



RED Plutarch Groningen-Bern 2018

Plutarch and the Ancient Religious Landscape

28th June
UniS, Schanzeneckstrasse 1
Room A 201

29th-30th June
Haus der Universität
Schlösslistrasse 5
3008 Bern



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IFK „Religious Conflicts and Coping Strategies“

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Thursday, June 28th
Room A 201, UniS

14.00–14.30 Welcome and Introduction

Rainer Hirsch-Luipold and Lautaro Roig Lanzillotta

14.30–16.00 Section I: Religion and Theology

Rainer Hirsch-Luipold: Religion, Religions and Theology in Plutarch
(Response: D. Leão)

Fabio Tanga: The Religious Landscape of Plutarch's *Quaestiones Graecae*
(Response: R. Hirsch-Luipold)

Delfim Leão: Gods, Impiety and Pollution in the Life and Death of Phocion
(Response: F. Tanga)

16.00–16.30 Coffee Break

16.30–18.00 Section II: Gods

Peter Lötscher: Plutarch's Monotheism (*full paper*)

Inger Kuin: Deaf to the Gods: Atheism in Plutarch's *Peri Deisidaimonias*
(Response: G. Roskam)

Nerea López Carrasco: Hecate in Plutarch: The Conception of a Goddess Through the Epithets (Response: E. Simonetti)

19.00 Dinner: Restaurant Rosengarten

τῆς ἐπιπέδατος ἰσχυροῦς πύλας ἐμβαλεῖν διὰ λυγρῶν τε, τῶν ὑμῖν ἐξελόντων
τὸ χρόνον ὑπερθεύει, διὰ λαμπρῶν ποιούσιν. ὅθεν ἅπαντες τῆς χροσίδων πλὴν τῆς πύλας
νομίζουσι. ταῦτά δὲ πύλας ἰδαοῦ μέζοντες, οὐκ εἰς ἀνδραγαθῶν δαιμονίῳ τὰ μὲν, δέξαι
τὰ δὲ ἀποπνεύωντων ἐλμακαὶ καὶ μελικαθῶν. ὅτι μὲν οὐκ ἐκτίσθη ἡ μὲν γέμοιο γο
τῆς περὶ ἐνδὲ καλανδῶν μεαῖ, ὁμολοῦται. καὶ τῶν ἐνδραγαθῶν, ἐορταζούρωμασι.
ἰσχυροῦς τῆς πύλας ὁμομαζόντες. ἐνδραγαθῶν φασίν, ὕδεν' ἐμὲν ἔσθ'· ἀλλὰ
καθῶν καὶ ἀναίμακτον ὡς ὄν δὲ τῆς πύλας ἀπὸ τῶν ἑσθῶν μὲν τῆς ἰσχυροῦς ὁμομαζόντες ὁμομαζόντες
Φυλάτῃν. οὐ μὲν ἀλλ' ἐπιπέδατος κτέλεισος, βοσπορικῆς ἕως αὐτοῖς ἐορταζούρωμασι, κατὰ τῶν
τῶν ἐνδραγαθῶν. καὶ περὶ τῆς προσομοιοῦσιν αὐτῶν. μὴ μὲν οὐκ, οὐδὲν ἀγρῶ μεαῖ κ' μου με
αἰ' οἱ
μὴ πύλας ἐλλῶν καὶ ὁμολοῦσιν ἐμὲν ὄντες. ἐκ γὰρ μεδ' τῶν ἐνδραγαθῶν τῶν πύλας
ὁρω μὲν ἐκτέλεισος, ἀπὸ τῆς τεταταμένης τῆς λέγουσι. καὶ τῶν οὐκ ἐκλαπτεῖν ἐν αὐτῶν

9.00–10:30 Section III: Gods (Dionysus)

Paola Volpe: Plutarch and the Ambiguity of the God
(Response: S. Planchas Gallarte)

Soraya Planchas Gallarte: Interpretations of Dionysus Ἴσοδαίτης in an Orphic Ritual
(Plutarch, E ap. Delph. 389A)
(Response: P. Volpe)

10:30–11:00 Coffee Break

11:00–12:30 Section IV: Myth and Ritual

Carlos Alcalde-Martín: Human sacrifices in the *Parallel Lives*: their function in the structure of the biography and in the religious thought of Plutarch
(Response: S. Citro)

Serena Citro: On Religiosity of στρατηγοί (Greek and Roman Ones)
(Response: C. Alcalde-Martín)

Elsa Simonetti: Divination in Plutarch's *Life of Cicero*
(Response: N. López Carrasco)

12:30–14:00 Lunch

14:00–15:30 Section V: Philosophy and Ethics

Michiel Meeusen: Plutarch on the Platonic Synthesis: A Synthesis
(Response: L. Lesage Gárriga)

Lautaro Roig Lanzillotta: An End in Itself, or a Means to an End? The Role of Ethics in the Second Century: Plutarch's *Moralia* and Nag Hammadi
(Response: I. Muñoz Gallarte)

Israel Muñoz Gallarte: Conception of the Last Steps towards Salvation Revisited: the *Telos* of the Soul in Plutarch and in Gnostic Literature
(Response: L. Roig Lanzillotta)

15:30–16:00 Coffee Break

16:00–17:30 Section VI: Anthropology and Cosmology

Luisa Lesage Gárriga: Towards a Sociology of the Soul in Plutarch's *De facie*: Two Case Studies
(Response: M. Meeusen)

Joaquim Pinheiro: La Valeur de la *Tolma* dans les *Moralia* de Plutarque
(Response: O. Guerrier)

19:00 Conference Dinner at Haus der Universität

9:00–10:30 Section VII: Reception

Geert Roskam: Plutarch's Theonomous Ethics and Christianity: A Few Thoughts on a Much Discussed Problem

(Response: P. Lötscher)

Georgiana Huian: Plutarch's Reception in the Church Fathers (*full paper*)

10:30–11:00 Coffee Break

11:00–12:30 Section VIII: Reception

Christina Harker: The Reception of Plutarch's Universe

(Response: S. Desmoulins)

Sixtine Desmoulins / Olivier Guerrier: Les Daimons de Plutarque et Leur Réception dans la Renaissance Française

(Response: C. Harker)

12:30 Lunch: Restaurant Beaulieu

Rainer Hirsch-Luipold: Religion, Religions and Theology in Plutarch

Throughout his *Moralia* and *Lives*, Plutarch presents a broad phenomenology of lived religion: mythology, rituals, cultic images and symbols, iconography, and cultic architecture. In this paper, I will give an overview of the various religious traditions as presented in Plutarch's oeuvre, and ask in how far an overarching concept of religion and a theology or even a concept of personal faith can be discerned behind them. Plutarch will emerge as a philosopher with a leaning towards the traditions of lived religion. According to him they are the basis or one important basis for the philosophical search for the truth.

Fabio Tanga: The Religious Landscape of Plutarch's *Quaestiones Graecae*

The paper discusses the religious landscape of Plutarch's *Quaestiones Graecae* through gods, oracles, feasts, sanctuaries, priests and sacrifices described in the treatise. The work shows many original cults and customs where knowledge, mysticism and revelation are often mixed as the result of Plutarch's historical, aetiological, literary and religious interests.

Delfim Leão: Gods, Impiety and Pollution in the Life and Death of Phocion

Plutarch insistently perceives the most important deeds and even the death of Phocion within a framework of divine references and human events connected with each other. Besides the operative interaction of such concepts as *tyche*, *kairos* and *chronos* in the outline of the biography, as well as omens and other signs, the *Mysteries of Eleusis* are particularly mentioned in articulation with important events that mark both the emergence and the decline of Phocion's military and political career. The most striking example, however, is given by the description of Phocion's death, whose execution is depicted as an impious crime (Phoc. 37.2: ἀνοσιώτατον), explicitly compared to the trial and execution of Socrates. It is argued that those elements globally contribute to compose a picture of Athens' decay and of the end of the democratic era, which the death of Phocion symbolically emphasizes.

Peter Lötscher: Plutarch's Monotheism

The discussion about a “pagan monotheism” continues, with Plutarch's theology playing an important role. He linked the belief of one last existence with the traditional religion of different peoples. First, there is the mention of the Pythagorean μόνας in a number of texts, which he sees as the beginning of everything. A Platonic monotheism can be found in *De E apud Delphos*, where he reflects on the oneness of being. When it comes to the relation between the One and the world, it is necessary to discuss the objection, that Plutarch's theology is not monotheistic, but actually dualistic.

Inger Kuin: Deaf to the Gods: Atheism in Plutarch's *Peri Deisidaimonias*

This paper considers Plutarch's understanding of atheism as a problem of perception, focusing on *On superstition*. My aim is to investigate how Plutarch viewed atheists as a category, and how he distinguished them from the different kinds of people who, according to him, held erroneous views about the gods, like Epicureans or superstitious people. Other texts that will be taken into account are *Against Colotes*, *On the delays of divine vengeance*, and *On the decline of oracles*.

Nerea López Carrasco: Hecate in Plutarch: The Conception of a Goddess through the Epithets

This paper studies the Plutarchean conception of *Hecate* from a selection of passages where the name of the goddess is explicitly mentioned and which belong to the three fields of Plutarch's works: Astrology, Religion (including Mysteries) and Magic. I will show the thematic interconnection between them having *Hecate* as common thread. This way, we will see the associations between *Hecate* and different divinities (especially *Selene*) in each field, as well as the particular epithets applied to the goddess (χθονία, φωσφόρος, Τριοδίτις, ούρανία...) which sometimes reveal or depend on such associations. Finally, some further considerations will be made about the Mystery profile of *Hecate* in Plutarch and its relation with Astrology.

Abstracts Section III

Paola Volpe: Plutarch and the Ambiguity of the God

Zeus encircled Semele in the lovely nest of his arms. Dionysus was born: he is the god of the life with many faces, the god of life and death, who dies and is reborn, the symbol of generation and death, ecstasy and orgiastic dance. Born of mortal woman, first of all he must assert his identity and so he is Dionysus Zagreus, Nictelio, Isodaéte, he is the son of Ox which the Argives (*De Iside* 364-365) evoked while playing the trumpet. A lot of names for a god who escapes and reappears to hide himself to those women who seek him spasmodically (*Quaestio graeca* 299F). He is the god of inebriation an evoé, the god 'purified and spiritualistic' and could be compared to the God of Jews (*Quaestio conv. IV*, 6).

Soraya Planchas Gallarte: Interpretations of Dionysus Ἴσοδαίτης in an Orphic Ritual (Plutarch, E ap. Delph. 389A)

In Plutarch's *De E apud Delphos* 389A Dionysus is mentioned through some epithets in the context of an orphic ritual. One of these epithets, Ἴσοδαίτης, has different interpretations as this is the only text in which this name appears linked to an orphic ritual. Due to our limited available information, there is not an agreed opinion about the meaning of the epithet. Hence, the aim of this work is to introduce the different interpretations of the Dionysus' epithet Ἴσοδαίτης in order to establish a good one that fits well in this context.

Abstracts Section IV

Carlos Alcalde-Martín: Human sacrifices in the *Parallel Lives*: their function in the structure of the biography and in the religious thought of Plutarch

Plutarch narrates in *Parallel Lives* several cases of human sacrifices, some of them not fulfilled. They originate from a dream, a portent or an oracle received by those who feel great anxiety as a result of a situation of extreme necessity, usually an imminent and decisive battle. The fulfillment of such sacrifices would instill courage in the army or population. These episodes have an important function both in the structure of the biography and in the characterization of the protagonist. But a fundamental reason for Plutarch to include them in the biographies is his deep religiosity and personal interest in all types of religious manifestations. In the case of human sacrifices, these give him the opportunity to present, often by putting it in the mouth of the biographies' personages, his opinion on human sacrifices and theological concepts about the gods and the cult that they should receive. He believes in the manifestation of divinity through dreams, oracles, omens and predictions and, at the same time, he does believe in benefactor gods, who reject human sacrifices for being contrary to their nature.

Serena Citro: On Religiosity of στρατηγοί (Greek and Roman ones)

The examination of some characters in Plutarch's works aims at highlighting and deepening the problematic relationship between men (and their will) and the divine intervention in human events. Does the favourable outcome of an action, in the political or military sphere, result from a weighted and thoughtful examination of the circumstances through the exercise of λογισμός or is it determined by a higher entity, which escapes the control of man? Or rather it could be a combination of both factors? Some characters show gratitude to the deity, considering fundamental and determining its contribution to the actions; in other cases the characters attribute exclusively to themselves the merit of important deeds. Therefore is or isn't a man, especially the leader, to be responsible for his own downfall and for that of community which depends on him, because he acts without reason, even though he has received from the divinity tools to act in a good way?

Elsa Simonetti: Divination in Plutarch's Life of Cicero

Plutarch's *Life of Cicero* is woven of prophetic episodes. Cicero's birth is welcomed by positive presages (Cic. 2,2), which he confirms and realizes in the best possible way throughout his life and career, backed by his own natural talents. In the midst of his biography (5,1), the Delphic oracle intervenes to resize and contain his political ambition. The gods themselves seem eager to save his life, when threatened, by sending presages (14,4); his exile (32,4) is also marked by divine signs that suggest its short duration, while nefarious omens will finally accompany his death (47,8-10). The present contribution aims at exploring the life of Cicero – an augur, an expert on divination, and an admirer of Plato and the Academy – as an exemplary case study of Plutarch's "art of mediation", which he exerted not only to conjunct the metaphysical/divine with the contingent/human plan, but also to relate the Greek to the Roman world. The analysis of Plutarch's reading of Roman ritual-divinatory practices, which adhere to specific political-cultural standards, radically extraneous to the Greek world, will indeed shed light on the inventive interpretative strategies that he adopts when he deals with Roman civilisation. Moreover, the presence of divine/superhuman elements in his historical reports will deepen our understanding of Plutarch's philosophical engagement in the *Lives*.

Michiel Meeusen: Plutarch on the Platonic Synthesis: A Synthesis

Throughout his oeuvre, Plutarch aims to explain the world we live in on a religious basis and in view of his Platonic-Academic philosophy, which was founded on a basic diffidence in knowledge deriving from sensory data and on a deeply rooted faith in the providential ordering of the world by a benevolent Demiurge. In so doing, Plutarch presents Plato as a real turning point in the history of ancient Greek (natural) philosophy, in whom the rivalling theological and naturalist world views of earlier thinkers coincided and resulted in a harmonious synthesis.

The aim of this paper is to substantiate how this Platonic synthesis serves as a recurrent theme in Plutarch's writings and usefully contributes to our better understanding of the pagan landscape against which his world should be read and interpreted. This will be done by synthesising and critically (re)reading a number of passages that centre on the topic.

Lautaro Roig Lanzillotta: An End in Itself, or a Means to an End? The Role of Ethics in the Second Century: Plutarch's *Moralia* and Nag Hammadi

It is well known that later Middle Platonists hesitated as to the moral or purely intellectual understanding of Plato's *homoiosis theo*: while for Eudorus, Philo, and Alcinous, the goal of the likeness to god was mainly moral; for Plutarch and Apuleius its culmination was mainly a theoretical or epoptic experience. What is less known, however, is that the Nag Hammadi treatises reflect both of these Middle Platonic interpretations of Plato's ὁμοίωσις θεῷ: if some texts simply focus on the ethical perspective, other present an interesting combination of a moral and an intellectualistic conception of the *homoiosis theo*. The present paper analyses the conspicuous similarities between Plutarch and some Nag Hammadi treatises regarding the conception of the ethical path as initiatory for achieving the theoretical culmination of human life.

Israel Muñoz Gallarte: Conception of the Last Steps towards Salvation Revisited: The *Telos* of the Soul in Plutarch and in Gnostic Literature

In the late decade of the 1980s and the beginning of the 90s, the researcher F. Brenk published two interesting articles that each dealt in a different manner with the final face-to-face encounter with Plutarch's god – "The Origin and the Return of the Soul in Plutarch" and "Darkly beyond the Glass: Middle Platonism and the Vision of the Soul". Even if his conclusions are clear regarding the sources of the Chaeronean, as well as the position of Plutarch among the other platonic philosophers, the researcher raised important questions when it comes to the late writings of Plutarch, such as the *Dialogue on Love* and *Isis and Osiris*. In this paper, I attend to some of these questions and will try to bring some light to this topic by allocating it within the wider framework of contemporary early Christian literature.

Abstracts Section VI

Luisa Lesage Gárriga: Towards a Sociology of the Soul in Plutarch's *De Facie*: Two Sase Studies

In the eschatological myth that closes *De facie*, Plutarch refers to the ascent of soul-intellects and to the continuous bifurcations they encounter during this process, which depend on their ethical behavior both in life and after the first death. The aim of this paper is to classify the different categories and types of soul-intellects and to review, through the analysis of two case studies, previous interpretations of *De facie*'s ascent of the soul-intellect in order to help to reach a sound understanding of the treatise.

Joaquim Pinheiro: La Valeur de la *Tolma* dans les *Moralia* de Plutarque

This paper aims to analyse the concept of *tolma* in Plutarch's *Moralia*. The word *tolma* can have a positive connotation, in order to reveal the virtue or heroism of human nature. It also has a negative connotation when associated with unsavoury characters or actions.

We intend to check whether the word *tolma*, as in *Parallel Lives*, is mainly used in contexts of action and represents the dynamism of courage, an attitude marked by a certain degree of risk and irrationality. Therefore, *tolma* expresses, in our opinion, an important element of the characterization of the political hero in Plutarch.

Finally, the concept of *tolma*, from early writings, is closely related with questions concerning fate, the problem of evil, the stoical acceptance of misfortune, and the (lack of) courage of human nature.

Geert Roskam: Plutarch's Theonomous Ethics and Christianity: A Few Thoughts on a Much Discussed Problem

In this paper, I focus on the theonomous aspect of Plutarch's ethical thinking. The final goal of Plutarch's ethics is the traditional ideal of 'assimilation to the divine (as far as possible)': the well-known Platonic *telos of homoiosis theoi kata to dynaton*. Plutarch's adherence to this ideal necessarily implies that in the end, different aspects of his ethical doctrines are fundamentally conditioned by his conception of God.

In this respect, Plutarch's position can also be compared to that of early Christianity. Now Plutarch's relation to Christianity has already been much discussed and several scholars have pointed to many similarities between their respective views. *Prima facie*, such similarities can also be found in the *theonomous* aspect of their ethics, for both indeed take their image of God as the starting point for further moral reflections. Yet in my view, there also exist some basic differences between the two, both regarding their understanding of God and regarding the general orientation and concrete elaboration of their ethical thinking.

Georgiana Huian: Plutarch's Reception in the Church Fathers

Plutarch's reception in the Church Fathers is a field inviting thorough investigation and reflection. This paper proposes, firstly, a brief mapping of the methodological questions and current findings achieved in this field. Secondly, it addresses Plutarch's presence in the Church Fathers through common themes and *topoi*, similarities in argumentation, borrowing of *exempla*, and the use of common conceptual frames. Analysing some writings of the Greek and Latin Fathers of the 4th and 5th century, I intend to show that the references to Plutarch range from direct influence to implicit polemic, touching the treatment of ethical, cosmological, and theological themes.

Christina Harker: The Reception of Plutarch's Universe

This paper explores the Renaissance reception of Plutarch's astronomical writing, especially by Copernicus, Galileo, and Kepler in their various works on orbits, the correct method and methodology of astronomical research, and what can be learned from the lunar landscape. I evaluate their use of Plutarch as a conversation partner, source, and model for their own treatises on a variety of subjects, including discussions of the heliocentric model of the solar system. In addition, I explore the ways these thinkers benefited from Plutarch's astronomical works and to what extent Plutarch influenced scientific discourse as a scientific and literary forerunner.

Sixtine Desmoulins / Olivier Guerrier: Les Daimons de Plutarque et Leur Réception dans la Renaissance Française

Les traités de Plutarque accordent une place particulière aux *daimones*, que ce soit dans une optique cosmologique et eschatologique que dans la perspective du «démon» personnel. La présente communication passera d'un bref état des connaissances sur le traitement du thème et sa singularité chez le philosophe de Chéronée à un aperçu de la réception de ce dernier dans la Renaissance française, tout particulièrement dans les *Œuvres morales et meslées* d'Amyot.