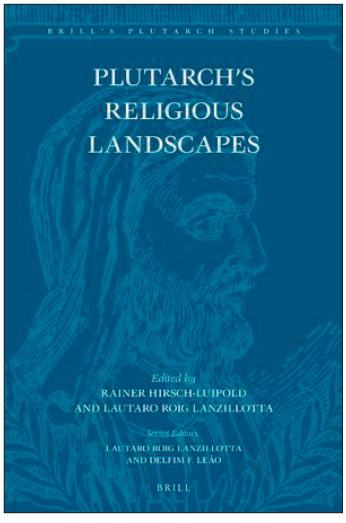
PLUTARCH'S RELIGIOUS LANDSCAPES



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THIS BOOK COLLECTS NINETEEN PAPERS FROM TWO consecutive meetings of the *Réseau International de recherche Plutarque* (RED) which took place under the title "Plutarch and the Ancient Religious Landscape" at the Universities of Groningen (27-29 September 2017) and Bern (28-30 June 2018), with the addition of an introductory chapter on Plutarch's general relationship with the religious sphere. All the chapters are written in English, except for chapter 11 and 20, written in French. The result is an extensive and rich miscellanea on the many religious and theological themes touched upon in Plutarch's writings. The term "landscapes" in the book's title is used mainly in a metaphorical sense, as the spatial dimension of rituals or escha-

tological narrations is only given prominence in chapters 7, 14, and 17. The *leitmotiv* of the collection is the study of Plutarch's testimony on ancient religion "both as a scientific observer and as an actor" (p. 1) – being him both a Platonist philosopher and a priest at Delphi – and of his own elaborations of theological and eschatological themes, in the frame of his "religious philosophy and philosophical religion". In this endeavour, whose outcome is an important and worthy addition to the large bibliography on the subject, it is only unfortunate to note that very little attention has been paid to Plutarch's theological dialogue *De sera numinis vindicta*, which might limit the validity or exhaustiveness of some of the contributions in the volume.

Since Plutarch is also studied as an informer on religious practices and conceptions, the interest of the book is not limited to scholars working specifically on this author: some chapters are very informative on Greek religion in a way which goes beyond Plutarch's own interests and views (14, 16, 17); others present comparisons between his thought and the imagery he employs with tendencies in early Christian texts (5) and Gnosticism (6, 8); and others investigate the reception of Plutarch's works in the Early Modern age (19, 20). Two chapters are only loosely concerned with ancient religion, rather focusing on "lay" ethics and psychology (11) or on physical cosmology (19).

After the introduction, the book is divided in three sections: part 2 (chapters 2-11) has a more philosophical focus; part 3 (chapters 12-18) is of higher interest to the history of religions; and part 4 (chapters 19-20) is dedicated to Plutarch's Early Modern reception. The book is usefully complemented with an index of ancient sources.

Since there is no overarching message uniting the individual chapters, each can be read independently from the others and deserves its own discussion. In the limited space of this review, I will only comment on a few of their merits and potential issues. On a general level, it may be observed that the latest complete critical edition of Plutarch's *Moralia*[1] is not taken into account in any of the chapters, including those engaging in philological discussions (3, 7, 17).

Chapter 1 (pp. 11-36), by Rainer Hirsch-Luipold, is titled "Religions, Religion, and Theology in Plutarch". This chapter is the best short overview of Plutarch's relationship with religion that is currently available in the English language, and it can definitely substitute Hirch-Luipold's earlier synopsis in the Blackwell companion,[2] except for the subject of Plutarch's eschatological myths, here not touched upon.[3]

1. For the first volume, see Ingenkamp & Bernardakis, 2008.
2. Hirch-Luipold, 2014.
3. On these, I suggest referring to Deuse, 2010.

Giving central prominence to Plutarch's peculiar form of monotheism (§ 3.4), labelled "polyatric" for its openness to foreign rituals and conceptions of the divine sphere,[4] the chapter means to convey two central messages: first, that Plutarch's interest in the Greek religious tradition, as well as in the others, is always theologically-oriented and never merely antiquarian, taking the form of symbolic interpretations programmatically used to attain truth (§ 2); second, that religion is at the centre of his philosophy, functioning both as an essential "starting point" for any truthful insight (§ 1, § 3.1) and as a "measuring rod against which all human experience has to be evaluated" (§ 3.2). Both messages, albeit true for a part of Plutarch's production, are open to question if generalized: the first might overshadow the mostly etiological approach exhibited by Plutarch in *Quaest. rom.* and *Quaest. graec.*, or the rather ethical concern of many of the religiously themed narrations in the *Vitae* (which is acknowledged in § 2.2); the second, similarly, might overshadow the importance of Platonic hermeneutics manifested in *De an. procr.* and *Quaest. Plat.*, and most importantly Plutarch's great interest in physics, which he probably also conceived as a starting point for higher forms of reasoning.[5] In this frame, one might be surprised by Hirsch-Luipold's reference to the physical discussion on the patina of the Delphic statues[6] as a passage in which a religious object "is interpreted theologically by way of a symbolic or metaphorical interpretation" (§ 2.2).[7] Among the short overviews of Plutarch's relationship with the Egyptian (§ 2.3), Zoroastrian (§ 2.4), and Jewish and Christian (§ 2.5) religions, the latter is of special interest, containing speculation on how Plutarch came to know about Jewish practices and why he never mentioned Christians in his *corpus*.

Chapter 2 (pp. 39-56), by Inger N.I. Kuin, is titled "Deaf to the Gods: Atheism in Plutarch's *De superstitione*". It focuses on Plutarch's conception of atheism as presented in *De sup.*, mentioned throughout the work as a lesser evil with respect to superstition, and accordingly characterized with mostly positive attributes. Kuin reviews the earlier literature on the treatise in order to reject both the doubts on its authenticity and its interpretations as a facetious exercise of rhetoric (§ 2). In this discussion, Kuin would have benefitted from taking into account Laurenti and Santaniello's recent edition of *De sup.*,[8] since the editors reach similar conclusions to Kuin's, while also showing that the treatise is constructed as a *súnkrisis* (a genre fea-

4. Hirsch-Luipold, 2016, pp. 44-45.
5. See Meeusen, 2015.
6. *De Pyth. or.* 2-4, 395a-396c.
7. See rather Babut, 1992, pp. 190-192; Meeusen, 2017, p. 91.
8. Laurenti & Santaniello, 2007, spec. pp. 19-27.

ture which connects it closely with the rhetorical trends of the Early Imperial age). The following analysis of *atheótēs* (§§ 3-6) is in any case well structured, combining terminological considerations (also on the terms νομίζειν and πίστις) with specific discussions of metaphors and analogies, and ending with a short comparison with how the concept is presented in other Plutarchan works (§ 6).

Chapter 3 (pp. 57-70), by Michiel Meeusen, is titled "Plutarch on the Platonic Synthesis: A Synthesis". This is a development of Meeusen's earlier treatment of Plutarch's "double" view on causality,[9] which involves the concurrence of physical processes with teleological divine causes in the determination of phenomena in the sensible world. After analysing the main textual sources on this conception (§§ 2-3), with a focus on its Platonic inspiration and on Plutarch's presentation of Plato as the pioneer who introduced this view, Meeusen dedicates a section (§ 4) to discussing Donini's earlier proposal "to emend δι᾽οὗ (= the instrumental cause in the traditional scheme) in δι᾽ὅ (= final cause)" in a crucial passage in *De def. or.* 48 (436d-e).[10] Meeusen convincingly argues for the conservation of the manuscripts' reading; the next step should be to find parallel passages to support his interpretation of the δι᾽οὗ as referring to the "divine λόγος", *i.e.*, allegedly, to the instrument through which the god "shapes the world and remains in contact with it".

Chapter 4 (pp. 71-83), by Peter Lötscher, is titled "Plutarch's Monotheism and the God of Mathematics". It is concerned with how the forms of monotheism professed by Plutarch and those professed by the early Christians differ, identifying two main points: Christian monotheism was not "polyatric" like Plutarch's (cf. chapter 1, above), and number symbolism was completely absent from the early apologetic *corpus*. Lötscher focuses on the latter difference, thus presenting an overview (§§ 3-5) of Plutarchan passages mentioning the god's oneness and Pythagorean numerology, giving prominence to Ammonius's speech in *De E* (17-21, 391e-394c). Then, he devotes a section (§ 6) to denying that Plutarch's dualism was "essential", but his arguments do not directly engage with the recent scholarship on this difficult topic.[11] The "God of Mathematics" in the chapter's title comes from an unusual reading of the phrase ἀπάρξασθαι τῷ θεῷ τῆς φίλης μαθηματικῆς used by Eustrophus in the same dialogue (7, 387e); all of its recent translations are in accordance with Franck C. Babbitt's: "to offer to the god the

9. Meeusen, 2016, pp. 258–277.

10. See Donini, 1992.

11. See Ferrari in De Simone, 2016, pp. 40-43 and the critical bibliographies in Boys-Stones, 2018, pp. 22, 111-115.

first-fruits of our beloved mathematics".[12] A discussion of the possible ambiguity of this sentence would have helped the readers to better understand Lötscher's view.

Chapter 5 (pp. 84-114), by Geert Roskam, is titled "Plutarch's Theonomous Ethics and Christianity: A Few Thoughts on a Much-Discussed Problem". In comparing Plutarch with the early Christian authors, this chapter stirs up an impressively rich bibliography on the parallels and differences between the two (§ 2) – as well as on Plutarch's popularity among later Christian authors (n. 40) –, which makes it an excellent starting point for further studies on the topic. It begins with an analysis of Plutarch's ethics aimed at showing their "theonomous" aspect (§ 1), *i.e.* their final orientation towards a Platonically conceived "assimilation to god" (ὁμοίωσις θεῷ). Although not entirely convincing on its general conclusions (especially on the rigid scheme of layered exemplarity reconstructed at pp. 89-90), this discussion acts as an appropriate introduction to Roskam's comparison between the ethics and theology of Plutarch with John's (§§ 3-6). This focuses on the self-centeredness of Plutarch's god – surely overblown, as the god's πρόνοια ("providence"), central to both the cosmology of *De facie* and the soteriology of *De sera num.*, is not taken into account – and on John's identification of his god with love, which results in an essentially altruistic ethics (as opposed to Plutarch's, focused on virtue). In the chapter's conclusion (§ 7), the Christian view is presented as an objective historical improvement, breaking through the "limitations" of Plutarch's ethics.

Chapter 6 (pp. 115-135), by Lautaro Roig Lanzillotta, is titled "An End in Itself, or a Means to an End? The Role of Ethics in the Second Century: Plutarch's *Moralia* and the *Nag Hammadi* Writings". This is a well-structured and aptly documented comparison between Plutarch's take on how to reach Platonic ὁμοίωσις θεῷ (§ 2; see chapter 5, above) and the Gnostics' views on the same matter found in the *Nag Hammadi* writings (§ 3). Roig Lanzillotta underlines that practical ethics were important for both – crucially as a way to neutralize the negative influence of passions onto the intellectual part of the soul –, and that both believed a proper ethical care to be necessary for the attainment of divine contemplation after death. Commendably, he decides to avoid speculating on historical derivations, rather considering both Plutarch and the Gnostics to be part of a common "philosophical-religious continuum" (§ 1) – which I would at least characterize as philo-Platonist. This point could have been strengthened by referring to an important article by Heinrich Dörrie,[13]

12. Babbitt, 1936.
13. Dörrie, 1981.

in which the parallels between Plutarch's and the Gnostic views were already interpreted to prove nothing more than "*Affinität*".

Chapter 7 (pp. 136-153), by Luisa Lesage Gárriga, is titled "Reincarnation and Other Experiences of the Soul in Plutarch's *De facie*: Two Case Studies". This chapter, surely connected with Lesage Gárriga's work on her recently published critical edition of *De facie* (2021),[14] presents a detailed analysis (§ 2) of the souls' vicissitudes in the afterworld as described in Sulla's myth (*De facie* 26-30, 940f-945e), with a focus on the varying locations with which the souls are associated and on the identification of the kind of souls participating to each stage. Her schematic analysis of the locations allows to notice in the text an "orderly pattern" (§ 4), but her original proposals (§ 3) on the identification of the two groups of souls said to be "without intellect" in 28 (943b-d, ἄνουν) and 30 (945b-c, ἄνευ νοῦ) is more dubious. She decides to explain these passages "exclusively through *De facie*, without resorting to other texts" (§ 1), but this approach, although commendable in its bottom-up orientation, is risky when the ambiguity of the text – as in this case – is such as to require some interpretative creativity, which can only be substantiated by parallel passages. Since she refers to the problem of a possibly contradicting eschatology to support her claims, some consideration of the myth in *De sera num.* would not have been beside the point, as this also stages two apparently incompatible processes leading to the souls' reincarnation (in 27, 565f-566a and 32, 567e-568a). Nonetheless, her discussion is a worthy addition to the debate, and her arguments are thoroughly confronted with the earlier literature.

Chapter 8 (pp. 154-176), by Israel Muñoz Gallarte, is titled "The Conception of the Last Steps towards Salvation Revisited: The *Telos* of the Soul in Plutarch and Its Context". It highlights some correspondences in the imagery employed by Plutarch and Gnostic authors to refer to the souls' ultimate reunion with the divine, taken as a corroboration that they were united in a common "cultural intertextuality".[15] The comparison is preceded by two sections which are highly dependent on earlier work by Frederick E. Brenk:[16] the first (§ 2) is an introduction to Plato's conception of *epopteía* (afterlife "contemplation" of the higher truths) in its historical context, and the second (§ 3) explores Plutarch's development of the theme in his own works. Special attention is paid to the imagery of its descriptions, and prominently to the motif of souls "marrying" or "consorting" with the divine, found in

14. Lesage Gárriga, 2021.
15. Valantasis, 1997.
16. Brenk, 1992 and 1994.

Amatorius 20 (766b) and *De Is. et Os.* 58 (374f-375a). Despite the presentation of the latter passage being not entirely convincing in its details (Isis does not seem to be correctly understood as a symbol of either the world soul or the cosmos' animated matter),[17] it is clear that the metaphor of "marriage" is relevant to Plutarch's eschatology, which allows Muñoz Gallarte to present an excellent overview of similar Gnostic sources (§ 4), in which it was common.

Chapter 9 (pp. 177-191), by Delfim F. Leão, is titled "Gods, Impiety and Pollution in the Life and Death of Phocion". This is a well-structured and insightful presentation of the parallels between Plutarch's biographies of Phocion and Alcibiades, especially focused on their common link with the Eleusinian mysteries (§ 2) and with the description of their protagonists' death sentences, both related to impiety (§ 3). In Alcibiades's case, impiety was the reason of his execution; in Phocion's case, impiety was the result of his ungrateful condemnation by the Athenian population. In presenting the latter, Plutarch mentions Socrates for a comparison (*Phoc.* 38), but it might be a stretch to infer with Leão that in this way Phocion "is represented as a worthy successor to the philosopher" (§ 4).

Chapter 10 (pp. 192-207), by Serena Citro, is titled "The Religiosity of (Greek and Roman) στρατηγοί". In the frame of the Leuven school's "hypomnematic" approach to Plutarch's *corpus*,[18] this chapter analyses the anecdote about Timotheus's reply to the accusation that he conquered cities by mere luck as is narrated in three Plutarchan texts, compared against each other (§ 2): *Reg. et imp. apophth.* (187b-c), *De Her. mal.* (7, 865b-c) and *Sull.* (6, 3). In the latter, Sulla's religious exaltation of his own supposed luck is contrasted with Timotheus's irritated reply to those who diminished his valor by reference to *túkhē* ("in this campaign, at least, […] fortune has no share" – a different reply from the cocky joke reported in the two other texts): while Sulla made a virtue and a political tool of such insinuations, Timotheus cared about the recognition of his own honour, until he began to be struck by misfortune. Citro's analysis is sound for the most part, but her inferences on this last episode, which she takes to represent Plutarch's own views on divine resentment ("the strategos […] had committed the sin of presumption", thus arousing "the resentment of the Divine", p. 202), might be undermined by her insufficient consideration of the context of indirect quotation (φασιν, 6, 4) and by her likely misinterpretation of the *hapax* ἀντιμειρακιεύεσθαι. It was an unspecified plurality of people, due to Timotheus's bitter replies, to describe his misfortunes as an effect of the divinity "acting in

17. See Boys-Stones, 2018, pp. 114-115.
18. Van der Stockt, 1999.

return like a (petulant) youth" (my translation; Plutarch would hardly refer this verb to his benevolent god in a serious way), and not Plutarch himself.

Chapter 11 (pp. 208-225), by Joaquim Pinheiro, is titled "La valeur de la *tolma* dans les *Moralia* de Plutarque". This is primarily a survey of the occurrences of the term τόλμα ("audacity") in Plutarch's *Moralia*, aimed at analyzing how the concept is articulated, connotated, and related with the philosopher's ethical and psychological views. The analysis is presented in a smooth thematic flow, but the persuasiveness of its conclusions is varying; for instance, one may raise some doubts on Pinheiro's interpretation of the passage in *De ad. et am.* 12 (56b), which quotes Thucydides (*Hist.* III 82) on the subversion of language brought about during wars as a manipulative way to justify generalized abuse ("*c'est souvent le contexte même qui influence de forme décisive la signification des mots. Plutarque a recours à Thucydidès pour le justifier*" etc., p. 217). The tentative connections with religion (§ 3) prove to be a dead end in the *Moralia* (except for the use of the adjective δαιμόνιος with τόλμα in *Mul. virt.* 245d), and Pinheiro's mention of a "metaphysical" use of the concept in the Neoplatonist, Neopythagorean, and Gnostic traditions is not supported with textual evidence or references to secondary literature.

Chapter 12 (pp. 229-238), by Fabio Tanga, is titled "The Religious Landscape of Plutarch's *Quaestiones Graecae*". This is an organized survey of the *Quaestiones Graecae* which concern religious themes (25 out of 59), arranged by sub-themes and relevant characters, possibly useful as a starting point for an inquiry into the topic. It mostly summarizes the *quaestiones*' content, adding few interpretative claims which in turn, strangely, never take into account the etiological, zetematic, and possibly hypomnematic character of the work.[19] This seems rather to be treated as a narrative text akin to *Mul. virt.* or *Am. narr.* with a concern for the entertainment of the reader, despite its etiological structure being formally acknowledged too (only from p. 235 on).

Chapter 13 (pp. 239-255), by Carlos Alcalde-Martín, is titled "Human Sacrifices: Can They Be Justified?". This is a very accurate, well-structured, and generally sound analysis of some of Plutarch's presentations of historical episodes involving human sacrifices, either executed or circumvented: *Pel.* 20-21, *Ages.* 6, *Them.* 13, and *Marc.* 3. It is argued that Plutarch frames all these sacrifices as not compliant "with Greek and Roman religious rules" and "as exceptional happenings" occurring in moments of "extreme necessity", required "to achieve military victory and save the country" (§ 1). The claim is corroborated by a detailed examination of each (§§ 2-5), with

19. See Meeusen, 2016, pp. 76, 85, 96, 168-169.

consideration of their rhetorical-connotative functions in the economy of the *Vitae*, their philosophical-religious implications, and their narrative and etiological purposes. Alcalde-Martín's interpretation of *Quaest. rom.* 83 (283f-284c, in § 4) might be debatable: in this passage, Plutarch only uses the adjective ἄτοπος ("absurd") to refer to the apparent (logical) contradiction in the Romans' behaviour when they accepted to sacrifice humans – which is what prompts the *quaestio* –, and it certainly does not communicate his condemnation of their act.

Chapter 14 (pp. 256-285), by Nerea López Carrasco, is titled "The Conception of the Goddess Hecate in Plutarch". In this contribution, Plutarchan testimonies on Hecate are arranged according to their informativity on either the "ritual context" of her cult – in turn divided in "regular worship" (§ 2) and "magic worship" (§ 3) – or the "astral context" of the goddess's assimilation with heavenly bodies or celestial regions (§ 4). The detailed analysis of the evidence focuses on everything of interest: Hecate's epithets, places of worship, associated deities and other entities, associated animals, powers and cosmic domains, the rituals' objects, procedures and functions, and correspondences with akin divinities and cults in Greek and Roman religion, all provided with an impressively rich documentation considering textual as well as iconographical parallels. The resulting picture shows Plutarch as a turning point on the literary tradition on Hecate, as the first informer on the goddess's association with the moon. The section on the "astral context" (§ 4) is arguably less convincing than the other two, especially for López Carrasco's interpretation of *De facie* 29 (944c): according to her, the fact that the place of punishment of *daímones* – described to be located on the moon just like the "Elysian plain" – is here named "Hecate's recess" can be taken as a proof that Plutarch identified the moon with Hecate, but one may counter that the mythic toponym may only corroborate the association of the goddess with underworld torments and evil spirits (on which see § 3). This discussion might have benefited, perhaps, from an accurate consideration of the passage in *De sera num.* 28-29 (566a-e) about the "oracle common to Night and Moon", considering the role that Hecate will be assigned in prophetic dreams in the *Oracula Chaldaica* (§ 3).

Chapter 15 (pp. 286-296), by Paola Volpe, is titled "Plutarch and the Ambiguity of the God Dionysus". This is an overview of several sources, both Plutarchan and non-Plutarchan, on the life and nature of Dionysus and on his cult. The sources are never criticized nor placed in their historical contexts, and mythological narrations on the distant past are treated on par with historical reports on Plutarch's times. The bibliography is minimal: the reader may integrate it with the references in the following two chapters.

Chapter 16 (pp. 297-310), by Soraya Planchas Gallarte, is titled "Interpretations of Dionysus Ἰσοδαίτης in an Orphic Ritual (Plutarch, *De E apud Delphos* 389A)".

This contribution examines "the term Ἰσοδαίτης ('the one who divides equitably'), an unusual epithet referring to Pluto and Dionysus", based on the testimonies of Lucian, *Ep. Sat.* 32 and Plutarch, *De E* 9 (389a). In the latter text, the name is associated with Dionysus, Zagreus and Nyctelius in a context of mythological symbolism which Planchas Gallarte, building on earlier scholarship, interprets to be connected with Orphic rituals. This is the frame in which she proposes her original interpretation of the term: she begins with a very sound etymological discussion coupled with an analytical criticism of the earlier interpretations (§ 2); then, she suggests two possible implicit objects for the δαίεσθαι ("to distribute") embedded in the term (§ 3): either the "fruits and vegetables" which "used to be offered in the Orphic ritual", or "the same destiny" assigned by Dionysus to "every initiate" to the Orphic mysteries; both conclusions are convincing and well argued. Of special interest is the documentary evidence found in the Orphic tablets from Pelinna (4th cent. BCE), of which Planchas Gallarte reports several extracts.

Chapter 17 (pp. 311-331), by Ana Isabel Jiménez San Cristóbal, is titled "The Epiphany of Dionysus in Elis and the Miracle of the Wine (Plutarch, *Quaestiones Graecae* 299 B)". In *Quaest. graec.* 36 (299b), "Plutarch wonders why the women of Elis sung a hymn to Dionysus asking him to come to them 'with ox foot'". This chapter analyses Plutarch's *quaestio*, along with all the relevant parallel sources, in an attempt to reconstruct the "ritual context" of the Elian invocation and explain its wording. The analysis, grounded in an impressively rich bibliography, begins with considerations on the genre of the hymn to establish its cletic character (§ 2): this entails that it could be sung at different festivals from the Dionysia or Anthesteria, and specifically to invoke the god. The focus is then switched to the profile of the "sixteen" Elian women (§ 3) and to the historical links of the city of Elis with Dionysus, with special attention to the local celebration of the Thyia as presented by external sources (§ 4). Jiménez San Cristóbal shows the similarities between this festival – which involved the recurrence of the miraculous event of a self-filling wine cauldron – and the celebration presented by Plutarch, both on a surface level and in their inferable features. Following this (§ 5), she links such rituals with the first consumption of fully aged wine "toward the end of winter or beginning of spring", symbolized as Dionysus's return to life, which allows her to draw a brilliant comparison with the Athenian Anthesteria, showing several correspondences with what has been established about the Elian Thyia. The identification of the Thyia as a local version of the Anthesteria might be destined to remain speculative, but it seems now probable that Plutarch saw an affinity between the two (note that at p. 318 one of Plutarch's wild guesses on the meaning of the expression "with ox foot" is inappropriately treated as evidence for a historical reconstruction, as though it were a reliable report on the Elian festival).

Chapter 18 (pp. 332-347), by Elsa Giovanna Simonetti, is titled "Divination in Plutarch's *Life of Cicero*". This chapter provides an overview of all the passages related to divination and omens in *Cic.* to highlight the relationships between such narrations and Plutarch's religious and philosophical concerns. The paper is well-structured and overall reliable as a presentation of the supernatural episodes in the biography, but it is very short on bibliographic and textual references. Most of the themes which are here touched upon were properly discussed by Simonetti in her monograph on Plutarch's views on divination and in a recent book chapter on prophetic dreams.[20] The overview is preceded by general considerations (§ 2) on Plutarch's relationship with Roman religion, his Latin sources, and his philosophical-religious evaluation of the person of Cicero, both a self-proclaimed Academician and an augur. All the relevant scenes are then presented (§ 3) with short analyses concerning their functions in the economy of the work and their implications with respect to the depiction of Cicero's character, religiosity, and divine sanction on Apollo's part. As for Simonetti's "ethical" interpretation of the omen of the ravens in *Cic.* 47, one might wonder whether it was rather meant to underline that Cicero was under Apollo's protection (without relation to the moral paradigmaticity of animals). The providential character of Cicero's lifecycle is confirmed and made explicit in the account of the historical events following his death (§ 4).

Chapter 19 (pp. 351-366), by Christina Harker, is titled "The Reception of Plutarch's Universe". This contribution focuses on the Early Modern reception of Plutarch's "scientific" works in the context of the 16th and 17th-cent. debate over non-geocentric views, as these are given some prominence in the then-rediscovered *De facie*, *Quaest. Plat.* 8 and *Plac. philos.* The central part of the chapter (§§ 4-6) is dedicated to the newly proposed heliocentric views and their relationship with Plutarch's texts. Harker first introduces the context of the debate, along with the generalized practice of appealing to antiquity to corroborate cosmological views (§ 2). Then she explores the hypothesis that Plutarch's references to the non-geocentric option might have been mediated to the European humanists by famous Islamic authors (§ 3). Proceeding to the European heliocentric astronomers, she firstly focuses on Copernicus, who quoted Plutarch explicitly in his works, to attempt to determine whether he actually read the latter's references to heliocentric views and in which period (§ 4); she then considers Galileo's demonstrable interest for Plutarch's works, with an overview of the correspondences between the scientific output of the former and some of the features and details of *De facie* (§ 5); she finally comments on Kepler's great

20. Simonetti, 2017 and 2019.

affection for *De facie*, with a focus on the astronomer's allegorical *Somnium* narrating a journey to the moon, followed by explanatory notes and by a full translation with commentary of Plutarch's dialogue (§ 6). In its whole, the chapter is largely reliant on earlier scholarship with little addition on Harker's part, but the presentation is well-organized and informative (except for the references to Plutarch, especially in n. 9, where the ending myth of *De facie* is misrepresented as Sulla's "famous myth about the Selenites or moon-dwellers", who are instead the object of a thought experiment developed by Lamprias in 25, 940b-f).

Chapter 20 (pp. 367-382), by Sixtine Desmoulins and Olivier Guerrier, is titled "Les *daimons* de Plutarque et leur réception dans la Renaissance française". This contribution explores the extent to which Plutarch's references to demons where Christianized by some of the humanists of the 16th century. It opens with a well-structured overview of the ideas on demons exhibited in Plutarch's *Moralia* (§ 1), with little problematization of how they fit with Plutarch's thought.[21] Its only function is to set the backdrop against which it is possible to evaluate the receptions of these themes by the later Christian authors, and Plutarch's references to "evil" demons are accordingly given central prominence; Desmoulins and Guerrier's question, in fact, is whether the 16th-cent. humanists understood these pagan entities to be identifiable with devilish beings in the Christian sense or not. Before answering it, they show that the Christianization of Plutarch began with the ancient Apologists (§ 2), who often referred to him in their refutations of pagan religion and demonology, most prominently done in Eusebius' *Preparatio Evangelica*; this treatise was well appreciated in the 16th century, and there is clear evidence that Amyot, who wrote the first French translation of the *Moralia*, often considered the testimony of Eusebius for his selection of the variant readings in Plutarch's text. They also show that Eusebius's interpretation of the tale of the death of Pan (Plutarch, *De def. or.* 17, 419b-e) as alluding to the disappearance of pagan demons caused by divine Redemption influenced its Early Modern presentations as a tale on the death of Christ. In this frame, they test the hypothesis of such widespread Christianization having an effect on Amyot's translations of Plutarch's passages on demons (§ 3), and careful terminological analysis leads to a negative conclusion. As they show with extensive quotations, the opposite is true for the interpretative paratext in Goulart's edition of the *Moralia*. The chapter ends with an analysis of a beautiful passage from Montaigne (§ 4), which shows how he "psychologized" the concept of the demon of Socrates as an "*impulsion de volonté*" in a wise soul, paralleling some of Plutarch's considerations in *De genio Socr.*

21. On this subject, see Brenk, 1977, pp. 85-144; Deuse, 2010, pp. 182-187, 191-193.

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