

PLATO AND PLUTARCH'S FICTIONAL TECHNIQUES: THE DEATH OF THE GREAT PAN*)

One of Plutarch's most famous pages is found in the *De defectu oraculorum* (ch. 17, p. 419 A-E). It forms part of the theory of δαίμονες, as ostensibly put forward by 'Cleombrotus the Lacedaemonian' to explain why the Greeks decreasingly felt the need to consult oracles¹). 'Ministers of the gods', powerful and long-lived, but nevertheless wandering and mortal, the δαίμονες command the prophetic art; and their disappearance from society and the land itself causes 'the defection of the oracles themselves' (418 D-E *et passim*).

Cleombrotus' controversial²) thesis of the mortality of δαίμονες is supported by another of the dialogue's characters, the historian Philip. Philip repeats a story supposedly told to him by his teacher of grammar, Epitherses, father of Aemilianus the rhetor³), and himself allegedly an eye-witness of the event. Moreover, Plutarch mentions that 'Philip had several witnesses among the persons present⁴) who had been pupils of the old man Aemilianus' (419 E).

This story, repeated by Eusebius with a Christian interpretation (Praep.ev. 5.17), which has received the attention of numerous modern scholars and writers⁵), consists of the following major points:

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1) Chs. 9-38, pp. 414 E - 431 B. The translation quoted in this article is that of Frank Cole Babbitt (LCL).

2) Cf. 418 E (Heracleon).

3) Both historical personages: L. Cohn, RE VI (1907) s.v. 'Epitherses' (no. 2) 221; K. Gerth, RE suppl. III (1918) s.v. 'Aemilianus' (no. 1) 23.

4) Τῶν παρόντων ἐπίστυχος μάρτυρας (Gerth, loc. cit.: "Welche von den Mitunterrednern Lamprias, Kleombrotos, der Kyniker Didymos Planetiades..., Demetrios aus Tarsos..., Ammonios... und Herakleon unter den ἔνιοι zu verstehen sind, wird nicht gesagt"). Cf. *infra*, n. 81.

5) See Ph. Borgeaud, *History of Religions* 22 (Chicago 1983) 254-283 (= RHR 200 [1983] 3-39), with refs.

(B 4–10) Epitherses was passenger on a ship bound for Italy, which became becalmed in the vicinity of the Echinades Archipelago. While ‘the ship drifted near the Paxi islands’ (B 10 – C 2) a voice was suddenly heard from Paxi calling Thamus three times (‘Thamus was an Egyptian pilot, not known by name even to many on board’). On the third cry (C 2–6), the sailor replied and received the following message: ‘When you come opposite to Palodes, announce that Great Pan is dead.’ After a consultation with his passengers (C 6–12), Thamus decided that ‘if there should be a breeze, he would sail past and keep quiet, but with no wind and a smooth sea about the place he would announce what he had learned’. So, when he came opposite Palodes (D 1–7), and there was neither wind nor wave, Thamus from the stern, looking toward the land, said the words as he had heard them: ‘Great Pan is dead’, whereupon ‘a great cry of lamentation’ was immediately heard from shore. The event later came to be known to the Emperor Tiberius in Rome (D 7–14), who sent for Thamus and, believing his story, asked the court φιλόλογοι to examine the matter; they ‘conjectured that he [the Pan in question] was the son born of Hermes and Penelope’.

Modern commentators of De def. 419 A–E have generally divided themselves into two categories of interpretation: those who accept Plutarch’s ‘testimony’ that Thamus’ adventure was basically historical⁶), and those who maintain that the entire chapter is a piece of fiction skilfully constructed by Plutarch or his source⁷). Both sides tend to differ in the choice of details that they find crucial to the understanding of the episode. Consequently, there is wide divergence about the origin of the phenomenon, here named the ‘Great Pan’, and its nature. It has variously been identified with a Greek deity (notably Pan or Zan), an Oriental one (most commonly the Egyptian Mendes or the Syrian Tammuz), or with Christ himself⁸). Such diversity of approach and interpretation could have been avoided, and the problem satisfactorily solved, had the exegesis begun from the simple fact that De def.

6) So e.g. A. G. Gerhard, SB Heidelberg 1915, 3–52; R. Flacelière, *Plutarque. Oeuvres morales VI* (Paris [Budé] 1974) 92. Similarly, Borgeaud (n. 5) 258 with n. 13.

7) So e.g. O. Gruppe, *Burs. Jahresber.* 85 (1895) 274; A. D. Nock, CR 37 (1923) 164 f.

8) For the history of the controversy, with the bibliographical data, see the able account by Borgeaud (n. 5) 266–283. On his part, the Swiss scholar (followed e.g. by F. E. Brenk, in: ANRW II 16.3 [Berlin–New York 1986] 2120 f.; but cf. his addendum, 2143 f.) stresses the Oriental and Tiberian aspects of the Great Pan.

419 A–E as a whole imitates, develops, and adapts somewhat the content of a passage, equally famous, from Plato's *Phaedrus* (274 C – 275 D).

Socrates expounds to Phaedrus an improvised story⁹⁾ concerning 'the subject of propriety and impropriety in writing'. Its beginning is best quoted in full (274 C 5 – E 1)¹⁰⁾:

'Well then, what I heard was that there was at Naucratis in Egypt one of the ancient gods of that country, the one to whom the sacred bird they call the ibis belongs; the divinity's own name was Theuth. The story was that he was the first to discover number and calculation, and geometry and astronomy, and also games of draughts and dice; and to cap it all, letters. King of all Egypt at that time was Thamus, who dwelt in the great city of the upper region which the Greeks call Egyptian Thebes; Thamus¹¹⁾ they call Ammon. Theuth came to him and displayed his technical inventions, saying that they should be passed on to the rest of the Egyptians; and Thamus asked what benefit each brought. As Theuth went through them, Thamus criticized or praised whatever he seemed to be getting right or wrong'.

In the course of Socrates' narrative, the King firmly rejects the most significant of Theuth's inventions, that of letters, which give 'an appearance of wisdom instead of wisdom itself' (274 E 1 – 275 B 2). Socrates continues his criticism of false learning by introducing the subject of oracles, which is all the more natural as the passage consistently contrasts – in an implicit way – the traditional and textless¹²⁾ replies of Ammon with the fashionable and discursive prophecies in the sign of 'Theuth'¹³⁾. 'Well, my friend, those at the sanctuary of Zeus of Dodona said that words of an oak were the first prophetic utterances. So the men of those days, because they were not wise like you moderns, were content because of their simplicity to listen to oak and rock¹⁴⁾, provided only that

9) Cf. 275 B 3–4.

10) The translation of C. J. Rowe, *Plato: Phaedrus* (Warminster 21988) 121 and 123, with the exception of the *περὶ τὴν μεγάλην πόλιν* (D 3). It is translated here in the traditional way (cf. e.g. the immediately preceding *περὶ Ναύκρατιν*, 274 C 5) and not understood as a modifier of *Αἰγύπτου ὄλης*.

11) *Θαμοῦν* Postgate, *θεὸν MSS.* Cf. G. J. De Vries, *A Commentary on the Phaedrus of Plato* (Amsterdam 1969) 248 f.; Rowe (n. 9) 209.

12) H. W. Parke, *The Oracles of Zeus. Dodona, Olympia, Ammon* (Cambridge Mass. 1967) 195, 199 f.

13) Cf. *infra*, text to nn. 15–20, on Ammon and 275 C 3–4, 8. P. 274 C–D (the ibis, letters, Theuth's visit to Thebes) implicitly points to the prophetic faculty of Theuth (on which, A. Rusch, *RE VI A* [1936] 363).

14) *Δρυὸς καὶ πέτρας ἀκούειν*. The meaning of these words has been much discussed (De Vries [n. 11] 250 f.; Rowe [n. 9] 210; M. L. West, *Hesiod: Theogony* [Oxford 1966] 167–9). In the context of Socrates' compliments to the ancestors' prophetic art (cf. B 6: the Dodonaean *δρυῶς*), the phrase – otherwise proverbial (cf.

they said what was true; but for you, Phaedrus, perhaps it makes a difference who the speaker is and where he comes from: you don't just consider whatever what he says is right or not' (275 B 5 – C 2). Phaedrus thereupon agrees, and in the process accepts what 'the Theban says about letters' (C 3–4)¹⁵). The latter point strongly reminds Plato's reader of the tradition that Dodona was closely related to the Theban Ammonium, especially with regard to its origin and prophetic art. According to Herodotus¹⁶), our most authoritative source, the Theban god was a founder of the shrines at both Dodona and Siwa. Nevertheless, other versions also circulated widely, some of which were obviously preferred by Plato and Plutarch¹⁷), that gave Zeus and Dodona precedence over their Egyptian and Libyan counterparts¹⁸). Developing his condemnation¹⁹) of the sophisticated and nationalistic oracles (for whose consultants 'it makes a difference who the speaker is and where he comes from') as a part of a general condemnation of writing, Socrates refers to the Ἄμμωνος μαντεία in the next sentence (C 8). The allusion recalls the Ammonian aspect of the Theban-Thamus mentioned at 274 D 4²⁰). It is furthermore intended as a warning against the prejudices shared by the authors of written manuals of rhetoric and their admirers (275 C 5 – D 2).

Earlier in the same dialogue (244 A–D), we find theological

e.g. Plat. Apol. 34 D and Plut. Mor. 608 C) in connoting the 'discrete objects in a natural landscape' (West) – also suggests an association with oracles. Cf. schol. Il. 22. 126–127 a (V p. 295 Erbse): ἡ χρησμοὺς διηγείσθαι (Δωδώνη γὰρ δρυῖς, πέτρα δὲ Πυθῶν); here in Plato, where Dodona is named without a reference to (contemporary) Delphi (ancient Delphi, unlike that of the 360s, was good too, however [244 A–D]), the πέτρα may perhaps denote the object of the Τομοῦρου's worship as well as Parnassus (on the use of lots at Dodona and – associated with Parnassus – at Delphi see Parke [n. 12] 75 f. 79 nn. 48 f. 100 ff.). For the sake of his own argument, Plato misrepresents the evolution of the methods of consultation of Zeus and Apollo in the two great Greek oracles and contaminates the relevant facts (Parke, loc. cit., 81, 83, 92 n.5). His hints to the sophisticated prophecies of 'Theuth's' followers in Egypt are probably a similar case.

15) Ὁ Θηβαῖος (cf. 274 D 3–4 and above, n. 9) means, of course, Thamus (De Vries [n. 11] 251). For another possibility, Rowe (n. 9) 210.

16) 2. 54–57, cf. Parke (n. 12) 52 ff. *et passim*.

17) Note Phdr. 275 B 6 (πρώτους); cf. Tim. 23 B–E. Plutarch generally defends the priority of Greek spiritual accomplishments over those of the Egyptians (cf. his Greek etymologies of the Egyptian theonyms in the *De Iside et Osiride*). The sage prophet of De def. 421 A ff. (see below, text to nn. 68–70), though living near the Red Sea, is a Greek.

18) Parke (n. 12) 66 f. (on Serv. Aen. 3.466) and 234 ff.

19) Cf. Phdr. 248 D 7.

20) De Vries (n. 11) 248.

and psychological justification of Plato's praise of the old-fashioned mantic – that of Delphi, Dodona, the Sibyl, and others (ἄλλοι B 3), evidently including the Ammonian as well²¹). The priests and priestesses of those cults, who were divinely inspired, did not enjoy any 'man-made sanity', such as those who produced written pieces of various kinds, especially those exemplified by the literature of Phaedrus' former idol Lysias²²). Political reasons²³) for this attitude of Plato's are not explicitly adduced, but may be divined from a number of indications. Plato approved of the roles of Dodona and the Ammonium of Siwa in the interstate relations of the 360s (the *Phaedrus* seems to date from about 365 B.C.) while disapproving of that selfish and pro-Persian role, which could nonetheless be defended as 'sane', then being played by Delphi (cf. also Xen. Hell. 7.1.27). His comments on the oracles may also have had something to do with the internal politics of Athens. In this respect, like his relatives and political friends Chabrias and Timotheus (cf. FGrHist 328 F 223), and unlike the followers of Callistratus (especially Iphicrates and Lysias), Plato commended attempts at finding in Dodona and the Ammonium of the Oasis substitutes for a Delphi controlled by unpatriotic opportunists²⁴).

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It can be shown, we think, that all the essential elements of De def. 419 A–E were either borrowed from or inspired by certain analogous features of Phdr. 274 C – 275 D.

First and most obviously, Thamus the Egyptian is common to the two dialogues. In Plato he is an ancient Pharaoh with certain Ammonian traits and oracular affinities, while in Plutarch he is Tiberius Caesar's contemporary and the pilot of a sea-ship, a profession commonly exercised by the Egyptians of the Roman Empire²⁵). Both the humble status (connected with water!) of the Egyptian and the command of the anonymous voice for him to announce such an important event of divine history are strongly

21) Leg. 5, 738 C–D ('the advice from Delphi or Dodona or Ammon, or that of ancient sayings, whatever form they take'; transl. R. G. Bury, LCL); cf. Polit. 257 B.

22) Cf. 265 B 3, 279 A.

23) Cf. Phdr. 244 B 2 (δημοσίᾳ); Alc. II 148 D.

24) See my articles in RSA 10 (1980) 8–15 and Aevum 66 (1992) 29–39.

25) Ch. G. Starr, Jr., The Roman Imperial Navy, 31 B.C. – A.D. 324 (Ithaca, NY 1941) 77–80, 93 and 95.

reminiscent of the Pamyles (Pamyle) *aition* in the *De Iside* 12²⁶). With regard to Plutarch's fictional procedure, the differences between our two authors as to Thamus' date and position are immaterial. Imitating Plato, Plutarch usually employs the same device of citing a Platonic personal or geographical name, but shifting some of its characteristics and placing it into a context that echoes the original only partially or in a distorted manner.

These techniques of Plutarch have never been analyzed or duly acknowledged as an integral part of his thinking and composition. Suffice it here to compare, briefly, two names from the *De Genio Socratis* – a work whose Platonic inspiration and a tendency to blend reality with fiction²⁷) are undeniable. The Timarchus of the Trophonius myth is a free replica of the Timarchus of the *Theages* (129 A–C), a dialogue, it is worth noting, that was specifically studied by Plutarch in a separate, but unfortunately now lost, essay (if we are to believe to no. 70 of the Lamprias catalogue). Both figures are Boeotians and the friends of 'Socrates', but the former is represented as a Chaeronean and a religious thinker, the latter (according to the author's veiled indications) as a Theban and a symbol of Pelopidas' liberators of Thebes in 379 B.C. Plutarch has transposed the revolutionary aspect of the *Theages'* Timarchus into the elaborated pseudo-historical setting of the *De Genio*²⁸). The other example is both much simpler and slightly different in character. There is no reason for postulating, and less reason for assuming²⁹), that the Ellopio the Peparethian of *De Gen.* 578 F (allegedly a companion of Plato and Simmias during their visit to Egypt, a visit with both philosophical and political aims)³⁰) had any existence except as a literary device of Plutarch. The name is nothing more than a tautology, mythologically expressed³¹), of his

26) 355 E: '... a certain Pamyles, while he was drawing water in Thebes, heard a voice issuing from the shrine of Zeus, which bade him proclaim with a loud voice that a mighty and beneficent King, Osiris, had been born...' (transl. F. C. Babbitt, LCL). Cf. J. Hani, in: Ass. G. Budé, Actes du VIII^e Congrès (Paris 1968 [1969]) 518; Ch. Froidefond, Plutarque. Oeuvres morales V 2 (Paris [Budé] 1988) 265 n. 5; J. Gwyn Griffiths, Plutarch's *De Iside et Osiride* (Cardiff–Cambridge 1970) 297 f.

27) M. Riley, GRBS 18 (1977) 257–273; J. Buckler, *The Theban Hegemony, 371–362 BC* (Cambridge Mass. 1980) 37 ff. 286 n. 53.

28) S. Dušanić, *Teiresias* suppl. 3 (Montréal 1990) 65–70.

29) With e.g. P. Natorp, RE V (1905) s.v. 'Ellopion' (no. 2) 2438; R. Herbst, RE XIX (1937) s.v. 'Peparethos' (no. 1) 558.

30) S. Dušanić, in: Coll. int. du CNRS "La Béotie antique" (Paris 1985) 231 f.

31) It was derived from the heronym Ellops, which connotes Euboea (i.e. Ellopia), Thessaly (the Ellopieis), and, through the Chalcidians, the promontory of

origo, which in turn echoes a casual mention of Peparethus in the *Alcibiades Maior* (116 D). As a close parallel with the *Theages*, the *Alcibiades Maior* will also have been studied by Plutarch³²). Furthermore, its topic easily explains why Plutarch placed Ellopio in the context of a theoretical defence of Panhellenic ideas³³). Like the Timarchus and the Ellopio of the *De Genio*, the Thamus of the *De defectu* has been borrowed from Plato together with a number of other details of the original text; there are many indications that these borrowings have reflected Plutarch's understanding of Plato's allusions to contemporary politics and stemmed from Plutarch's work on the *Lives* of the fourth-century notables.

Second, Plutarch's Tiberius (419 D) has something in common with Plato's Theuth (274 C – 275 B). Dramatically, both are depicted as Thamus' interlocutors; only, the kingly nature of the 'Theban' (274 D) passed on to the Roman. From the point of view of the theoretician of oratory, Tiberius with his φιλόλογοι (D 13) was naturally equated with Theuth. This conclusion is confirmed by other sources of Tiberius' interests in texts, oracular and astrological³⁴), as well as those Egyptian documents that compare the legislation of Tiberius with that of Theuth³⁵). Even Plato's choice of the name of Thamus for the ancient Pharaoh and the living representative of Ammon in Thebes seems to have been inspired by analogous historical evidence: Socrates' transportation of Thamus into the distant past is nothing more than a politico-literary device of the same sort that made, in the *Critias*, the Atlantid kings disguise the Athenian politicians of the classical period³⁶). Now, the Pharaoh Thamus (the son of and co-ruler with Nectanebus I, 365 or earlier – 363/2; sovereign, 363/2 – 361/0) – better known under the name or a variant of the name, Tachos (Taos, Teos, etc.)³⁷) – was deeply

Chalcidice (K. Tümpel, RE V [1905] s.v. 'Ellops' 2438; note Plut. QG 22). Geographical and other affinities of Peparethus were with Magnesia, Chalcis, and Athos (Plin. NH IV 72; cf. Herbst [n.29] 552). See below, n.93, for Plutarch's interest in the etymology of ἔλλοψ.

32) In any case, it is used in the *Vita Alcibiadis* (quoted 1.3; cf. Lyc. 16.4) "as the basis for the description of [the] hero's youth" (P. Friedländer, Plato II [London 1964] 231 and 349 n. 3; H. Meyerhoff's transl.).

33) The statesman's knowledge as a condition of sound interstate relations: Alc. I 118 B ff. ~ *De Genio* 7 (p. 578 E–579 D). Cf. Dušanić (n. 30) 235.

34) Borgeaud (n.5) 259–265 (with refs.) insists, with good reason, on that implication of *De def.* 419 D 7–14. Certainly, Theuth's complex figure unites astronomy and mantic (274 C–D; *supra*, n. 13).

35) Rusch (n. 13) 362.

36) S. Dušanić, AC 51 (1982) 46–52.

37) Ernst Meyer, RE IV A(1932) s.v. 'Tachos' (no. 1) 1989–1995. A form

concerned with the mantic, along the lines of Ammon rather than Theuth, to judge from his contribution to the birth of the so-called 'Demotic Chronicle', marked by pronounced anti-Persian feelings. Connected with Thamus-Tachos *via* Chabrias (and Timotheus too?), Plato introduced him into the *Phaedrus* because of such political considerations as the fear of Persia and sympathy for Lacedaemonian Panhellenism, spoken of above, à propos of Dodona and the Libyan Ammonium³⁸). Plutarch the polymath³⁹) must have been well enough informed on all of these matters to have understood Plato properly and to associate his Thamus with Tiberius, i.e. a potentate also historical and devoted to the oracular art.

Third is the matter of the *geographia sacra*. According to the tale of Socrates (274 C 5), Theuth comes from Naucratis. This is remarkable, though the Delta and Naucratis itself do retain some traces of Theuth's cult⁴⁰). As already noted by Aelius Aristides (III 583 f.), we should have expected Hermupolis Magna ('Ἐρμῆος πόλις, Hdt. 2.67), the god's place of birth and chief sanctuary. Plato's reference to Theuth's ibis (C 7), the bird of Hermupolis Magna (Hdt. *loc. cit.*), only strengthens the impression that we have an instance of Plato's 'artistic licence' here (cf. Aristid. III 586 *et passim*); with his vast knowledge, directly and indirectly obtained, about Egypt, Plato would not have made a simple mistake. Moreover, it is not hard to detect the purpose of the licence. In the context of criticizing calculation, writing, rhetorical and other manifestations of an unemotional 'sanity', Plato symbolically places Theuth in a commercial city. Hermes, the *alter ego* of Theuth in the sphere of the τὸ ἀγοραστικόν (cf. Crat. 408 A), Lysias (Callistratus' man) and his Piraeus form a comparable unity⁴¹).

almost identical to the *Phaedrus*' Thamus is found in Polyaeus, 3.11.5: Θαμῶ, Αἰγυπτίων βασιλεῖ.

38) Text to nn. 23 f.

39) Tachos figures in the *Vita Agesilai*. Plutarch himself notes that his work on Agesilaus' *Life* made him consult Spartan archives (19, 10f.) and, thanks to that consultation, he may have known more details about the collaboration between Agesilaus and Tachos-Thamuis (for instance, in 366/5 and 362/1 BC) than the text of the *Life* shows. The passages of the lost *Vita Epaminondae* concerning the Aegean policy of 365–364 may also have offered some material of relevance for our purpose. Some other of Plutarch's non-extant works should be noted here too: the *Life of Tiberius*, essays on mantic (cf. *infra*, nn. 65, 78).

40) Rusch (n. 13) 354; H. Kees, RE XVI (1935) s.v. 'Naukratis' 1958.

41) Dušanić, RSA 10 (1980) 9 n. 44; CQ 85 (1992) 354–7. Cf. Ps. Plut. Mor. 844 B 9–10.

Plutarch uses a similar device to explain and underline some allusive messages of his own through indications of an evocative geography. One example, that recalling ‘Ellopio the Peparethian’, is provided by De def. 419 D, where Pan figures as ‘the son born of Hermes and Penelope’. It has already been remarked⁴²⁾ that the fact itself that Plutarch mentions Pan’s mother, and his choice of her name, correspond with the initial position of Thamus’ ship (Echinades, between Odysseus’ Ithaca and Icarus’ Acarnania) in the vicinity of the lands of Penelope⁴³⁾. A developed application of the same technique is to be assumed for the lines describing the whole itinerary of the ship after ‘the wind dropped’ (B–D: Echinades, Paxi, Palodes).

It helps the reader to see that De def. 419 A–E paraphrases Phdr. 275 B–C – specifically with regard to Socrates’ emphatic compliments to Dodona. The destination of Thamus’ παράπλους, Palodes (C 5 and D 2), was the port of Buthrotum⁴⁴⁾, itself a notable station on the route that connected the Ausonian Sea with Dodona, a route of great fame owing to various events of the mythical past and/or the sacred history (the wanderings of the Trojan heroes⁴⁵⁾ and the itineraries of some θεωροί⁴⁶⁾. A foundation of the Trojans en route

42) Borgeaud (n. 5) 258 n. 11.

43) Cf. W. H. Roscher, Myth. Lex. III 1 (1897–1902) s.v. ‘Pan’ 1377 (2). The *Phaedrus* (263 D) cites Pan’s father (Hermes) only, but see Hdt. 2.145 f. *Infra*, n. 95.

44) Strab. 7.7.5 (C 324): Βουθρωτὸν ἐπὶ τῷ στόματι τοῦ Πηλώδους καλουμένου λιμένος; Ptol. Geogr. 3.14.4 Nobbe: Πηλώδης λιμὴν (K. Müller notes *ad loc.*: “portus ille dorice τὸ Παλωδες vocatur ap. Plut. De def. orac. 17, et τὰ Παλώεντα apud Appianum BC 5.55”); for Plutarch’s being precise as to dialect forms see below, n. 70). E. Oberhammer, RE XIX (1937) s.v. ‘Pelodes’ 373 f.

45) Helenus and Aeneas: Dion. Hal. Ant. 1.51.1 (Βουθρωτὸν λιμένα = Palodes). Cf. Verg. Aen. 3. 291–507 (293, 294 ff. 333 ff. 467); Ovid. Met. 13. 719–724 (721); Varro ap. Serv. Aen. 3.256 and 349 (III pp. 104, 137 ed. Harv.); Plut. RQ 41. See also J. Gagé, Apollon romain (Paris 1955) 234–237, 325 f. 517 f.; N. G. L. Hammond, Epirus (Oxford 1967) 385 f. 412–4 *et passim*; P. Cabanes, ZPE 63 (1986) 146 (Andromachos, Kestrinos).

46) Hyperborean: Hdt. 4. 33.1 f. (Buthrotum is not explicitly cited and the whole route of the Hyperborean gifts till Dodona is notoriously controversial but see Hammond [n. 45] 366 n. 4); Epidaurian: IG IV² 95, col. II, lines 26 (the Thesproti) and 28 (Corcyra, which implies Buthrotum, the port linking Epirus to Corfu and a Corcyrean dependency at the time of the inscription [cf. Hammond (n. 45) 519]); Argive: SEG XXIII 189 = XXXVI 337 (cf. 331), col. I, lines 12 (Phoenice) and 13 (Corcyra; the itinerary of these θεωροί tends to show that one of the interior-Buthrotum ways led through Phoenice, thus connecting what will become the two main Roman roads of the region [cf. Hammond (n. 45) Map 18, p. 700]). – The Buthrotum-hinterland of Epirus roads (whose importance is somewhat underestimated by Hammond [n. 45] 35–38, 172, 367 *et passim*) naturally had, in the

from an Epirus centred on Zeus' oracular shrine to Italy or Sicily, a Julian *colonia civium Romanorum*, Buthrotum with Palodes must have automatically called Dodona to the memory of Plutarch's erudite public⁴⁷). Thamus cries 'Great Pan is dead' ἐκ πρύμνης (he was a pilot) and βλέπων πρὸς τὴν γῆν, which is on the course of a vessel sailing north from a position off the Paxi (cf. C 10: παραπλεῖν). This implies his orientation towards the east or the southeast in the direction of Buthrotum and further to Dodona; here the τὴν γῆν means of course the mainland, not Corfu. That proves to be quite significant. Everyone addressing a mortal (cf. e.g. De def. 423 B 10) or a deity (e.g. during a prayer; Phdr. 253 A 2) is expected to look in the addressee's direction, specifically in the latter case in the direction of the deity's place of abode. The task of Thamus, as we shall try to demonstrate, was to communicate the news to Thesprotian Zeus and/or his sanctuary, of Pan's death.

Fourth, Theban Ammon, Dodonaean Zeus, and windless weather. Both Plato and Plutarch were generally interested in Graeco-Egyptian religious syncretism. As previously mentioned, Socrates' digression on Dodona was quite likely intended to remind the reader of Dodona's association with the Theban and Libyan sanctuaries of Ammon and their oracular methods. Plutarch's references to Pamyle(s) and the Ammon of Thebes (De Iside 355 E), to 'sounding bronze' and Apis (ibid. 362 C), as well as to the Ammonium of Siwa and the enigma of the shortening of the solar year (De def. 410 B ff.)⁴⁸, seem to do the same, but of course on a different level and in the service of different literary and philosophical pur-

addition to the sacral, their military and commercial purposes. P. Cabanes, L'Épire de la mort de Pyrrhos à la conquête romaine (Paris 1976) 209, 216, 271 and 273, 298, 466.

47) Demetrius the grammarian, a speaker in the De def., is fond of Homeric quotations (cf. below, nn. 81 and 95); see also 426 C–D and 436 B. – With the Italo-Trojan legends and the Epirote geographical conditions in view, P. M. Martin (in: Littérature gréco-romaine et géographie historique. Mélanges offerts à R. Dion, publ. par R. Chevallier [Paris 1974] 49 f.) rightly observes: "... les ports de Bouthrotion et d' Onchesmos-Port-Anchise ... puissent être considérés comme les échelles de Dodone, comme aujourd'hui le port d'Igouménitsa l'est de Jannina". However, he does not refer to Thamus' sailing.

48) On 355 E, above, text and n. 26. – For 362 C cf. Griffiths (n. 26) 403 f. and (on the Dodonaean cauldrons) Parke (n. 12) 89–91. – As to 410 B ff., this obscure passage will have pertained to the aspects, primarily astronomical, of the struggle of Apollo against Python/Typhon and of Ammon/Osiris against Apopis respectively (on 365 D see Griffiths [n. 26] 440 with n. 1); the whole corresponds with the physical theories of mantic discussed at 420 B ff. (e.g. 421 C: 'eight cycles of the Great Years'), in a context not without relevance to the problem of oracular techniques (cf. *infra*, n. 69).

poses. Those circumstances throw light on Epitherses' repeated emphasis on the dependence of Thamus' announcement of Pan's death on the atmospheric conditions (C 10 – D 1: εἰ μὲν εἶη πνεῦμα, παραπλεῖν ἡσυχίαν ἔχοντα, νημερίας δὲ καὶ γαλήνης περὶ τὸν τόπον γενομένης ἀνειπεῖν ὃ ἤκουσεν; cf. D 2–3: οὔτε πνεύματος ὄντος οὔτε κλύδωνος). Thamus' decision, lacking a convincing explanation in modern studies⁴⁹), is not to be ascribed to practical considerations. It refers, obliquely but clearly enough, to mantic conventions common to the Ammon of Thebes and Epirote Zeus: while the winds blow, the god is silent; he speaks (either directly or indirectly) only while it is νημερία, however rare that occasion may be⁵⁰). In the *De Iside* 365 D 7, it is said of Ammon Δία μὲν γὰρ Αἰγύπτιοι τὸ πνεῦμα καλοῦσιν.

Fifth, Pan and the *συγγένεια* of the oracles. Points three and four above have explained the significance of Thamus' mission and its geographical facets. W. H. Roscher⁵¹) has previously suggested that Plutarch's dead Pan should be identified with an Egyptian sacred animal, a goat or a buck, whose cult and nature resemble in certain aspects those of Greek Pan. Thamus' origin and the mortality of his 'Pan', perhaps even the attribute of the 'Great' given to Pan⁵²), point to the Egyptian pantheon, in all probability to Mendes⁵³). To this we can add now an explanation of the occasion described in *De def.* 419 A–E with a wealth of details. Shrines and their πόλεις sharing the same or related deities were united by a bond that was termed *συγγένεια* or *φιλία ἀπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ*⁵⁴). As with purely human relations, the kinship or friendship of cult centres,

49) See e.g. O. Crusius, *Philologus* 50 (1891) 105, and W. H. Roscher, *Flecken-eisen's Jahrb. f. Klass. Phil.* 145 (1892) 475.

50) Ammon: *FGrHist* 4 (Hellenicus of Lesbos) F 174; Callimachus fr. 409 Pfeiffer. Zeus: Ovid. *Met.* 7.629 f. (*sine flamine*). Cf. *De def.* 419 E–F.

51) Roscher (n. 49) 465–477 (cf. his *Myth. Lex.* III 1 ([1897–1902] 1374). His identification of the Great Pan with Mendes has been adopted only by a minority of the students of *De def.* 419 A–E. Hani (n. 26) 516 thought of Min.

52) Porphyry ap. Euseb. *Praep. ev.* 5. 13.1 (of Pan-Min): θεὸς μέγας; Panopolis and some other places of Pan's worship in Egypt have produced numerous Greek inscriptions styling the local deity as the θεὸς μέγιστος (Roscher [n. 49] 473) but cf. also the δαίμονες μεγάλοι in Plato (*Symp.* 202 D–E) and Plutarch himself (*De Iside* 360 D, cf. *De def.* 419 F).

53) *Hdt.* 2. 46 (cf. 145 f.). This account belongs to the same narrative of the Egyptian origins of Greek religion as the digression on Dodona (above, n. 16). On Herodotus as a source for the *De Iside* (380 E mentions Mendes), Froidefond (n. 26) 54 ff.

54) E.g. Plato, *Tim.* 21 E ff. (the φιλία of Athens and Sais due to Athena/Neith); Delphinion 37a, lines 2 and 5 (*συγγένεια ἀπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ*: Apollo Delphinus, Miletus and Cnossus c. 230 B.C.).

oracles included, presupposed their multiple contacts⁵⁵). In the secular sphere, among the Greeks and the Egyptians alike, probably the most important occasion for such contacts was death; when it occurs within a community, its immediate members, the deceased's φίλοι καὶ συγγενεῖς, must be informed⁵⁶) in order that they be able to mourn the loss⁵⁷), and if possible to participate in the funeral ceremonies. Unlike the Greeks, who had no mortal gods (negligible exceptions apart), the Egyptians obviously extended that custom to the communication of the news about divine deaths too⁵⁸). The end of a buck (goat) of Mendes topical in the first century AD or just a reading of Herodotus 2,46, will have inspired Plutarch to introduce that theme into De def. 419 A–E. Complying with the native convention, the oracle of Ammon⁵⁹) informs its relatives at Dodona of the death of the 'Great Pan' through Thamus, who performs, though not of his own choosing, the role of a θεωρός or rather of a herald⁶⁰).

Yet the question remains of why 'Pan' of all the great gods or sacred animals close (cf. De def. 421 E) in one way or another to Ammon of Thebes has been chosen⁶¹). Plutarch himself warns us that the answer should be sought on the Greek, not the Egyptian, side of the matter, because the Pan in question has Greek parents (D 13–4). With eloquent precision it appears that the 'conjecture'

55) To cite some examples illustrating international relations: the Hyperbo-reans and Delos (above, n. 46); the Ammonia (of Thebes and Siwa) and Dodona (Parke [n. 12] 208)/Olympia (ibid. 211 f. 254 f.); Amasis and the Athena of Lindos (Hdt. 2.182.2; the Neith/Athena of Sais was obviously behind both the Danaids' foundation of the Lindian Athenaeum and the King's offerings to it).

56) In Egypt: Hdt. 2.85.1; Diod. 1.91.1. Among the Greeks: Hdt. 6.58. 1 f. (of the death of a Spartan king); Theophr. Char. 14; Luc. De luctu 9 *et passim* (20: the custom is international). Cf. A. Mau, RE III (1897) s.v. 'Bestattung' 335 f.

57) Roscher (n. 49) 470 f. aptly compares Hdt. 2.46 (of Mendes) πένθος μέγα, with De def. 419 C, μέγαν στεναγμόν.

58) Cf. e.g. Diod. 1.83.4.

59) The voice calling Thamus (419 C) must have been Ammon's (cf. De Iside 355 E: 'a voice issuing from the shrine of Zeus' [above, n. 26]).

60) The heralds (employed in Egypt too: Hdt. 6.60) announce public funerals and other cult ceremonies (J. Oehler, RE XI [1921] s.v. 'Keryx' [no. 2] 356). All the verbs used by Plutarch to denote Thamus' action (ἀπάγγελον [C 5], ἀνελεῖν [D 1], εἰπεῖν [D 4]) are also to be found in different authors speaking of the κηρυκεία in general (*ibid.*).

61) If his Platonic model did not demand Pan, Plutarch would have perhaps cited Osiris-Apis or Mnevis (cf. De Iside 359 B, 362 D, 364 B–C, 368 C, 380 E); they also were close to Ammon the Prophet (see above, note 26, for 355 E) and, in the form of Dionysus and his suite (cf. 356 D, 362 C), to the Dodonaean oracle (*infra*, n. 69). See also J. Hani, La religion égyptienne dans la pensée de Plutarque (Paris 1976) 54.

concerning the god's origin stemmed from the φιλόλογοι rather than from either the θεολόγοι or the μυθογράφοι⁶²). Plutarch chose to refer to the death of Pan because he is the inspiring divinity of Socrates' speech in *Phaedr.* 274 C – 275 D; and it was the erudition of the φιλόλογοι alone that was capable of understanding the intentions of the two writers.

For the author of the *Phaedrus* the praise of the Theban Ammonium and Dodona is only a ramification of his thesis that true love is superior to false learning. He demonstrates the value of that doctrine in the fields of rhetoric, psychology, theology and politics, practical and theoretical alike. The landscape of the conversation between Socrates and Phaedrus, in the sign of Pan, Achelous, the Nymphs, and the Cicadas, offers symbolic support of Socrates' dialectic – in that the central part is given to Pan, as addressed in Socrates' famous prayer at the end of the dialogue⁶³). From that point of view, there is a certain correlation between the Nature's god Pan and Dodona; 275 B 8, 'oak and rock' can thus be taken as more or less an allusion to that link⁶⁴).

Plutarch, the passionate admirer of Plato in general and the *Phaedrus* in particular⁶⁵), must have easily caught the meaning of 274 C – 275 D, while sensing at the same time the passage's susceptibility of being transformed into a picturesque story. As an historian of Graeco-Egyptian similarities in religion, he was probably aware of the importance that the 'Pan' factor held in the cults of both Ammon⁶⁶) and (together with the Nymphs and Achelous) Dodonaean Zeus⁶⁷). The parallel between Pan in Epirus and Pan along the Nile provided a handsome justification for the role of Thamus the Egyptian κατά τὸ Παλῶδες. In a remarkable passage of the *De defectu*, Plutarch goes almost so far as to reveal his own allusive method by citing an additional clarification of some of its salient features: at 420 F, Cleombrotus mentions 'natural phenomena', Plato's interest in them, and his use of ὑπόνοια in discussing them. In the sequel (421 A ff.) Cleombrotus speaks of a man 'inspired to prophecy', followed by 'roving nymphs and de-

62) See Suet. Tib. 70. 2 f.

63) Phdr. 230 B–C, 241 E, 258 E – 259 D, 262 D, 263 D, 278 B–C, 279 B–C. Cf. Herm. Alex. ad Phdr. 279 B–C (p. 265 f. Couvreur, esp. p. 265, lines 14–21).

64) See above, n. 14.

65) K. Ziegler, RE XXI (1951) s.v. 'Plutarchos' (no. 2) 750 f., cf. 698, 704 c, 744 ff. (747 f., on Mor. 1004 C–D).

66) Roscher, Myth. Lex. III 1, 1376 (8); cf. Hdt. 2.144 f. and Griffiths (n. 26) 334 with n. 1.

67) Parke (n. 12) 68 and 153 ff. (esp. 155 *sub finem*).

migods⁶⁸) living near the Persian Gulf but nonetheless a master of Pythagoras' philosophy (cf. 422 D–E). While 420 F reveals Plato as the source of the hyponoetic references to the *Physis* in 419 A–E, the pages 421 ff. (422 D–E) indicate that the references bear upon the theme of the prophetic science⁶⁹) and imply a comparison between Greek conceptions and Egyptian imitations in that field. Though a neighbour of the Troglodytes, the anonymous sage 'was a Greek by birth', even preserving his Dorian dialect, which was typical of the Pythagoreans⁷⁰). A quotation from the *Phaedrus* comes in the whole, to underline Plutarch's being inspired by Plato's treatment of the interrelated problems, eminently Pythagorean, of truth, metempsychosis, and the plurality of the worlds⁷¹). As the philosophical core of Plutarch's demonology originated in Plato's teaching of the soul⁷²), these problems had an evident impact upon the contribution attributed to Cleombrotus in the *De defectu*, in which the role of the mantic is presented as the *daimones*' province.

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In the light of the foregoing analysis, the story in *De def.* 17 (p. 419 A–E) should be denied any historical basis of the kind envisaged by the modern students of the chapter. It is, essentially, a Plutarchean imitation of *Phdr.* 274 C – 275 D modelled upon Socrates' linkage of Dodona with Ammon's shrine(s). Compared

68) K. Latte, *RE XVIII* (1939) s.v. 'Orakel' 837, in a survey of the Nymph-inspired oracles, appropriately associated *De def.* 421 A with *Phdr.* 263 D.

69) The paragraph 421 B–E is especially concerned with the mystical element of Delphi as the representative of 'natural' oracles with the inspired methods of prophecy (421 C: Dionysus, cf. *De E* apud Delphos 388 E ff. and *De Iside* 365 A). This is developed at 432 C–D (~ *Phdr.* 244 A–B) and, less explicitly, in various parts of the dialogue dealing with the phenomenon of the *μαντική ἀναθυμίασις* (Zagreus and the tripod of the Pythian priestesses: Griffiths [n. 26] 435 with nn. 1–5). – Dionysus' role at Dodona: Parke (n. 12) 151.

70) 421 B, 422 D; cf. H. Dörrie, *Der 'Weise vom Roten Meer'*. Eine okkulte Offenbarung durch Plutarch als Plagiat entlarvt, in: *Festschrift für R. Muth* (ed. P. Händel und W. Meid), *Innsbrucker Beiträge zur Kulturwissenschaft* 22 (1983) 98. The *De defectu* pays a distinct attention to the dialectal details, cf. 412 A 4 and above, n. 44.

71) 422 B: the 'Plain of Truth' (~ *Phdr.* 248 B). Understandably, the chapter is full of quotations from, and allusions to, the *Timaeus* and its popular doctrine is more Platonic than Pythagorean (Dörrie [n. 70] 95–110, esp. 105 f.).

72) *De def.* 416 C–F; *De Iside* 360 D ff. (with Griffiths [n. 26] 383–386; Froidefond [n. 26] 96 ff.). Ch. Froidefond, *Plutarque et le platonisme*, ANRW II 36.1 (Berlin–New York 1987) 205–211.

with direct borrowings from⁷³), and the variations of⁷⁴), the original, Plutarch's own elements in De def. 419 A–E seem both few and insignificant⁷⁵). Plutarch's 'Tiberius' and his choice to illustrate the *συγγένηια* in question through the invention of the great *daimon*'s death are much more of a literary debt than a reflection of contemporary events and ideas in the sphere of religion, despite modern contentions to the contrary.

One consequence of this investigation is that certain particulars may now be added to what we know of the two thinkers and the manner of their expression. The example of De def. 419 A–E, in its imitation of Phdr. 274 C – 275 D, is instructive in two ways.

On the one hand, it shows, rather surprisingly, that Plato has found a place for the elaboration of a topical⁷⁶) mantic theme, centred on the comparison and praise of Dodona and the two Ammonia, in his discussion of love and rhetoric. That aspect of Phdr. 274 C – 275 D has remained neglected in the exegesis, which is inclined to treat Socrates' allusions to Dodona and Ammon as virtually accidental. According to the traditional interpretation of the Thamus episode in the *Phaedrus*, which should be abandoned in favour of Plutarch's, surely the more accurate, p. 274 C – 275 D develops a purely philosophical analysis of the phenomenon of the written word, wherein the realities concerning Zeus/Ammon and the oracles can have no prominent role⁷⁷). Actually, the episode reflects Plato's approval of, and connections with, the Panhellenic policy of the 360s, as conducted by Timotheus, Chabrias, Agesilaus and a number of other statesmen which included Thamus-

73) Thamus; the learned King; Pan.

74) Palodes ~ Dodona; windless weather and the announcement of the event saddening the two oracles ~ Plato's hint to Dodona's kinship with the Ammonia.

75) They are of a simple literary character: B 5 f. ('freight and many passengers'), B 6, 8–10 (evening, wine), B 12 – C 2 (the pilot; see *supra*, text and n. 25), C 6–8 (the consultation). As to C 2 f. (the *third* cry), the symbolical value of the number three was of course a commonplace; as is well known, it attracted Plato too (cf. e.g. Phdr. 249 A).

76) We are inclined to think that Phdr. 275 B, *ἔφησαν*, alludes to a well-known dispute (cf. 275 B 7 – C 2) concerning the oracles of the late 370s or early 360s. For a different interpretation see Rowe (n. 9) 210, who has justly emphasized the interest of the aorist.

77) The recent Colloquium on the *Phaedrus* (Perugia, September 1989; see L. Rossetti [ed.], *Understanding the Phaedrus*, Sankt Augustin 1992) well illustrates the strength of that concentration on the theoretical aspects of 274 C – 275 D. While composing my 1980 article referred to *supra*, n. 24, I was unaware of the support a political interpretation of the *Phaedrus* may find in De def. 419 A–E.

Tachos. The author of the *Vitae parallelae* and the *Against Alcidas* was in a position to understand both philosophical and political messages of the *Phaedrus*⁷⁸).

On the other hand, the pair Phdr. 274 C – 275 D and De def. 419 A–E reveals that Plutarch did not remain content only with understanding Plato's ὑπόνοια (420 F 5–7). His *Moralia*⁷⁹) frequently imitate Plato's fictional techniques, replete with allusions. His methods of that order are neither a symptom of his lack of imagination nor an expression of the structural needs of his philosophico-literary production. They are a fruit of a playful imitation of Plato, stemming from the imitator's complex feelings of admiration for the Master. Consequently, centred on Plato, they are much more faithful to the original (the *De defectu* retains the clue-name Thamus!) and have much more system than similar procedures observed in other authors of the Imperial period⁸⁰). In some cases, Plutarch's adaptation of Plato offers a useful, if implicit, commentary on Plato's intentions that remain obscure to other readers, both ancient and modern.

Put into an esoteric form, Plutarch intended his Platonic allusions for his circle of equally esoteric friends, who were in the habit of reading, analyzing, discussing, and putting their own interpretations on Plato's dialogues⁸¹). Here one finds another point of contact between Plutarch and the beginnings of the Academy. The onomastic riddles of the first Scholarch seem to have formed part of the same game played between Plato and the early Academicians (Phdr. 261 B–C), and the Chaeronean, with his profound knowledge of Plato's biography and literary production, obviously wished to follow his model in that activity also. The heritage of the Academy can help us to comprehend more completely two marked traits of the Plutarchean method in construction of the De def. 419 A–E: the use of significant geo-topographical terms, and the insistence upon the 'witnesses' who attest to the verisimilitude of the events invented or adapted by the

78) On no. 69 a of the Lamprias Catalogue see Dušanić CQ 85 (1992) 356.

79) The non-historical digressions in the *Lives* too, though less frequently. On 'Dionysius' in Alex. 73. 7–9 (a parallel in De Iside 361 F) see D. Sansone, GRBS 21 (1980) 73 with n. 32. – Cf. *infra* n. 93 on De sera num. vind. 563 D.

80) In a lucid page, Nock ([n. 7] 164) briefly cited the parallels from Lucian, Philostratus and the *Acta Alexandrinorum*. The later *Lives* of the *Historia Augusta* – in R. Syme's masterly analysis – should not be forgotten either.

81) Mor. 700 C. A similar circle and activity seems to be playfully referred to at De def. 419 E (*supra*, n. 4). The ἔντιοι are 'witnesses' as knowledgeable admirers of Plato.

author⁸²). The members of the School knew that both techniques were largely applied to Plato's dialogues⁸³), the first especially being used in the opening of the *Phaedrus*⁸⁴).

To conclude with two examples of Plutarch's fictional use of a Platonic name in a context influenced by Plato's thought. Though not found in the passages examined here, they are closely related to our subject and therefore tend to corroborate our conclusions.

The *De Iside*, whose comparisons between Greek and Egyptian religion recall the theme of *συγγένεια* that underlies the pages of the *Phaedrus* and the *De defectu* dealt with here⁸⁵), mentions a Φαῖδρος ποταμὸς near Byblos. The river was punished by Isis when it tried to hinder her from transporting Osiris' body (357 D). This Phaidros is a Plutarchean *hapax*, but commentators on the *De Iside* draw attention to the existence of a virtual homophone, namely the Semitic Wādi-Fedar, in the same region⁸⁶). No one has proposed to attribute the *aition*, in which Isis takes her revenge by drying up the river, to Plutarch himself – more precisely, to his decision to invent a mythologem by exploiting the existence of a Greek-sounding hydronym in Syria. Actually, the entire episode about Isis in Byblos (357 Aff.) will have been Plutarch's invention⁸⁷). Both the *aition* and the episode as its extension must be

82) Cf. De def. 419 B,D,E (Epitherses, 'a man who was not a fool nor an impostor'; 'many persons'; 'several witnesses' [the foregoing note]) with e.g. Theag. 123 B 1–2, 128 D 8 and 129 A 1 ff. (the Platonic anachronism [*supra*, text to n. 28] makes of course Clitomachus' testimony as little dependable as the imitative character of De def. 419 A–E makes Epitherses'). For an attempt at finding the source of Plutarch's 'witnesses' in a different literary tradition see Borgeaud (n. 5) 258 n. 13.

83) See e.g. Procl. In Rem publ., p. 16–19 Kroll (352 f.): the symbolical πρόσωπα (~ witnesses), καιροί, and τόποι of the προοίμια of Plato's dialogues. Cf. id., In Alc. 103 A (18 f.), for the long-lived debate concerning the respective roles of ψυχαγωγία and ἱστορία in the shaping of those three elements of Plato's dramatic expression (also, A. Ph. Segonds, Proclus. Sur le Premier Alcibiade de Platon I [Paris (Budé) 1985] 136 f.), and the hostile critiques of Isocrates (12.78, 246) and Athenaeus (5, 215 D ff.) of Plato's ψευδολογία and ποιικιλία.

84) Herm. Alex. ad 227 B (τῆ Μορυσχία), p. 28 Couvreur; cf. schol. *ad loc.* (p. 68 Greene).

85) Cf. e.g. De Iside 355 D 7 ff. ~ Phdr. 274 D 1, with Griffiths' (n. 26) and Froidefond's (n. 26) commentaries *ad loc.*

86) Griffiths (n. 26) 331 (47 f.); Froidefond (n. 26) 268 n. 9.

87) Griffiths (n. 26) 320 appropriately comments: "It is a striking fact that the episode, or any story resembling it, does not occur in a source prior to Plutarch". Nevertheless, he does not envisage the possibility of a Plutarchean invention (neither does Froidefond [n. 26] 266 n. 4).

products of his fictional creativity, inspired at the moment he learnt of the name of a river in Syria similar to the Athenian anthroponym so familiar to him. The victim of Isis is consequently nothing more than a humorous allusion to Socrates' interlocutor in, and the eponym of, the *Phaedrus*. At the beginning of his dispute with Socrates over the cynical *Eroticus* of Lysias (242 D ff., cf. 265 B–C), Phaedrus, like the ancestor of the Wâdi-Fedar, shows too little respect for Eros-Osiris and Aphrodite-Isis⁸⁸). Citing the example of Stesichorus who 'was deprived of his sight because of his libel against Helen', Socrates does not hide fear that his (involuntary) participation in Phaedrus' 'offence against Love' will bring him harm, unless a palinode to Eros is composed (242 E – 243 B).

Cleombrotus the Lacedaemonian, whose part in the *De defectu* bears the stamp of so many Platonic connections, is also met with in Plutarch's essay alone⁸⁹). That circumstance suggests not only caution but also the need to search for a Platonic source for the name. It is easily found in one of Plato's dialogues that Plutarch most admired⁹⁰). According to the *Phaedo* 59 C, Cleombrotus was a pupil of Socrates, but not present at his master's death. Later sources, including the Neoplatonists, note that he was an Ambraciote and a naïvely fervent believer in the doctrine of the soul's eternity as expounded in the *Phaedo*⁹¹). Plutarch obviously borrowed this Cleombrotus for his own literary and philosophical purposes. While retaining the anthroponym, he changed the ethnic in a transparent way, resembling the transformation of the *Theages*' Timarchus of Thebes into the Timarchus of Chaeronea in the *De Genio*⁹²). The philosophical basis of that introduction of 'Cleombrotus' into the *De defectu* has been provided by Plato's

88) Osiris as the *interpretatio Aegyptiaca* of Eros: 374 B–C (with the notes of Griffiths [n. 26] and Froidefond [n. 26] *ad loc.*). Cf. Plutarch's own *Eroticus* (764 B), which contains numerous points of contact with the *Phaedrus*.

89) But his historicity seems never to have been questioned (K. Gerth, RE XI [1921] s.v. 'Kleombrotos' [n. 4] 679; A. S. Bradford, A Prosopography of Lacedaemonians from the Death of Alexander the Great, 323 BC, to the Sack of Sparta by Alaric, AD 396 [München 1977] 239) despite fanciful traits of his career as given by the author of the *De defectu*. – I have not seen D. Babut's article on Le rôle de Cléombrote dans le *De defectu oraculorum* et le problème de la 'démonologie' de Plutarque, cited (as forthcoming) in ICS 18 (1993) 227.

90) On Plutarch and the *Phaedo* see Ziegler (n. 65).

91) Which led him to commit suicide leaping ἀπ' ὑψηλοῦ τείχεος: Calimachus, AP 7.471, *et al.* (cf. A. S. Riginos, *Platonica* [Leiden 1976] 180–3).

92) Above, text to n. 28. The name Cleombrotus is attested in many parts of the Greek world. Attributing it here to Sparta, Plutarch remains within the area of

arguments for the ψυχῆς ἀθανασία upon which the theory of δαίμονες, attributed to ‘Cleombrotus’, rests in its main lines⁹³). There remains, however, the question of why Plutarch decided upon Cleombrotus among the several other convenient names or persons found in the *Phaedo* and in other Platonic works devoted to related topics (Mor. 120 D–E). The question is all the more justified as the choice of ‘Cleombrotus’ has influenced, in a way which obviously made Plutarch modify his primary purposes, the course of the whole conversation in the *De defectu*. Choosing Cleombrotus and accustomed to imitate his Platonic models with an artistic combination of freedom and faithfulness, the Chaeronean was compelled to ascribe to his Cleombrotus ‘une excessive crédulité’ (410 B, 421 A ff.)⁹⁴, consonant with the nature of Socrates’ pupil of the same name but inconsistent with his role in a learned dispute. We are permitted to suppose that in his selection of ‘Cleombrotus’ [the Ambraciote] Plutarch was led by reasons comparable to, and consistent with, those examined above, under the heading of the *geographia sacra*. The Ambraciote Gulf, with Ambracia in its northern coast, lay along the Echinades-Paxi-Palodes line of De def. 419 B–D. Thamus’ sail and the historical Cleombrotus’ native country, probably also the reputed place of his suicide, coincide in a manner significant to an understanding of Plutarch’s *ars arcana*⁹⁵).

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the Dorian dialect (cf. *supra*, n. 70), echoes the famous Agiad name (cited in several *Lives*) and, perhaps, renders his Cleombrotus’ simplicity more conceivable.

93) Cf. 435 E ff. (with reference to the *Phaedo* 97 B – 99 D). Froidefond (n. 72: ANRW II 36.1) 207f. – For an analogous logic in Plutarch’s procédés of imitative invention see, among innumerable instances, Table-Talk 8.8: Empedocles, allegedly a friend of Plutarch’s (as such, not attested elsewhere) and only a namesake of the philosopher from Acragas, opens up the question of why the Pythagoreans used to abstain from fish; in this, the meaning of ἔλλοψ (728 E; cf. 979 C, 981 D and *supra*, n. 31) has a striking importance. The whole reflects Theaet. 152 E, where i.a. Empedocles, Epicharmus and Oceanus figure in a discussion of the doctrine of flux. According to a late tradition, Empedocles and Epicharmus were Pythagoreans; the latter mentions ἔλλοψ in fr. 36 Olivieri. The reproduction of Empedocles’ name from Theaet. 152 E in Table-Talk 8.8 recalls i.a. the use of Ardiaeus’ name (Rep. 10. 615C ff.) in De sera num. vind. 564 C (cf. D. Sansone, ICS 18 [1993] 185).

94) Flacelière (n. 6) 87f.

95) Cf. the quotation from Od. 21.397 at 422 D. It would not have been appropriate if Plutarch did not wish to involve Ithaca (see also above, text and n. 43) here: θηητήρ και ἐπίκλοπος contradicts the immediately foregoing ἐν τελετῇ και μῆσαι.