect in his *Erotikos*; cf. F.E. BRENK, *Plutarch's 'Erotikos': The Drag Down Pulled Up*, in *ICS* 13.2 (1989), pp. 457-471, esp. 461. For similar framing see C. SEGAL, *Ovid's Cephalus and Procris: Myth and Tragedy*, *GB* 7 (1978), pp. 175-205, esp. 177 and 183; F.E. BRENK, *Tumulo Solacia or Foedera Lecti: The Myth of Cephalus and Procris in Ovid's Metamorphoses, AugAge* 2 (1982/83), pp. 9-22, esp. 11, 19-20.

<sup>(8)</sup> So M. RILEY, *art. cit.* (n. 6), p. 272. The *daimones* or *to daimonion* supposedly communicated directly, not through language. According to L. VAN DER STOCKT, *Twinkling and Twilight. Plutarch's Reflections on Literature* (AWLSK, 145), Brussels 1992, pp. 57-58 (citing 58D-E, 589C), Plutarch almost sensualizes language, in his concreteness, yet manifests a Platonic reserve toward language as a means of communication. On the later *daimones* of Xenokrates, see now H.S. SCHIBLI, *Xenokrates' Daemons and the Irrational Soul*, *CQ* 43 (1993), pp. 143-167.

<sup>(9)</sup> 108.

tional eternity<sup>(10)</sup>. In speaking of the Forms, Plato implies both atemporality and duration. He leaves open the possibility that the Forms' eternity has duration but not time, but will not allow temporal measurement of it<sup>(11)</sup>. One might also consider the totality of God's life as a single 'telescoped' entity, lacking the extension or 'dispersion' of transient, mortal life. The Alexandrian Platonist, Ammonios, speaking of the eternity of God in *The E at Delphoi*, uses a remarkable expression:

"No, He is one and has completed all in one sole 'now'." (Ἄλλ' εἰς ὧν ἐνὶ τῷ νῦν τὸ ἀεὶ πεπλήρωκε, *De E* 393A)<sup>(12)</sup>.

And he continues with the explanation:

"... [real Being] ... is without motion, without time, without occurrence; and does not admit either a 'before' nor an 'after', neither a future nor a past..."<sup>(13)</sup>.

Plutarch probably was not the first to conceive of this formulation for divine eternity. Besides representing himself as a young disciple of Ammonios at the time, he injects peculiarities into Ammonios' speech, which are not typical of Plutarch's thought elsewhere<sup>(14)</sup>. In general he allows

<sup>(10)</sup> Cf. R. SORABJI, *Time, Creation and the Continuum. Theories in Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages*, London 1983, pp. 21-32, esp. "Static and Flowing Time", pp. 33-45, and in particular "Is Eternity Timeless?", pp. 98-130.

<sup>(11)</sup> According to J. WHITTAKER, *The Eternity of the Platonic Forms, Phronesis* 13 (1968), pp. 131-144 — contested, however, by R. SORABJI, *op. cit.* (n. 10), pp. 105-107 — the Forms exist forever, even though Plato did not regard them as atemporal. Aristotle's god clearly has eternal duration (R. SORABJI, *op. cit.*, p. 127). For the more radical Augustine, past, present, and future are simply mental perceptions (R. SORABJI, *op. cit.*, p. 29).

<sup>(12)</sup> For the One in the Middle Platonists see J. HALFWASSEN, *Der Aufstieg zum Einen. Untersuchungen zu Platon und Plotin*, Stuttgart 1992, pp. 201-210.

<sup>(13)</sup> The Greek words for "neither a future nor a past ..." are not in the mss., but the editors supply them from Eusebios and Cyril.

<sup>(14)</sup> J. WHITTAKER, *God Time Being. Two Studies in the Transcendental Tradition*, Oslo 1971, pp. 35, 40, claims that Philon needed an eternity before eternity (πρὸ αἰῶνος αἰῶν) commensurable with the existence of God, but that he seems not to have given it consideration, that his God exists "outside of time" but not in the "eternal now". R. SORABJI, *op. cit.* (n. 10), pp. 121-122, however, disagreeing with Whittaker, maintains that *Quod Deus sit immutabilis* 6.32, arrives at the nature of a non-temporal eternity, since Philon describes the absence of time, i.e., of past and future, in the divine eternity:

"So with God there is no future, for He has made subject to Him the very boundaries of all times. Indeed, His life is not time, but eternity, the archetype and model for time. In eternity there is no past nor future, but only present" (literally: "... nothing has passed by, nor will be, but only exists [in the present]" (... οὐτε παρ-ελήλυθεν οὐδὲν οὐτε μέλλει, ἀλλὰ μόνον ὑφέστηκεν).

his main speakers considerable divergence from his views. He may not endorse everything, and he loves to eat his cake and have it too. For example, even in the *Lives* he can narrate a hair-raising vision of a demon (*Brut.* 36), and in the next breath pull the rug out from under it<sup>(15)</sup>. At any rate, in extant classical literature Ammonios' statement is the first carefully considered and unequivocal declaration of non-durational eternity<sup>(16)</sup>.

Besides Platonists, others, such as the Stoics and Epicureans, were interested in the existence of a time independent of the orderly movement of the *kosmos*. For some Platonists, though, like Philon (Philo), it was a non-problem, since time was co-extensive and co-eternal with an eternally existing universe<sup>(17)</sup>. The Stoics, on the other hand, required a

Similar is the Third Sibylline Oracle, lines 15-16 — the inspiration of which could be Alexandrian Platonism:

ἄλλ' αὐτὸς ἀνέδειξεν αἰώνιον αὐτὸς ἑαυτὸν | ὄντα τε καὶ πρὶν ἔοντα, ἀτὰρ πάλι καὶ μετέπειτα

(V. NIKIPROWETSKY, *La troisième Sibylle*, Paris 1970, p. 292).

<sup>(15)</sup> See F.E. BRENK, *In the Light of the Moon: Demonology in the Early Imperial Period*, in *ANRW* II 16.3 (1986), pp. 2068-2145 (indices in *ANRW* II 36.2 [1987], pp. 1283-1299), esp. 2128-2129, 2145.

<sup>(16)</sup> So J. WHITTAKER, *op. cit.* (n. 14), p. 48. Possibly the original source was Eudoros of Alexandria (1st cent. BC); cf. J. WHITTAKER, *Ammonios on the Delphic E*, *CQ* 19 (1969), pp. 185-192, esp. 188, 192 n. 6. The problem arises with something similar in Augustine (*Confessiones* XI 13.16): *anni tui dies unus, et dies tuus non cotidie, sed hodie, quia hodiernus tuus non cedit crastino; neque enim succedit hesterno. Hodiernus tuus aeternitas* ("Your years are one day, and Your day is not every day, but today, since Your today does not give way to tomorrow, nor follow upon yesterday. Your today is eternity"). C. KIRWAN, *Augustine*, London—New York 1989, pp. 169-170, takes the words in a transferred sense: "God's existence is outside our time system". He sees Augustine as anticipated by Plotinos (*Enneads* III 7.3.16-20), and trying to find duration outside time for God; cf. also the review of Kirwan by A. SCHUBERT, *Gnomon* 65 (1993), pp. 603-611, esp. 609. More recently, J. QUINN, *Four Faces of Time in St. Augustine*, *REAug* 26 (1992), pp. 182-231, argues Augustine's theory of time actually involves four interconnected types of time (psychological, physical, moral, and historical), and that in particular historical and psychological time, while "so conceptually distant" are "equivocally related" to an extreme degree (p. 216).

<sup>(17)</sup> In *De an. procr.* (esp. 1013A-1014E), Plutarch claims the universe was created in time; i.e. before, the material element was animated only by *psyche* without intellect, that later it became a *kosmos* (an orderly universe), directed by *psyche* with *logos* (1014E). See H. CHERNISS, *LCL-M* XIII 1, pp. 147-149, 178-189; M. BALTES, *Die Weltentstehung des platonischen Timaios nach den Antiken Interpreten* I, Leiden 1976, pp. 32-38 (Philon), 38-45 (Plutarch), 86-93 (Philon), 93-94 (Plutarch); F.E. BRENK, *An Imperial Heritage: The Religious Spirit of Plutarch of Chaironeia*, in *ANRW* II 36.1 (1987), pp. 248-349, esp. 264-265 (indices in II 36.2 [1988], p. 1300-1322).

primordial time before the foundation of the world, or its return, when only the divine fire (or *pneuma*) existed. Unfortunately they left no explanation of this time. Still, in all probability it would have to be measured by the only activity possible, the logically ordered thoughts of the Stoic god, the Pneuma-Fire-Logos<sup>(18)</sup>. Similarly, according to Epikouros there was a time once and there would be again when only atoms exist, and thus a time independent of the celestial bodies. Had Epikouros formulated a relationship between the velocity of the atoms and time, undoubtedly he would have won the Nobel prize. In his own terms the velocity of the atoms was not infinite, “surpassing all limits”. Nonetheless, though beyond the grasp of our intellect, it was equivalent to “the speed of thought.”<sup>(19)</sup> The Epicurean *Kyria Doxa* 19 is not much help, since it speaks of infinite and finite time but, unfortunately, only in respect to physical and intellectual pleasures<sup>(20)</sup>. Possibly, then, the Middle Platonic discussions of time and eternity were stimulated by Stoic and Epicurean teasing with a time outside of the orderly universe. For example, Plutarch in *The Generation of the Soul in the Timaios* argues for, before the ‘creation’ of the world in time, a primordial time based on disorderly movement<sup>(21)</sup>.

<sup>(18)</sup> For Stoic theories on time, esp. as infinite because of eternal cycles, see A.A. LONG – D.N. SEDLEY, *The Hellenistic Philosophers*, Cambridge 1987, I, pp. 303-309, and II, p. 303; J. WHITTAKER, *op. cit.* (n. 14); R. SORABJI, *op. cit.* (n. 10), pp. 21-32, 80-83, 98-130, and *Matter, Space and Motion. Theories in Antiquity and Their Sequel*, Ithaca 1988, pp. 160-185.

<sup>(19)</sup> For the velocity of the atoms, see *Letter to Herodotos* 43-44, 46, 48; A.A. LONG – D.N. SEDLEY, *Hellenistic Philosophers*, nos. 11A, 15A [I, pp. 46, 72-73; II, pp. 41, 75-76].

<sup>(20)</sup> (1) [19] ὁ ἄπειρος χρόνος ἴσῃ ἔχει τὴν ἡδονὴν καὶ ὁ πεπερασμένος, ἐάν τις αὐτῆς τὰ πέρατα καταμετρήσῃ τῷ λογισμῷ. (2) [20] ἡ μὲν σὰρξ ἀπέλαβε τὰ πέρατα τῆς ἡδονῆς ἄπειρα, καὶ ἄπειρος αὐτὴν χρόνος παρεσκευάσεν. ἡ δὲ διάνοια τοῦ τῆς σαρκὸς τέλους καὶ πέρατος λαβοῦσα τὸν ἐπιλογισμὸν καὶ τοὺς ὑπὲρ τοῦ αἰῶνος φόβους ἐκλύσασα τὸν παντελῆ βίον παρεσκευάσεν, καὶ οὐδὲν ἔτι τοῦ ἀπέριου χρόνου προσεδεθήμεν. ἀλλ’ οὔτε ἔφυγε τὴν ἡδονὴν, οὐδὲ ἦνικα τὴν ἐξαγωγὴν ἐκ τοῦ ζῆν τὰ πράγματα παρεσκευάζεν, ὡς ἐλλείπουσα τι τοῦ ἀρίστου βίου κατέστρεφεν. (3) [21] ὁ τὰ πέρατα τοῦ βίου κατειδὼς οἶδεν ὡς εὐφρόριστόν ἐστι τὸ <τὸ> ἀλγοῦν κατ’ ἔνδειαν ἐξαιροῦν καὶ τὸ ὅλον βίον παντελῆ καθιστάν’ ὥστε οὐδὲν προσδεῖται πραγμάτων ἀγῶνας κεκτημένων (*Kyriai Doxai* 19-21; A.A. LONG – D.N. SEDLEY, *Hellenistic Philosophers* I, no. 24C, pp. 150-151; text, II, p. 155); cf. G. ARRIGHETTI, *Epicuro*, Turin 1967, pp. 127-128.

<sup>(21)</sup> The soul in itself belongs to eternity, but being generated, is incapable of participating fully in eternity; accordingly, “the Father ... created a moving image of eternity ... that we have called time, namely, the succession of days, nights, and months” (*Timaios* 37D).

Most interesting to scholars of *The Daimonion of Sokrates* is the ‘historical and dramatic time’ depicted in the last moments of the liberation of Thebes. However, this type of time, which is generally relegated to ‘narrative’, is only contrasted with the different pace of the philosophical discussions. Atemporality, either in an absolute or relative sense, is not considered. Particularly striking in the dramatic vicissitudes is the ‘time of expectation’. But the philosophical discussions are also intertwined with and interrupted by the hair-raising events related in the ‘historical’ narrative: suspicion of failure, suspense, doubt, the intervention of chance (the *automaton*), and the like, all with a strong temporal component. The undeniable intervention of chance or luck (*automaton*, *tyche*) again suggests that ‘Timing is everything’<sup>(22)</sup>. In Platonic philosophy the soul’s ‘time of expectation’ for its terrestrial existence is brilliantly depicted in the *Phaidon* (251B–252C) and in the *Symposion* (207D–208B). In poetry Vergil describes the prison of the soul in the reincarnational scene of his underworld (*Aeneid* VI 733-734), magnificently evoking the Platonic vision of disturbance, uncertainty, and anxiety<sup>(23)</sup>. In *The Daimonion* — according to one scholar — “the temporal realities, in particular the social and political, remain ambivalent, seemingly governed by the caprice of human liberty; thus we are confronted with the apparent

For the Stoics, only the present “exists” (ὑπάρχει). Time, like other *lekta* has no independent existence, but is only a construct used by ‘rational beings’ to explain the movement of bodies (SVF II, nos. 509, 517; A.A. LONG – D.N. SEDLEY, *Hellenistic Philosophers*, no. 51B, I, p. 304; II, pp. 301-302; A.A. LONG, *Hellenistic Philosophy. Stoics, Epicureans, Sceptics*, London 1974, p. 131.

<sup>(22)</sup> In Plutarch, *tyche* is not only luck or blind chance (Hellenistic and Epicurean *tyche*, *to automaton*), but a clear proof of divine providence; cf. F.E. BRENK, *In Mist Apparelled. Religious Themes in Plutarch’s Moralia and Lives*, Leiden 1977, pp. 145-183; *art. cit.* (n. 17), pp. 305-316.

<sup>(23)</sup> For example: καὶ μὴ ἔτι κατὰ τὸ σῶμα, ἀλλὰ κατὰ τὴν ψυχὴν οἱ τρόποι, τὰ ἦθη, δόξαι, ἐπιθυμῖαι, ἡδοναί, λύπαι, φόβοι, τούτων ἕκαστα οὐδέποτε τὰ αὐτὰ πάρεστιν ἐκάστω, ἀλλὰ τὰ μὲν γίνονται, τὰ δὲ ἀπόλλυται. πολὺ δὲ τούτων ἀτοπώτερον ἔτι, ἔτι καὶ αἱ ἐπιστήμαι μὴ ἔτι αἱ μὲν γίνονται, αἱ δὲ ἀπόλλυνται ἡμῖν, καὶ οὐδέποτε οἱ αὐτοὶ ἔσμεν οὐδὲ κατὰ τὰς ἐπιστήμας, ἀλλὰ καὶ μία ἐκάστη τῶν ἐπιστήμων ταῦτόν πάσχει (*Symposion* 207E–208A); ... *hinc metuum cupiuntque, dolent gaudenique, neque auras | despiciunt clausae tenebris et carcere caeco* ... (Vergil, *Aen.* VI 733-734). See D. BABUT, *Sur le démon de Socrate*, p. 66. In *La doctrine démonologique dans le ‘De genio Socratis’*, he underscores the relationship between human and divine worlds. H.G. INGENKAMP, *Luciano e Plutarco: due incontri con il divino*, AFSL 6 (1985), pp. 29-45, notes how Plutarch’s divine world is surrounded by an aura of mystery (pp. 39-42).

'illegibility' of historical events"<sup>(24)</sup>. But the perturbation and uncertainty of historical events, or of life itself on earth, might suggest to a contemplative mind an alternative — the existence, after terrestrial life, of eternal repose in a universe without time<sup>(25)</sup>.

In his stimulating book on time and narrative, Paul Ricœur returned to the psychological insights of Saint Augustine — 'expectation' within finite time and the atemporality of eternal time<sup>(26)</sup>. For Ricœur, the so-called 'Augustinian theory of time' is much less aporetic than the theory proposed by Augustine himself, and matters are made worse by the theory constantly being presented in a non-aporetic manner. The background, nevertheless, is eternity. For Augustine the motion of the stars — whether they are immutable, or mutable, destined for destruction or not — cannot have 'created' time. There must be another criterium, a measurement of time which is totally dependent upon us human beings. Speaking of the miserable state of our earthly existence and the dissolution of the finite, which tends toward the glory of the infinite, Augustine contemplates a hierarchy of temporalizations based on the proximity of the experience to its pole, eternity. There is, therefore, a strict relationship between time and eternity. Eternity, moreover, does not abolish time, but gives it 'profundity'<sup>(27)</sup>.

As early as the Homeric epics, relatively eternal time was used as part of narrative structure. In the extraordinary time frame of the *Iliad*, events are concentrated within a few days, with past reported through 'flashbacks' and future through prophecy or foreshadowing<sup>(28)</sup>. Parallel with this horizontal structure of present, past, and future, there are also two vertical levels of contrast, based on the chronological spheres of

<sup>(24)</sup> J. FONTAINE, *Augustin penseur chrétien du temps*, BAGB 1988, pp. 53-72, esp. 63.

<sup>(25)</sup> So N. FISCHER, *Sein und Sinn der Zeitlichkeit im philosophischen Denken Augustins*, REAug 33 (1987), pp. 205-234, esp. 219 — citing Augustine, *De libero arbitrio* III 6.63, 15.144, 23.225; *Confessiones* X 28.39, II 6.13.

<sup>(26)</sup> *Temps et Récit* I, Paris 1983, in particular pp. 19-34 (= *Time and Narrative* I, Chicago 1984, pp. 5-16).

<sup>(27)</sup> See P. RICOEUR, *op. cit.*, pp. 20-21 (French ed.), pp. 6-7 (English ed.). Fontaine sees the conception of time as an interior movement in the soul as a means, while still in the body, to rise "outside of itself" upward toward God; i.e., the beginning of its ascent from temporality into eternity (pp. 56-58).

<sup>(28)</sup> See I.J.F. DE JONG, *Narrators and Focalizers. The Presentation of the Story in the Iliad*, Amsterdam 1987, pp. 42-43, 81-85.

gods and heroes. The life of the gods, though, hardly imitates the eternity and ascetic pleasures enjoyed by the Platonic Forms. The divine beings eat, drink, and, exhausted or not, retire each night to bed to enjoy pleasures neither very static nor angelic. Their time resembles in many senses the quasi-eternal time reflected in the recurrence of the stars, the succession of day upon night and night upon day. Like the almost eternally recurring cycles and vicissitudes of the Homeric similes, so the gods impart universal order and generic background to the turbulent, seemingly unique, and apparently non-repetitive events of individual human lives<sup>(29)</sup>.

In another respect, though, the gods also live in linear time. The contrast between human life and divine life in all its regularity is especially evident in the first book of the *Iliad*. But here, too, there are similarities. Human passion and ephemeral conflict such as the dispute over the concubines Chryseis and Bryseis, correspond in a certain sense, even with a strong temporal connotation, to the quarrels (and irregular lives) of the gods. Their passions and desires, not the emotions and aspirations of the heroes, ultimately determine the course of destiny and its only record 'in song'. At least, such is the poetic vision of 'double motivation and causality', divine and human, permeating the entire work. The cyclical and eternal banquet of the Olympians and their retiring to bed is far more symbolic of eternal youth, beauty, and vigor — like the constant recurrence of natural and human events — than of the static eternity of the Forms or of an unchangeable Middle Platonic God<sup>(30)</sup>. Thus, the life and time of the gods are not exactly polar opposites to human life and time. Rather, their time is a *tertium quid*, a stage between stable, unchanging eternity and the inconstancy of human existence enmeshed in 'historicity'.

The special time represented in the *Περὶ τοῦ δαιμονίου τοῦ Σωκράτους* of Plutarch, is this intermediate *tertium quid*, rather than merely

<sup>(29)</sup> A. GARCÍA-BERRIO, *A Theory of the Literary Text*, Berlin-New York 1992 (= *Teoría de la literatura*, Madrid 1989), argues that this succession implies the guarantee of survival through the permanent and periodic replacement of individuals. On the other hand, the "nocturnal regime's symbols" presuppose a precipitation toward the fatal annihilation of time (p. 386).

<sup>(30)</sup> The *αἰών* of the gods is the perpetual youth they enjoy; cf. C. BRILLANTE, *La rappresentazione del sogno nel frammento di un 'ibrenos' pindarico*, QUCC 25 (1987), pp. 35-51, esp. 39-46; I. BREMMER, *The Early Greek Concept of the Soul*, Princeton 1982, pp. 15-16, 74.

human, or Augustinian eternal time. For Augustine, the angels — who always existed, since God always had need of His servitors — belong to the “Heaven of Heavens” (the *Caelum Caelorum*). Unchangeable, with neither past to recall nor future to await, they are suspended in an intermediate state between mortal time and the eternity of God<sup>(31)</sup>. But the quasi-atemporal time of the Timarchos’ myth corresponds rather to the life of the *daimones*. Like the Homeric gods, they watch over and assist their favorites. Thus, should he so desire, the Middle Platonic god, especially a First God, can remain aloof in his isolated solitude, enjoying the eternity and immutability of the intelligible Forms. Meanwhile, his underlings, the *daimones*, can dirty their hands in the mundane business of earthly intervention.

The *mise en scène* of the myth, Trophonios’ cave at Lebadeia, also belongs in a sense to daimonic time. Timarchos descends into this ‘cave’, the only Boiotian oracular site active in Plutarch’s time, for a visionary experience normally lasting only one night. Though the mysterious supernatural figure is generally called ‘the hero’, Plutarch would have been glad to call him a *daimon*. After the battle of Leuktra, Epameinondas and others routed Trophonios as Zeus Basileus, even as Zeus Trophonios. But in the Roman period, shedding his Basilean incrustations, hero/god returned to his more Trophonian state. Like Sokrates’ *daimon* he spoke directly, not through intermediaries. No priest nor prophet was involved. Moreover, his daimonic form is suggested by the obligatory sacrifice to Agathos Daimon (and to Agathe Tyche) before the consultation, though this was a late development.

Other characteristics of the Boiotian oracle coincide with the themes of *The Daimonion of Sokrates*. The mystical experience was considered very unnerving, like that of the conspirators’ during the revolt; and it was obligatory that it be written down later on a tablet. Moreover, Trophonios’ greatest hour as a prophet, at least in literature and popular belief, coincided with the liberation of Thebes. Not only did he predict the outcome of the Battle of Leuktra. In his own prophecy he claimed

<sup>(31)</sup> In *De civitate Dei* XII 16 angelic time is based on the intellectual “motions” of the angels (cf. *De Genesi ad litteram, Liber imperfectus* III 8; and *De Genesi ad litteram* V 5.12). In *Confessiones* XII 19, angelic service was always needed. R. SORABJI, *op. cit.* (n. 10), pp. 31-32, claims Augustine is speaking of mental states rather than real motions.

responsibility for the rout<sup>(32)</sup>. Then there was a long and steady decline in his fortunes. But by Plutarch’s day his popularity was on the rise again. Finally, this prophet, hero, *daimon* — never fully a god — had been interested in more than the liberation of Thebes. During the third and second centuries BC, he was a focal point for the enfranchisement of slaves<sup>(33)</sup>. Thus, Trophonios’ personal history, with its own cycle of rise, decline, fall, and rise, beautifully harmonizes with the daimonic milieu of the dialogue.

Already in the Hellenistic period, Epikouros had shown great interest in psychological time. Long after Plutarch, Augustine became its unforgettable champion. The psychological time of our dialogue reflects the difference between ‘*récit*’ (the actual narration of the account) and ‘*histoire*’ (the events as they historically developed)<sup>(34)</sup>. The ‘human events’ or occurrences concerning Epameinondas and the liberation of Thebes occupy a considerable part of the dialogue (28 1/2 pages in the Budé edition). The initial conversations in the ‘dialogue’ proper (28 pages), devote 11 pages to the background of the conspiracy (575A–586A), while 6 1/2 pages concern the philosophical question (579F–582D). At this point the actual ‘narrative’ of the conspiracy begins (5 1/2 pages). The conversations begin again (589F–593A), occupying 7 pages, and are followed by the similes of the athletes and swimmers, recounted by Theanor (593A–594A) (2 1/2). The final, historical part (594A–598F) takes up 12 pages. There are, then, 21 pages dedicated to the philosophi-

<sup>(32)</sup> Moreover, he was a poet, responding in hexameters: “Of men malevolent, I will waste away the host bearing shields” (Pausanias IV 32.5-6).

<sup>(33)</sup> See H.D. BETZ, *The Problem of Apocalyptic Genre in Greek and Hellenistic Literature: The Case of the Oracle of Trophonios*, in *Apocalypticism in the Mediterranean World and the Near East*, ed. D. Hellholm, Tübingen 1983 (1989<sup>(2)</sup>), pp. 577-597 (repr. in *Hellenismus und Urchristentum* I, Tübingen 1990, pp. 184-208); S. LEVIN, *The Old Greek Oracles in Decline*, in *ANRW* II 18.2 (1989), pp. 1599-1649, esp. 1637-1642; P. & M. BONNECHÈRE, *Trophonios à Lebadee. Histoire d'un oracle*, *LEC* 57 (1989), pp. 289-302, esp. 290-291, 295-298 — citing Diodoros XV 53.4; Polyainos, II 3.8; Pausanias IV 32.5-6.

<sup>(34)</sup> G. GENETTE, in *Figures III*, Paris 1972, speaks of “temps de récit”, “isochronie entre récit et histoire”, and “une espèce d'égalité entre le segment narratif et le segment fictif” (pp. 122-144). See also H. WEINRICH, *Tempus. Besprochene und erzählte Welt*, Stuttgart 1964 (= 1927); A. MARCHESI, *L'officina del racconto. Semiotica della narrativa*, Milano 1983, pp. 132-158; S. CHATMAN, *Story and Discourse. Narrative Structure in Fiction and Film*, Ithaca 1978/1980, pp. 64, 70-72; and J. VOGT, *Aspekte erzählender Prosa*, Düsseldorf 1972, pp. 40-53.

cal 'dialogue' (or conversations proper), 9 1/2 given to the philosophical myth and the similes, and finally, 7 1/2 to the historical 'narrative'. The Timarchos myth with its quasi-atemporality — the ascent of the souls through a celestial sea — occupies, then, only 7 pages, followed by the rather restricted appendix of 2 1/2 pages for the similes of the soul-runners and soul-swimmers<sup>(35)</sup>.

The psychological time dedicated to the conspiracy, however, is tortuously extended. As the medium becomes the message, the reader senses himself trapped in the phenomena of the transitory, visible world, the *kosmos aisthetos*. The same *kosmos aisthetos* was once so roundly condemned by the middle Plato, before he had second thoughts, for misleading the soul in its quest for the intelligible beauty and good. In a battery of incidents, surprises, and twists of circumstance, psychological time tests the protagonists' resistance to chance and caprice in human life. Such time is poles apart from the eternity of an unchanging One and Monad<sup>(36)</sup>.

The differences between 'récit' and 'histoire' are quite pronounced in the various parts of *The Daimonion of Sokrates*. The fictitious dialogue of the *personae*, the longest and most important section, and the principal reason for the work, receives the major narrative space<sup>(37)</sup>. Second in

<sup>(35)</sup> For the myth itself, see Y. VERNIERE, *Symboles et mythes dans la pensée de Plutarque. Essai d'interprétation philosophique et religieuse des Moralia*, Paris 1977, pp. 72-77, 163-78, 181-186; J. HANI, *CUF-M VIII*, pp. 55-58, 226-230 (with drawing); and K. DÖRING, *art. cit.* (n. 6), pp. 381-385.

<sup>(36)</sup> For the contrast between the rhythm of the narration of historical events and that of the philosophical dialogue see P. DESIDERI, *art. cit.* (n. 6), pp. 576-577; and A. BARIGAZZI, *art. cit.* (n. 6), p. 151. S.T. KATZ, *Mystical Speech and Mystical Meaning*, in *Mysteries and Language*, ed. S.T. Katz, New York-Oxford 1992, pp. 3-41, esp. 25-26, touches on the One in later Platonists.

<sup>(37)</sup> Scholars dispute the theme. For J. HANI, *CUF-M VIII* (p. 61), following H. POURCOT, *op. cit.* (n. 6), pp. 91-109, 206-249, it is liberation of the soul, symbolized by the liberation of Thebes; so also, with a Christian perspective, D.A. STOIKE, *De genio Socratis (Moralia 548A-568A)*, in *Plutarch's Theological Writings and Early Christian Literature III*, ed. H.D. Betz, Leiden 1975, pp. 236-285, esp. 242-245. M. RILEY, *art. cit.* (n. 6), pp. 268-269, and D. BABUT, *Le dialogue de Plutarque 'Sur le démon de Socrate'* (n. 6), pp. 72-73, instead, see the superiority of the 'theoretical' over the 'practical' life. A. BARIGAZZI, *art. cit.* (n. 6), sees the combination of high morality and political life, as exemplified in Epameinondas (p. 411). J.P. HERSHBELL, *Plutarch's Portrait of Socrates*, in *ICS 13.2* (1989), pp. 365-381, puts the meaning of Sokrates' daimonion and the liberation (of Thebes and of the soul) on an equal plain, both related to control of the passions (Sokrates, Epameinondas, and Theanor)

psychological importance, due to its philosophical interest and highly dramatic presentation, probably would be Timarchos' eschatological voyage, in spite of its moderate length of 7 pages. From the philosophical point of view, the account of the conspiracy has less importance, even though it — arguably — demonstrates the influence of the daimonic on this event and on human history in general<sup>(38)</sup>. In spite of its 15 pages, the historical 'narrative' primarily seems to be an illustration (*hypodeigma*) either of daimonic intervention and control in the world, or of the juxtaposition of supernatural and natural worlds.

According to a recent theory, in the Platonic dialogues written as continuous narrative, the philosophical content becomes an 'event'. As Sokrates discourses, something happens to the participants. The philosophical theory is presented as actively manifesting itself to a reader in a living and evolving 'present'. The philosophical content or 'event', moreover, extends to another present time, that of the reader. The present time of the reader is affected, not by reason of the 'eternal' truth of the philosophical message, but rather because each 'narrative' is directed toward a reader conceived as living within his own present<sup>(39)</sup>. Plutarch's own audience was undoubtedly acquainted with the historical events of the revolt, probably through a reading of rationalistic historians who were struggling to keep the gods at bay. Now they are teased with the possible involvement of the daimonic. Such involvement, nonetheless, is neither directly stated nor explicitly related, and at the same time the bloodcurdling narrative grows into an end in itself.

(p. 378). D.A. RUSSELL, *'Hθoς nei 'Dialoghi' di Plutarco*, *ASNP* 22 (1992), pp. 399-430, also favors the theme of liberation. He sees Epameinondas depicted as a model of simplicity and *pietas* — something which undoubtedly would have been reflected in Plutarch's Life of the hero (p. 414). J. BUCKLER, *Epameinondas and Pythagoreanism*, *Historia* 42 (1993), pp. 104-108, argues that the real Epameinondas' Pythagoreanism was very superficial, and that to Pythagoreans his attitude toward divination would have been impious (p. 108).

<sup>(38)</sup> D. BABUT, in *ICS 13.2* (1989), pp. 383-408, stresses the absence of direct supernatural intervention in the liberation narrative, especially by the much-hailed *daimones* (pp. 385, 391).

<sup>(39)</sup> So S. BONZON, *art. cit.* (n. 5), p. 216. See also, S. JÄKEL, *Platonic Dialogue as a Specific Genre between Tragedy and Comedy. Tragic and Comic Elements in the Early Dialogues of Plato*, *SIFC* 85 (1992) (= Giornate Pisane. Atri del IX Congresso della F.I.E.C., II), pp. 1001-1013, esp. 1009-1010: "... a play or drama whose actors are words — or terms — introduced by the speakers ..."



There are a number of reasons for the extremely phenomenological, matter-of-fact manner of the historical account. First, the details of the conspiracy are not related by the omniscient narrator but appear through the subjective eyes of his focalizers<sup>(40)</sup>. The relator of the conversations and the historical narrative is the Theban Kephisias, brother of Epameinondas, complying with a request of the Athenian Archedamos. The latter, in effect, asked Kephisias for a phenomenological account characterized by chance. From this, supposedly, Archedamos can corroborate his own rather rationalistic theory that history depicts not an all-powerful *tyche* but rather a real contest between virtue (*arete*) and *tyche* (575B-D). Important at this point is Archedamos' obliviousness of theological considerations. The phenomenological aspect of the narrative, moreover, is particularly reinforced by the secondary focalizers, participants in the conspiracy, whom Kephisias quotes as eyewitnesses to the unforeseeable events, as they occur. They have neither time to reflect nor knowledge of the future. Not Pythagorean sages, but ordinary mortals like us (and most historians), their eyes are blinded by the glitter of the phenomena. Lacking a more translucent vision of intelligible reality and supernatural forces, they see only the apparent succession of chance occurrences.

However, there is a world of difference between daimonic aid to an individual soul and divine providence working in history. Theanor, in the section on the similes, claims that "as long as we are struggling to keep our heads above water in the welter of worldly affairs and changing body after body as though it were a vehicle, *to daimonion* (the daimonic) allows us to shift for ourselves and hope for the best, trying through our own merits (*arete*) to get through safely and reach the haven" (593F). Only at the end of the cycle of metempsychosis do the *daimones* come to the aid of the soul. However, both in the *Ethika* and the *Bioi*, Plutarch continually insists that the world is directed by a benevolent divine providence. As a general rule, though, theological reflection in the *Lives* belongs to the omniscient narrator or to his secondary focalizer, whose views are amazingly sympathetic to the author's. The *Ethika* allow more variance of opinion. Still, in questions of divine providence

<sup>(40)</sup> H.C. WHITE, *Narration and Discourse in the Book of Genesis*, Cambridge 1991, modifying Genette, distinguishes between "narrator's discourse" and "character's discourse" (the "expressive function"), then between "representative narrative", "expressive narrative" and "symbolic narrative" (pp. 41-92, esp. 51-57, 75-76).

and influence, Plutarch's position, if not entirely clear, usually seems to approve some sort of theological interpretation<sup>(41)</sup>.

Contrasting with the phenomenal, 'historical' time of individual and particular events, is the more general and universal chronology of the similes narrated by the Pythagorean stranger, Theanor. The eschatological chronology of the Timarchos myth is closely related. The similes depict the *daimones* as 'old boys' or swimmers. Once they themselves competed, but now from the sidelines they encourage those souls struggling to arrive at the finish line. Or — "after a long succession of reincarnations and with the cycle coming to a close" — as swimmers already on shore, they extend a hand to those still struggling in the waves (593A–594A). The Timarchos myth is a little more temporalized and less generic than these similes, depicting a kind of linear voyage through the heavens, presumably common to all souls after death. The soul-*daimones*, that is, souls directed by a *daimon* which is their intellect (*nous*), appear as stars. Their destination, delineated less than the voyage itself and the actual movements of the star-*daimones*, is the moon, an orb which doubles for purgatory and point of departure in reincarnation. As in Plato's myth of Er (*Politeia* [*Republic*]) or the Thespesios myth in Plutarch's *The Delays of the Divine Vengeance*, historical or personal references are kept to a minimum<sup>(42)</sup>.

It is natural that other reference points should be kept vague. Still, with a certain irony, the celestial bodies of the Timarchos myth refuse to demarcate the fixed and immutable temporal order required by traditional Platonism. On the contrary, Timarchos sees a kind of flux or indistinct current of colors and bodies, an ocean of phenomena existing outside our time, even if the voyage hints at a certain fixed astronomy: "whirring ... changes of color ... migrations ... drifting around ... overflowing ... receding ... floating ... cresting ... surging ... boiling ... spiraling", and the like (590B-F). The *nous-daimones* "sink ... float ... wander ... are dragged ... bob about" (591D–592B)<sup>(43)</sup>.

<sup>(41)</sup> The matter is treated by S. SWAIN, *Plutarch: Chance, Providence, and History*, *AJPPh* 110 (1989), pp. 272-302, esp. 292-293, concentrating on the rise of Rome in Plutarch.

<sup>(42)</sup> An exception is the reference to Hermodoros of Klazomenai at 592C-D, related to a living person's *daimon* voyaging outside the body.

<sup>(43)</sup> E.g., "Ἄλλ' οὐδὲν ὄρω", τὸν Τιμαρχὸν εἶπειν, "ἢ πολλοὺς ἀστέρας περὶ τὸ χάσμα παλλομένους, ἑτέρους δὲ καταδυομένους εἰς αὐτό, τοὺς δὲ ἄττοντας αὐτὸν κάτωθεν ..." (591D). J. HANI, *CUF-M* VIII, p. 227, notes the perplexity of modern scholars over the celestial geography.



In other words, the celestial bodies of Greek astronomy no longer serve as fixed points for the measurement of time, the "succession of nights and days", the "moving image of eternity" (*Timaios* 37D). The stable astronomy of the *Timaios* has given way to an astronomical clock run wild, stars with no fixed abode, set against a confused heaven in flux, indistinct, and unstable. The stars (really the *nous-daimones*) are extinguished, wander about, and — horrors — even bob up and down and leap. Shades of Plutarch's tractate, *The Generation of the Soul in the Timaios* (1014A–1017B), when before the 'creation' of the heavens, orderly time was preceded by disorderly! Similarly, in his *Platonic Questions* (1007C–1009C), time did not exist before the creation of the *kosmos*, but only disorderly movement, "in a certain sense, the matter of time..."<sup>(44)</sup>. Timarchos' chronology is reduced to the psychological, finding its reference points only on return to earth. His experience seems brief, in narratological terms, not much longer than the time taken to recount the event. But when he returns "with a radiant countenance" — to the surprise of friends and the readers — the experience turns out to have lasted two and one-half days (590A–B).

More than once in the dialogue Plutarch avoids a simple dichotomy between present and past. Rather, he introduces a *tertium quid*, a time of the *aldilà*, participating simultaneously in elements of past, present, and future. Moreover, the historical 'times', on the human level, interact with one another. The narration depicts the past, the time of Epameinondas and the revolt, as present. A past antecedent to this fictitious present is recalled through the myth and history of Thebes. The daimonic shades (*psyche-* or *nous-daimones*) belong simultaneously to past and present, and will belong to the future. Supposedly dead and cold, they can strike out — like Sophokles' Oidipous, who claimed that from the grave he would drink the Theban's blood (*Oidipous at Kolonos* 621–622) — into the present (here, the fictitious past). But the *daimones*, nonetheless, remain somewhat psychologically non-involved in these 'times'<sup>(45)</sup>.

<sup>(44)</sup> See R. SORABJI, *op. cit.* (n. 10), p. 270.

<sup>(45)</sup> P. RICŒUR, *op. cit.* (n. 26), p. 28 (French ed.), p. 11 (English ed.) — citing *Confessiones* XI 20.26 — notes the three times in Augustine: present of past things (memory), present of present things (direct perception [*contuitus, attentio*]), and present of future (expectation).

The quasi-atemporality of the *daimones* is also alluded to in an archaic type of supernatural intervention<sup>(46)</sup>. Two references to daimonic intrusion anticipate the Timarchos myth and the similes of the soul-runners and soul-swimmers. One of the early speakers mentions the looting of Alkmena's tomb at Haliartos by the Spartan general Agesilaos, an event not otherwise attested in classical authors (577E–578B)<sup>(47)</sup>. From the otherworld, the shade of Alkmena — or *to daimonion* acting as her advocate — has afflicted the Spartans with omens of future disaster. Here, as elsewhere in the dialogue, we are teased with inversions on the normal 'spatial localization' of time: past behind, future before<sup>(48)</sup>. The Spartan, Lysanoridas, has already parted to seal Alkmena's tomb, perform libations, and then seek out the tomb of Dirke, presumably to render similar expiation. The references to Alkmena and Dirke not only evoke the mythical past, so fundamental to Greek literature, they also depict the real impact of the past, through a soul or *daimon*, on the present. Alkmena, from quasi-atemporality among the dead, can lash out directly against the living.

This daimonic intervention is both like and unlike the conception behind the normal iconography of death. The inorganic image tries to arrest time, representing immobility or sleep, the idealized conservation of the deceased in a moment of past felicity or tragic parting<sup>(49)</sup>. In

<sup>(46)</sup> See P.R. HARDIE, *Sign Language in 'On the Sign of Socrates'*, in the present volume (originally given for the International Plutarch Conference, Oxford, September, 1989). Alluding to the Loeb, Hardie humorously notes that the one thing the *daimonion* is not, is a 'sign', since no intermediary is involved.

<sup>(47)</sup> Most probably invented for this dialogue; so J. BUCKLER, *Plutarch and Autopsy*, in *ANRW* II 33.6 (1992), pp. 4788–4830, esp. 4807, citing A. SCHACHTER, *Cults of Boiotia I. Acheloois to Hera* (ICS Bull. Suppl., 38.1), London 1981, pp. 13–14.

<sup>(48)</sup> M. BETTINI, *Anthropology and Roman Culture. Kinship, Time, Images of the Soul*, Baltimore 1991 (= *Antropologia e cultura romana. Parentela, tempo, immagini dell'anima*, Roma 1986), pp. 121–133 and 184–193; cf. pp. 134–141, 151–157. S. MACK, *Patterns of Time in Vergil*, Hamden (CT) 1978, p. 3, sees something new in Vergil: with little concern for the present, "he make us feel ... that the past merely represents one step ... on a path leading to the future ..." A. MOMIGLIANO, *Time in Ancient Historiography*, in *Essays in Ancient and Modern Historiography*, Middletown (CT) 1977, pp. 179–204 (= *History and Theory*, Beiheft 6 [1966], pp. 1–23), felt that a distinctive feature of Jewish historiography, vs. Greek, was the religious duty to remember the past (p. 195).

<sup>(49)</sup> So S.C. HUMPHREYS, *Death and Time*, in *Mortality and Immortality. The Anthropology and Archaeology of Death*, ed. S.C. Humphreys – H. King, London 1981 (= *The Family, Women and Death*, London 1983, pp. 144–164), p. 266.

almost all funeral ritual the keynote is the separation of the dead from the living. In myth, the dead who drink the water of Lethe even lose the memory of their previous existence<sup>(50)</sup> For Plato they even participate in the invariable movements of the stars, which are themselves outside of time<sup>(51)</sup>. At the same time the iconography of death presents them as though present. Not all the dead forget about the living. The Pythagoreans in particular move between the realms of the living and the dead. Some of their privileged deceased obtain *aletheia* (truth, “non-forgetfulness”). Such *aletheia*, which permits them to recall life on earth, is associated, in their doctrine, with the ‘non-temporal’ existence of the gods; for existence in time is imperfect. The privileged sage, and he alone, can recall his previous incarnations, while the ordinary person even forgets when and how he lived before<sup>(52)</sup>. Thus, the Pythagoreans, like the *daimones*, stand between the dead and the living, between past and present.

A little later (583A–583C) there is another intervention from the dead. The Pythagorean group at Metapontion, except for Lysis and another, were destroyed in a building set on fire by their enemies. Lysis managed to escape but later met his death at Thebes. After Lysis’ *daimon* revealed his fate to Pythagorean friends at home, the Krotonian, Theanor, one of his friends, came to Thebes to propitiate Lysis’ soul, summon him from the dead, and discover where he wished to be finally laid at rest (583A–C; 585E–F)<sup>(53)</sup>. When Theanor encountered Epameinondas, he immedi-

<sup>(50)</sup> S.C. HUMPHREYS, *art. cit.*, pp. 274–275, citing J.-P. VERNANT, *Le fleuve, Amélys et la Mélète Thanatou*, *RPhilos* 85 (1960), pp. 163–179 (= *Mythe et pensée chez les Grecs*, Paris 1965, pp. 79–94). In Plato and in mystery literature, the souls drink the water of Memory; this liberates them from the cycle of rebirth, originally initiated by drinking the water of Lethe (cf. J.-P. VERNANT, *op. cit.*, pp. 79–80).

<sup>(51)</sup> See W. BURKERT, *Lore and Science in Ancient Pythagoreanism*, Cambridge (MA) 1972 (= *Weisheit und Wissenschaft. Studien zu Pythagoras, Philolaos und Platon*, Nürnberg 1972), pp. 365–367.

<sup>(52)</sup> S.C. HUMPHREYS, *art. cit.* (n. 49), p. 277, citing M. DETIENNE, *Les Maîtres de la vérité dans la Grèce ancienne*, Paris 1967.

<sup>(53)</sup> No wonder he wanted to stay in Thebes, considering the Boiotians’ passion for the bones of luminaries (Hesiod, Aktaion, Oidipous, Zethon and Amphion, Linos, Hektor); cf. Pausanias IX 17.3, 18.5, 29.8–9, 38.3–5. See H. TZARÉLLA-EVJEN, *Heroes who did not ‘Rest in Peace’: Legends and the Archaeological Record*, in *Boiotia Antiqua II*, ed. J.M. Fossey, Amsterdam 1992, pp. 3–6. She relates the new excavation at Toumba Baloménu, 1989 — the secondary burial of a young woman within the walls of Chaironeia (Middle Bronze Age) — to such practice.

ately realized that the same *daimon* which guided Lysis during his life, was now guiding the Theban (586A). Like the propitiation at the tombs of Alkmene and of Lysis, the guiding *daimon* of Epameinondas reminds us of another reality and another time, one not exactly governed by the recurrence of the circuits which constitute the years of human history.

But daimonic time is quite different from the eternity of the Forms, or of the god Ammonios describes:

Τὶ οὖν ὄντος ὄν ἐστι; Τὸ αἰδίον καὶ ἀγένητον καὶ ἀφθαρτον, ᾧ χρόνος μεταβολὴν οὐδὲ εἰς ἐπάγει. Κινητὸν γὰρ τι καὶ κινουμένη συμφαναταζόμενον ὕλη καὶ ῥέον αἶε καὶ μὴ στέγον, ὡσπερ ἀγγεῖον φθορᾶς καὶ γενέσεως, ὁ χρόνος· οὐ γὰρ δὴ τὸ μὲν ἔπειτα καὶ τὸ πρότερον καὶ τὸ ἔσται λεγόμενον καὶ τὸ γέγονεν αὐτόθεν ἐξομολόγησίς ἐστι τοῦ μὴ ὄντος.

“But what then is real Being? The eternal, the unbegotten, the incorruptible to which time, not even a moment of time, brings change. Something moveable and appearing in connection with matter in motion, always in flux and never holding still, like a vessel of birth and decay—such is time. Even the usual words, ‘after’, ‘before’, ‘will be’, ‘happened’, are the inherent confession of non-being” (*De E* 392E–F).

And he continues:

Ἄλλ’ ἔστιν ὁ θεός, εἰ χρεὶ φάναι, καὶ ἔστι κατ’ οὐδένα χρόνον, ἀλλὰ κατὰ τὸν αἰῶνα τὸν ἀκίνητον καὶ ἄχρονον ... ἀλλ’ εἰς ὧν ἐνὶ τῷ νῦν τὸ αἶε πεπλήρωκε ...

“But God exists, if it is necessary to say so, and He exists according to no time, but according to eternity, the unmoving and non-temporal ... being One with one ‘now’ He has completely filled ‘forever’” (393A–B)<sup>(54)</sup>.

Divine, eternal time, even that corresponding to pure intellect (*nous*), is at best only alluded to in the dialogue. Augustine’s angels, who existed in this time before the creation of the world and whose movement is only intellectual, (*City of God* XII 16), would feel out of place. Daimonic time belongs to souls liberated from the body, and not only united to the intellect, but — in this dialogue — apparently free of most or all passionate traces and nostalgic attachment to this world. They are freed from the “cycle of birth and henceforth at rest from the body” (593D). Or at least the *daimones* who watch over men belong to this category.

<sup>(54)</sup> Greek text of R. FLACELIÈRE, *CUF-M VI*, pp. 31, 32.

Nonetheless, they remain *psyche-nous* as much as *nous-daimon*. No wonder Timarchos' celestial voyage merits a special type of time independent of night succeeding day<sup>(55)</sup>. Moreover, the future is present to the *daimones*, since the *daimon* guide can predict the exact time ("in the third month from now") of Timarchos' death, once he has returned to earth.

A Pythagorean framework redolent of reincarnation might have invested *The Daimonion of Sokrates* with a predominant feeling of cyclical time closed in upon itself. Cycles do exist. In the Timarchos myth we find souls on the moon who are preparing for rebirth. The runners and swimmers similes symbolically depict the souls "at the end of a long succession of reincarnations, and as the cycle comes to a close". Nor does the divine waste time on Lysis. Barely is his body cold when he has already been judged, assigned to a new *daimon*, and readied to return to earth. Meanwhile, his *ex-daimon* has gone off with Epameinondas (585F–586A). But there is also a linear element. The souls in the celestial voyage of the Timarchos myth are seen ascending to a higher region, rather than descending toward this world. True, the scene of souls falling from the moon into rebirth (591A–C) is very dramatic. However, many of these souls are saved by the moon since the end of their cycle of birth (τῆς γενέσεως τελευτή) falls out "at the proper moment" (εἰς καιρόν) (591C). The scene of souls falling from the moon into rebirth is succeeded by that of souls ascending from the earth. Timarchos' guide, moreover, hints at an ultimate goal in the higher regions beyond the administration of the *daimones*, which belong to the gods (591A, 591B). Finally, he describes the universe's hierarchical structure as though it originating from a single unitary point, the Monad (591B). Thus, the soul might find its *telos* by reconverging on the original point of origin.

Elsewhere in his writings, Plutarch continually insists upon the *daimones'* intermediate or transitional state, and sometimes of a final trans-

<sup>(55)</sup> For M. BETTINI, *op. cit.* (n. 48), a journey is time, and time in literature and storytelling makes itself into a journey — citing (pp. 135-136; cf. 129, 191-192) Seneca, *De brevitate vitae* 3.2; "... the most 'narratable' representation of time that language can offer to literary creativity [is] 'the journey'" (pp. 140-141, with some modification of the English translation). J.M. STURGESS, *Narrativity. Theory and Practice*, Oxford 1992, pp. 126-127, argues that an anarchic attitude toward time in narrative suggests an equivocal and disruptive relationship between the narrative and the world represented.

formation from *daimon* into god<sup>(56)</sup>. In the two similes following the Timarchos myth, certain souls — as we have seen — are depicted at the end of the reincarnational cycle, finally "approaching the upper world, after countless births and long struggles" (593D-F). The shore image follows upon the finish line image and is more elaborate, perhaps to suggest a more ultimate goal, the transition from *daimon* to god (*theos*). When all is said and done, simply leaving the souls on a shore rather dampens expectations<sup>(57)</sup>.

Little interest is shown in eternity. Only in the allusions just mentioned are there suggestions of something above the daimonic order. In the Timarchos myth, eternity might be at home among those other 'islands' which exist, but remain unseen. They are, though, beyond the competence of the *daimon*, who much prefers leading his tourist to his own turf, the lunar world:

"Of the higher regions we have only a small part, since to others these belong, to the gods; however, the portion of Persephone..." (591A)<sup>(58)</sup>.

Nonetheless, after the remark on the region of the gods, the guide reveals that the universe has a very hierarchical structure, beginning and culminating in a kind of fixed or unitary point. Unity (*Monas*) links Life (*Zoe*) to Motion (*Kinesis*) at the Invisible (*Aoraton*). Intellect (*Nous*) links Motion to Generation (*Genesis*) at the Sun; while Nature (*Physis*) links Generation to Decay (*Phthora*) at the Moon. The Fates (*Moirai*) hold keys at each link. At the topmost link is *Atropos* ("No Turning Back"). The terminology suggests a final goal (*telos*) to our linear time, culmi-

<sup>(56)</sup> See, for example, F.E. BRENK, *op. cit.* (n. 22), p. 93; *art. cit.* (n. 17), pp. 279-280, 285, 290, 293, 301-303.

<sup>(57)</sup> Plutarch suggests that the final goal is a vision of a God, who incorporates Being, and the Forms, and possibly the One. See F.E. BRENK, *Darkly Beyond the Glass: Middle Platonism and the Vision of the Soul*, in *Platonism in Late Antiquity*, ed. S. Gersh — C. Kannengiesser, South Bend 1992, pp. 39-60, esp. 51-56; and *The Origin and the Return of the Soul in Plutarch*, in *Estudios sobre Plutarco: ideas religiosas* (Actas del III Simposio Internacional sobre Plutarco), ed. M. García Valdés, Madrid 1994, pp. 3-24.

<sup>(58)</sup> "Ἄλλ' ἡμῖν", φάναι, "τῶν ἄνω μέτεσσι μικρόν. ἄλλων γὰρ θεῶν ἐκεῖνα. τὴν δὲ Φερσεφόνης μοῖραν ..." P.R. HARDIE, *Plutarch and the Interpretation of Myth*, in *ANRW II* 33.6 (1992), pp. 4743-4787, observes that Plutarch — who regards myth as a faint "reflection", "significance" (ἐμφασίς) of the truth — likes to use sensible symbols for the noetic world: the sun is divinity; mutable phenomena (comets, meteors) are mortality (pp. 4747-4748, 4754). L. VAN DER STOCKT, *op. cit.* (n. 8), pp. 89-97, 164-165, discusses Plutarch's attitude toward the possibility of myth conveying truth.

nating somehow in *Monas* — an original unitary, static, and eternal existence. *Monas* itself is physically above the changeable (*Zoe, Kinesis*) or, in modern terms, ‘expanding’ universe.

There are, then, some affinities with modern conceptions of time. In one recent theory, the model for ‘imaginary’ time is a globe. The globe represents a self-contained universe, finite but with no boundaries or edge, where time seems capable of turning back upon itself. However, along with imaginary time there is ‘real’ time. Real time comprises cosmological time (based on the expansion of the universe, increase of disorder), psychological time (the psychological experience of events lived and now recalled in memory), and thermodynamic time (from the cooling down of the universe). All three ‘arrows’ arising from these ‘times’ point in the same irreversible direction<sup>(59)</sup>. The Timarchos myth, thus, in its own way depicts an expanding universe growing in disorder from a single unitary element, even if nothing suggests the universe cooling down. Obviously, the psychological arrow is an extremely important component of disturbance, both in the myth and in the historical narrative. Recurrent and cyclic events, then, in *The Daimonion of Sokrates*, though very proper to daimonic time, like the imaginary time of modern science are not the full story. Considering the Pythagorean context of Plutarch’s dialogue, the cyclical elements are minimized, while the theme of liberation should suggest release into a divine sphere, toward a final goal removed from any form of imaginary or real time known to us.

Human, ‘historical’, fleeting, transitory, time belongs to a soul tossed by the passions — a time of expectation, a time of anxiety. It is specifically proper to the human existence of what Plutarch defined as *soma* — *psyche* — *nous*. And when, “having shuffled off this mortal coil”, a person passes to the next world, as intellect and soul with passions, something remains. A part of the old time clings as well. Nor can the *daimones* entirely escape our time. Intermediaries between us and the divine, they stay one step ahead of us, like those “*mystai* and *bakkhoi* of the Golden Tablets, who already have tread the sacred path”<sup>(60)</sup>. The

<sup>(59)</sup> S. HAWKING, *A Brief History of Time*, New York 1988, pp. 141-154, esp. 136-141, 145-151.

<sup>(60)</sup> See, for example, R. JANKO, *Forgetfulness in the Golden Tablets of Memory*, CQ 34 (1984), pp. 89-100; R. TURCAN, *Bacchoi ou bacchantes? De la dissidence des vivants à la ségrégation des morts*, in *L'association dionysiaque dans les sociétés anciennes*, ed. O. De

closeness of the *daimones* to us, and of their time to ours, intimates the continuity of being, no matter how pigeonholed into different realms. In our earthly sojourn, as part of a continuum, we are never entirely free of the supernatural, at least as represented by *to daimonion*.

The *Περὶ τοῦ δαιμονίου τοῦ Σωκράτους* also belongs to the “practice for death” (μελέτη θανάτου) at the heart of Platonism, and especially Pythagorean Platonism. Through questioning, one arrives at the truth<sup>(61)</sup>. But one must also remember. In our dialogue the rememorative process is particularly strong. Amid the stirring recollections of the greatest moment of Theban history, Kephisias recalls the discussion about Sokrates’ *daimonion*. Other interlocutors summon up the mythical and historical past of Thebes. Finally, Timarchos and Simmias, faithful recorders of the visionary experience, recall to an extraordinary degree not only every detail of the celestial voyage but even the very words of the *daimon*-guide<sup>(62)</sup>.

This dialogue, then, remains faithful to the title. The obvious theme is liberation. Little interested in the problem of time and eternity, it continually explores the possibility of daimonic influence, and daimonic time, on human life. Throughout, on many different levels and in many senses time structures and unifies the work. The arrows of time, though, pierce the Pythagorean cycle. Sokrates’ *daimonion* does not forget that even *daimonic* time recedes before eternity<sup>(63)</sup>.

Cazanove, Paris-Rome 1986, pp. 227-246; G. PUGLIESE CARATELLI, *Le lamina d'oro 'orfiche'*, Milano 1993. In the long archetype, Ω, lines 20-22 (R. JANKO, *art. cit.*, p. 99) we find: δὴ σὺ πῶν ὁδὸν ἔρχεαι, ἦν τε καὶ ἄλλοι | μύσται καὶ βᾶκχοι ἱερῶν στείχουσι κλεινοί. | καὶ τότε ἔπειτ' ἄλλοισι μεθ' ἡρώεσσιν ἀνάξεις.

<sup>(61)</sup> Recently — like some other scholars — D. BABUT, *La composition des 'Dialogues pythiques' de Plutarque et le problème de leur unité*, JS (1992), pp. 187-234, argues for a rather unified viewpoint and composition arising out of the seemingly divergent positions in *The Obsolescences of the Oracles* and in the *Pythian Dialogues* in general. He would argue for an “ordre ascendant” of the views presented — something he believes is exemplified elsewhere in, e.g., *Isis and Osiris* (p. 194 n. 28).

<sup>(62)</sup> A. MARCHESE especially, *op. cit.* (n. 34), pp. 132-145, stresses the importance of recollection and dialectic for narratology.

<sup>(63)</sup> Professor Claudio Moreschini of the University of Pisa kindly looked over the original Italian text, while Professor Jean-Louis Ska of the Pontifical Biblical Institute, gave useful advice on narratology, Professor Prosper Grech on Augustinian time. Thanks are also due to Mary Hopkins for her usual generosity in making the rough roads of English style a little more level.

STUDIA HELLENISTICA



**PLUTARCHEA LOVANIENSIA**  
**A MISCELLANY OF ESSAYS ON PLUTARCH**

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