

Nomos, Kosmos & Dike in Plutarch

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(eds.)

THE *DAIMON* IN TIMARCHUS' COSMIC VISION (PLU. *DE GEN. SOCR.* 22, 590B-592E)

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Abstract

In the Timarchus myth in Plutarch's *De genio Socratis*, the *daimon* is conceived as the highest part of the human soul, currently referred to as "intellect" (νοῦς) and wrongly believed to be internal. By contrast, in the two speeches preceding and following the myth (by Simmias and Theanor, respectively), the *daimon* is a superior entity assisting each man in multiple ways. This is Plutarch's way to harmonize Plato's different pronouncements concerning the personal *daimon* – an attempt anticipating later developments found in Plotinus.

One of the most controversial of Plutarch's *Moral Essays* is the one entitled Περὶ τοῦ Σωκράτους δαιμονίου and generally known to scholars by the Latinized title *De genio Socratis*. This is a dialogue set at the time of the overthrow of the Spartan-backed oligarchic government of Thebes in 379 BC by a conspiracy involving the return of some Theban exiles and the killing of the oligarchs. Several of the characters introduced by Plutarch are Thebans taking an active part in the conspiracy, though Epameinondas, who figures prominently in the dialogue, refuses to shed the blood of fellow-citizens, in spite of his patriotic and anti-Spartan leanings.

One of the speakers in the dialogue is Simmias, one of Socrates' pupils, whom we know from Plato's *Phaidon*; another is Theanor, a Pythagorean adept who has come from southern Italy to bring back the remains of Lysis, another Pythagorean, who had died at Thebes. At one point in the dialogue the issue of the nature of Socrates' guiding *daimon* is brought up, and different views are presented by three speakers: Galaxidorus, Simmias, and Theanor; the two latter characters do not limit themselves to the specific problem, but offer general doctrines concerning *daimones*, with particular emphasis on those that accompany each man as personal guardians.

The question of how the two parts of the dialogue, namely the historical and the doctrinal aspects, relate to each other has been the object of a great deal of controversy. It is not our purpose to tackle this problem at this time; it will suffice to remark that the prevailing trend in scholarship seems to favor the dialogue's unity by pointing out several links connecting the two parts, and to refer to the essays by Babut and Barigazzi, which provide a detailed survey of this long-standing discussion.¹

¹ D. BABUT 1984; A. BARIGAZZI 1988, now collected in A. BARIGAZZI 1994: 213-234. The

The most striking section of the part devoted to the nature and essence of *daimones*, and in particular to each man's personal *daimon*, is the Timarchus myth (22, 590B-592E), related by Simmias, concerning the former's descent into Trophonius' grotto at Lebadeia and the vision he experienced while there. This is preceded, in an earlier section of the dialogue, by Galaxidorus' rationalistic attempt to reduce Socrates' *daimon* to commonplace divination, such as the omens one could draw from sneezes or various fortuitous occurrences, although he does not expressly deny the existence of *daimones* (12, 581F-582C). The myth comes immediately after a speech by Simmias, in which the latter expresses his own opinion about Socrates' *daimon* and on *daimones* assisting humans (20, 588C-589F). It is only at the insistence of one of the other speakers, the soothsayer Theocritus, that Simmias goes on to relate Timarchus' myth (21, 589F-590B). The myth is then followed by a speech by Theanor (24, 593A-594A), in which this Pythagorean character adds his own point of view concerning the *daimones* which assist men during their lives.

Some of the most interesting ideas on the subject are found, in my opinion, in the myth of Timarchus. Though he had gone down into Trophonius' grotto to inquire about Socrates' *daimon*, the revelation he receives concerns *daimones* in general. It should be noticed, in the first place, that Timarchus experiences his vision through his soul (ψυχή – but we shall come back to the ambiguity of this term) in a state of separation from the body (22, 590B: δόξαι γε τῆς κεφαλῆς ἅμα ψόφῳ προσπεσόντι πληγείσης τὰς ῥαφὰς διαστάσας μεθίεναι τὴν ψυχὴν κτλ.), pretty much like Thespesius in the *De sera numinis vindicta* (23, 563E).

At first he experiences a vision of the cosmos, in which the celestial bodies appear to him as colorful islands in an equally colorful sea. Plutarch adds many astronomical details, for whose explanation we may refer to Hani's edition and to other scholars who have studied this part of the myth.²

The section that most closely interests us begins at the moment Timarchus turns down his gaze to a huge circular gulf, "like a sphere cut in half", as Plutarch says (*De gen. Socr.* 22, 590F χάσμα μέγα στρογγύλον οἷον ἐκτετμημένης σφαίρας), steeped in total darkness and in a state of turmoil, from which rose cries of animals, babies, men, and women. According to Hani³ this sphere cut in half represents the earth's lower hemisphere, on which the hereafter was located according to some widespread conceptions.⁴ But,

Belles Lettres editor of the dialogue, J. HANI 1980: 60-62, also favors the dialogue's unity.

² J. HANI 1980: 226-228. See also A. PÉREZ JIMÉNEZ 1996, with the bibliography quoted and discussed. For the Timarchus myth in general see e.g. W. HAMILTON 1934; G. MÉAUTIS 1950; J. HANI 1975 (mainly about the shamanistic elements in the myth); R. M. AGUILAR 1996; I. GALLO 2001.

³ J. HANI 1980: 228. According to G. MÉAUTIS 1950: 208 the sphere cut in half is the earth itself.

⁴ Cf. e.g. F. CUMONT 1942: 35-103.

as Cumont already remarked,⁵ the earth, or its lower hemisphere, would not appear as a hollow gulf to anyone looking at it from above, but rather as a convex bulge. In my opinion, this sphere cut in half is the lower celestial, rather than the lower terrestrial, hemisphere. The stars of the southern sky shine over the abode of the dead in some famous Virgilian lines too (*G.* 1.242-243): *hic vertex nobis semper sublimis, at illum/ sub pedibus Styx atra videt Manesque profundi* (“the celestial pole of our hemisphere is always overhead, but the one below is visible to black Styx and the spirits of the deep”). I will not try to solve, for lack of time, the problem of whether the cries rising up from the dark gulf are those of souls who have been forced to reincarnate in our world as people or beasts, or come from the abode of the dead. In particular, are the cries of babies Timarchus hears those of newly born infants or of children who died before their time, like Virgil's untimely dead, the ἄωροι of the sixth book of the *Aeneid* (6.426-429)?⁶ Plutarch may well have fused the conception of Hades as the earth's lower hemisphere with another widespread eschatological idea identifying our life on earth as the real Hades, so that the earth's lower hemisphere (placed under the stars of the southern sky) could be regarded in turn *both* as the abode of the dead after life on earth *and*, symbolically, as the very location of our terrestrial life.

Be that as it may, the part concerning the fate of the souls and the conception of the *daimones*, holding the greatest interest for us, begins at this point. Now, also, a new character enters the scene: Timarchus' mysterious, invisible guide, who will instruct him without ever being perceived by his eyes. From what he says (*De gen. Socr.* 22, 591A: τὴν δὲ Φερσεφόνης μοῖραν, ἣν ἡμεῖς διέπομεν; 591C σελήνην δὲ δαιμόνων ἐπιχθονίων οὔσα)⁷ we gather that this guide is one of the “terrestrial *daimones*” (ἐπιχθόνιοι δαίμονες) who dwell on the moon. His explanations still concern, at first, cosmic details, such as the four principles (life, movement, generation process, decay) dividing the cosmos into three zones, each presided over by one of the three Fates.⁸ But now the cosmological picture is closely connected with the fate of the human soul and the doctrine concerning the *daimon*.

⁵ F. CUMONT 1942: 56 n. 2.

⁶ F. CUMONT 1949: 315 thinks that both in Virgil and in Plutarch the crying babies have died before their time. G. MÉAUTIS 1950, followed by J. HANI 1980: 229, believes these are newly born babies; according to F. E. BRENK 1987: 287 “these are souls returning from life on earth”.

⁷ The guide cannot reach the regions higher than the moon (591A). Cf. G. MÉAUTIS 1950: 207. The moon is, in fact, the realm of Persephone: cf. Plu. *De fac. lun* 28, 943B; 29, 944C. The epithet ἐπιχθόνιος is a clear reference to Hēs. *Op.* 122 (τοὶ μὲν δαίμονες ἀγνοῖ ἐπιχθόνιοι τελέθουσιν).

⁸ Plu. *De gen. Socr.* 22, 591B. Cf. *De fac. lun* 30, 945C-D, where the three Fates are differently arranged. They come of course from Plat. *R.* 617c-d.

Timarchus sees some stars jerking in sharp motions around the huge circular gulf, while other stars plunge into it and still other come darting up from it.⁹ These stars are human souls, or, as Timarchus' guide puts it, *daimones*, and come straight from the closing of the myth of Er, in Plato's *Republic*, as confirmed by the reappearance of the very verb used by Plato: ἄττειν ("to dart", "shoot", "spring").¹⁰

As hinted, the guide explains that these stars are really *daimones*; but, as we shall see, both this word and the term "soul" (ψυχή) are anything but unambiguous. Here are his words: "Every soul partakes of intelligence (νοῦς) and there is none devoid of reason and intelligence; but what of it gets mixed with flesh and passion undergoes a change and tends to foolishness, as it is affected by pleasure and pain. Not all souls, however, get mixed the same way. Some plunge totally into the body and, falling completely prey to derangement, remain perturbed during their whole life; others get mixed only partially, while partially leaving out their purest element. This is not tugged down with the rest, but floats at the surface, as it were, in connection with the man's head, like a buoy indicating a diver who plunged into the deep; and the soul is kept upright around this emerging part, as far as it obeys reason and is not dominated by passion. The part immersed in the body is called 'soul' (ψυχή), while the part free from corruption is called intellect (νοῦς) by the mass, and believed to be inside themselves, just as they think what appears as reflection in mirrors to be inside the mirrors themselves; but those who reason correctly call it *daimon*, as it is outside themselves".¹¹

As recognized by several scholars,¹² the conception of the *daimon* appearing here must be read in the light of a famous passage of Plato's *Timaetus*, which states that the highest part or faculty of the human soul has been given by god to each man as a *daimon*,¹³ whereas elsewhere in Plato the *daimon* is an external

⁹ For the movements of the souls cf. Plu. *De sera num. vind.* 23, 563F-564A.

¹⁰ Plat. *R.* 621b: φέρεσθαι ἄνω εἰς τὴν γένεσιν, ἄττοντας ὡσπερ ἀστέρας. Cf. Plu. *De gen. Socr.* 22, 591D: τοὺς δὲ ἄττοντας κάτωθεν. In Plato this refers to the souls proceeding toward incarnation, in Plutarch to those leaving the body; in both cases the movement is upwards.

¹¹ Plu. *De gen. Socr.* 22, 591D-E: ψυχὴ πᾶσα νοῦ μετέσχεν, ἄλογος δὲ καὶ ἄνους οὐκ ἔστιν, ἀλλ' ὅσον ἂν αὐτῆς σαρκὶ μιχθῆ καὶ πάθειν, ἄλλοιούμενον τρέπεται κατ' ἡδονὰς καὶ ἀλγηδόνας εἰς τὸ ἄλογον. Μίγνυται δ' οὐ πᾶσα τὸν αὐτὸν τρόπον· ἀλλ' αἱ <μέν> ὅλαι κατέδυσαν εἰς σῶμα, καὶ δι' ὅλων ἀναταραχθεῖσαι τὸ σύμπαν ὑπὸ παθῶν διαφέρονται κατὰ τὸν βίον· αἱ δὲ πῆ μὲν ἀνεκράθησαν, πῆ δὲ ἔλιπον ἕξω τὸ καθαρῶτατον, οὐκ ἐπισπώμενον ἀλλ' οἷον ἀκρόπλουτον ἐπιψαῦον ἐκ κεφαλῆς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου καθάπερ ἐν βυθῶ δευκτότος ἄρτημα κορυφαῖον, ὀρθομένης περὶ αὐτὸ τῆς ψυχῆς ἀνέχον ὅσον ὑπακούει καὶ οὐ κρατεῖται τοῖς πάθειν. Τὸ μὲν οὖν ὑποβρύχιον ἐν τῷ σῶματι φερόμενον ψυχὴ λέγεται· τὸ δὲ φθορᾶς λειφθὲν οἱ πολλοὶ νοῦν καλοῦντες ἐντὸς εἶναι νομίζουσιν αὐτῶν, ὡσπερ ἐν τοῖς ἐσόπτροις τὰ φαινόμενα κατ' ἀνταύγειαν· οἱ δὲ ὀρθῶς ὑπονοοῦντες ὡς ἐκτὸς ὄντα δαίμονα προσαγορεύουσι.

¹² Cf. e.g. W. HAMILTON 1934: 181; G. SOURY 1942: 160; Y. VERNIÈRE 1977 : 128.

¹³ Plat. *Ti.* 90a: τὸ δὲ δὴ περὶ τοῦ κυριωτάτου παρ' ἡμῖν ψυχῆς εἴδους διανοεῖσθαι δεῖ τῆδε, ὡς ἄρα αὐτὸ δαίμονα θεὸς ἐκάστω δέδωκεν, τοῦτο δὲ δὴ φαμεν οἰκεῖν μὲν ἡμῶν ἐπ' ἄκρω τῷ σῶματι, πρὸς δὲ τὴν ἐν οὐρανῶ συγγένειαν ἀπὸ γῆς ἡμᾶς αἴρειν ὡς ὄντας φυτὸν οὐκ ἔγγειον

guardian assisting every man, as in the *Phaidon* (107d; 113d) and the *Republic* (617d-e; 620d-e), or an entity intermediate between the human and the divine, or the sensible and the intelligible, as in the *Banquet* (202d-e). The influence of this *Timaeus* passage is made certain not merely by the conception of the *daimon* as the highest part or faculty of the soul, but also by the recurrence of such details as the connection of this *daimon* with the human head and the upright position it ensures. There surely are, in Plutarch's text, echoes from other Platonic dialogues, such as the term ὑποβρίχιον ("submerged"), which comes from the myth of the *Phaedrus* 248a (where it is referred to the souls unable to rise high enough to contemplate the intelligible ideas), just like the horsemanship metaphors following upon the passage we have just quoted (Plu. *De gen. Socr.* 22, 592A-C; cf. Plat. *Phdr.* 246a-248b); and the pairing of the incarnate soul with an underwater diver is probably borrowed from the *Phaidon* (109b-e). There is no doubt, however, that the main influence here comes from the *Timaeus*. We should not miss, at any rate, the main difference between Plato and Plutarch. The *daimon* identified with the highest part or faculty of the human soul is clearly internal in the *Timaeus*, but is explicitly said to be external in the *De genio Socratis*: "those who reason correctly call it *daimon*, as it is outside themselves".

This is not the time and place to tackle the intricate problem of Plutarch's demonology. We may refer to the comprehensive study by Guy Soury and the more recent essays by father Brenk¹⁴. It should be noticed, however, that, in the description following the passage we have quoted, this *daimon* is explicitly called each man's "personal *daimon*" (οἰκείος δαίμων: 22, 592C) and its action is described, as already hinted, in a way reminiscent of Plato's chariot of the soul in the myth of the *Phaedrus*, with reason as the charioteer.

Even in the Timarchus myth, however, the *daimon* identical with the part of the soul that is not sunk in the body is not the only type of *daimon*. We have seen that Timarchus' mysterious guide is one of the "terrestrial *daimones*" (ἐπιχθόνιοι δαίμονες) who inhabit the moon. The *daimon* of the myth, which is the purest part of the human soul, but is nevertheless external, should be compared, then, with the other views of the *daimones* we find in the dialogue.

As already hinted, Galaxidorus gives a rationalistic interpretation of Socrates' *daimon*. Later on Simmias' speech preceding the myth develops the interesting idea that *daimones* communicate through an intelligible discourse

ἀλλὰ οὐράνιον, ὀρθότατα λέγοντες· ἐκέϊθεν γάρ, ὅθεν ἡ πρώτη ψυχῆς γένεσις ἔφυ, τὸ θεῖον τὴν κεφαλὴν καὶ ρίζαν ἡμῶν ἀνακρεμαννὸν ὀρθοῖ πᾶν τὸ σῶμα.

¹⁴ G. SOURY 1942; F. E. BRENK 1973-1974; F. E. BRENK 1977: 49-183; F. E. BRENK 1986: 2117-2130; F. E. BRENK 1987: 275-294. For Plutarch's demonology see also F. ANDRES 1918: 301-305; C. ZINTZEN 1976: 644-647; Y. VERNIÈRE 1989; C. SANTANIello 1996; F. CASADESÚS BORDOY 2001.

dispensing with words. The νοῦς of a higher *daimon* can thus influence our νοῦς, which, according to the myth, is our own *daimon*.¹⁵ Finally, Theanor describes *daimones* assisting humans, who are souls who have left the body and are free from reincarnation.¹⁶ The designation of οἰκεῖος δαίμων, or “personal *daimon*”, is employed in reference to these *daimones* too (24, 594A). They seem to be identical with the “terrestrial *daimones*” inhabiting the moon,¹⁷ one of which serves as Timarchus’ guide. According to father Brenk the conception of the *daimon* as a disembodied human soul actually reflects Plutarch’s genuine opinion, though Cleombrotus, one of the speakers in the *De defectu oraculorum*, presents his own elaborate, and in many ways different, demonology (10, 414F; 16, 419A; 21, 420F-421E).

D. BABUT 1983 believes that there is no contradiction in the demonological doctrine of the *De genio Socratis*. According to him, Galaxidorus’ rationalism clears the ground from popular superstitions, and Simmias’ and Theanor’s speeches can easily be reconciled; as for the difference between the *daimon* as νοῦς in the myth and the *daimones* distinct from the human soul in the speeches preceding and following it, Babut believes it to be Plutarch’s way to reconcile Plato’s different doctrines, as expressed in the *Timaeus*, with the *daimon* as the highest part or faculty of the soul, and in the *Phaidon* and the *Republic*, where the *daimon* is external. I regard this as correct,¹⁸ but it hardly eliminates the contradiction, which is merely carried over from Plato to Plutarch, although Babut’s position has been endorsed by father Brenk.¹⁹ Recently, an attempt to reconcile the two different elements has been made by J. BOULOGNE 2010: 77-78, who sees in the joint action of the two *daimones* of Simmias’ speech and the Timarchus myth an “immanent transcendence” and a “transcendent immanence” in the apprehension of thought. It remains, however, that a νοῦς influenced by a higher νοῦς is not identical with it; nor is the human νοῦς the same as the disembodied soul assisting each man in Theanor’s speech, although both are referred to as οἰκεῖος δαίμων, “personal

¹⁵ Plu. *De gen. Socr.* 20, 588E-589C, especially 589B: οὕτως οὐκ ἂν οἶμαι δυσπείστως ἔχοιμεν ὑπὸ νοῦ κρείσσονος νοῦν καὶ <ψυχὴν> ψυχῆς θειοτέρας ἂν ἄγεσθαι θύραθεν ἐφαπτομένης ἢν πέφυκεν ἐπαφὴν λόγον ἴσχειν πρὸς λόγον ὡσπερ φῶς ἀνταύγειαν.

¹⁶ Plu. *De gen. Socr.* 24, 593D-594A. Cf. 16, 585F-586A, where Theanor says that Lysis has reincarnated and has been entrusted to another *daimon*, while his former *daimon* now assists Epameinondas (cf. Pl. *Phd.* 113d).

¹⁷ As remarked by J. HANI 1980: 229. Cf. the myth of the *De facie in orbe lunae*, where the δαίμονες inhabiting the moon are the souls of the dead (e.g. 30, 944C).

¹⁸ That the conception of the νοῦς/δαίμων does not rule out the existence of other *daimones* guarding and protecting humans is emphasized, e.g., by W. HAMILTON 1934, 180 n. 1; A. CORLU 1970, 59.

¹⁹ F. E. BRENK 1987: 290-291. F. E. BRENK 1986: 2126 finds it “somewhat surprising to find the *nous* or *daimon* external in Plutarch”. In my opinion, it is only Plutarch’s way to try to reconcile Plato’s different doctrines. As we shall see, Plotinus’ solution is different.

daimon".²⁰ What Plutarch very probably intended was to present to the reader a gamut of several conceptions concerning the *daimon*.

Several scholars²¹ believe that the doctrine of the Timarchus myth should be understood in the light of Plutarch's tripartition of man into body, soul, and mind or intellect (σῶμα, ψυχή, νοῦς), whose most consistent and developed formulation is found in the *De facie in orbe lunae* (28, 943A-30, 945E). Quite possibly, this idea too was suggested by Plato's *Timaeus*,²² just like the identification of the νοῦς and the *daimon*.

It cannot be denied that in the Timarchus myth the soul (or ψυχή), totally sunk in the body, is clearly distinguished from the νοῦς, that remains outside. It must be stressed, however, that, although von Arnim's idea, according to which the distinction between νοῦς and ψυχή begins only at the moment of incarnation,²³ cannot be accepted, Plutarch's terminology is anything but consistent. In the very passage of the Timarchus myth we have quoted and discussed, as well as in other passages, and also in the myth of the *De facie in orbe lunae*, the term ψυχή is sometimes referred to the lower part of the human soul, totally sunk in the body, while elsewhere it designates the whole of the human spirit, comprehensive of both the ψυχή proper and the higher νοῦς undefiled by material contact. We remember reading that "what of the soul gets mixed with flesh and passion" becomes irrational and that some souls "get mixed only partially, while partially leaving out their purest element".²⁴ The ambiguity of the term ψυχή has been stressed by several scholars;²⁵ but it should be added that the same applies to the term δαίμων, which, in the myth of the *De facie in orbe lunae* (e.g. 30-31, 944C) sometimes refers to ψυχή and νοῦς while still united, while in the same context the same two unseparated elements are repeatedly referred to as ψυχή. And in the Timarchus myth itself, when the *daimones* of men who are said to possess νοῦς are described, Plutarch seems to have forgotten the identification of νοῦς and δαίμων he has established only a few lines before.²⁶

²⁰ Cf. above, p. 114..

²¹ Cf. e.g. W. HAMILTON 1934: 180; Y. VERNIÈRE 1977: 127; J. HANI 1980: 230.

²² Cf. e.g. Y. VERNIÈRE 1977: 128 and notes 3-4 (referring to Pl. *Ti.* 30b, 69c and 70a); J. HANI 1980: 57 and 230 (referring to Pl. *Ti.* 30b, 31a, 70a).

²³ H. VON ARNIM 1921: 31.

²⁴ Cf. above, p. 112. In the same way, at Plu. *De sera num. vind.* 24, 564C, Thespesius, who has left the body with the rational part, has left "the rest of the soul" in it.

²⁵ Cf. e.g. W. HAMILTON 1934: 180; G. SOURY 1942: 157-158; Y. VERNIÈRE 1977: 127.

²⁶ Plu. *De gen. Socr.* 22, 591F: δαίμονές εἰσι τῶν νοῦν ἔχειν λεγομένων ἀνθρώπων. The terminological imprecision is pointed out by J. HANI 1980: 230 too. Possibly, however, Plutarch may once more be stressing the incorrectness of the current terminology: these *daimones* might be identical with what the public at large wrongly *calls* νοῦς (τῶν νοῦν ἔχειν λεγομένων ἀνθρώπων).

Be this as it may, the conception of the *daimon* appearing in the Timarchus myth undoubtedly poses some serious difficulties to those who wish to establish the consistency of the demonology put forward by Plutarch in the *De genio Socratis*. Nevertheless, it is indeed a most stimulating approach to the question. This is confirmed by the development it underwent in Plotinus, who harmonized it with the *daimon* communicating through intelligible, wordless discourse, which appears shortly before in Plutarch, in Simmias' speech.

In Plutarch, we should remember, both *daimones*, even the one people at large wrongly call νοῦς, are external. In his treatise Περὶ τοῦ εἰληχότος ἡμᾶς δαίμονος ("On the *daimon* which received us by lot") Plotinus faced the same problem as Plutarch: reconciling Plato's different statements concerning the personal *daimon*. Both in the title and in the text he employs the same terminology as the *Phaidon*, according to which the *daimon* has received us by lot.²⁷ Immediately after, however, he states that the correct conception is the one found in the *Republic*: we choose our *daimon* ourselves.²⁸ This is because Plotinus identifies the *daimon* with the psychic faculty immediately superior to the one prevailing in each man, so that, by choosing a type of life, we place ourselves at a definite level, and by doing so we also choose a *daimon*. Plotinus is of course influenced by the same passage of Plato's *Timaeus*, which influenced Plutarch, and actually quotes it (Plot. 3.4.5, 19-23; cf. Plat. *Tim.* 90a); but his conception is more articulated than Plato's; according to him the *daimon* is not identical with the soul's highest part or faculty, but with the one immediately superior to that which prevails at any given moment; this in turn supposes ever higher *daimones*, until man has reached the state of perfection (Plot. 3.4.3, 14-21).²⁹

We remember Simmias' higher *daimon*, communicating through wordless discourse – an idea itself strongly reminiscent of the doctrine of knowledge by

²⁷ Plot. 3.4.3, 3-4: δαίμων ὅσπερ ζῶντα εἰλήχει, repeated from Pl. *Phd.* 117d. I have presented a fuller discussion of the development Plutarch's text receives in Plotinus in a lecture presented on May 6, 2011 at the conference *Plato Latinus*, which was held at the Palazzo Feltrinelli in Gargnano, on lake Garda, with the title "La citazione di Plotino in Servio, *ad Aen.* 9.182". This is due to appear in the proceedings of the aforementioned conference and contains full quotations and discussion of the relevant passages.

²⁸ Plot. 3.4.3, 8-10: ὀρθῶς οὖν λέγεται ἡμᾶς αἰρέσασθαι (cf. Pl. *R.* 617d-e; 620d-e). Τὸν γὰρ ὑπερκείμενον κατὰ τὴν ζωὴν αἰρούμεθα.

²⁹ That this is indeed the way Plutarch's text was understood in later times is proved by a commentary to Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*, which was pointed out to me through the courtesy of Francesco Becchi: Eustratii et Michaelis et Anonyma in *Ethica Nicomachea Commentaria*, *CAG* XX, p. 5, 12-16 HEYLBUT: εὐδαιμονία δὲ ἡ ἀνθρώπου τελειότης ὠνόμασται παρὰ τὸ εὖ ἔχειν τὸν δαίμονα τὸν ἐν τελειότητι γενομένου ἀνδρός. Δαίμονα δὲ ἐκάλουν ἐν ἡμῖν οἱ παλαιοὶ τὸ νοερὸν τῆς ψυχῆς, καθὰ φησι καὶ Πλούταρχος ἐν τῷ λόγῳ ᾧ ἐπιγράφεται Περὶ τοῦ Σωκράτους δαιμονίου.

contact, elsewhere developed by Plotinus (5.3.7, 25-28; 6.6.8, 12-14; 6.8.18, 4-7).³⁰ Like Plutarch, Plotinus managed to bring together Plato's different statements about the personal *daimon*; but whereas Plutarch regards both the *daimon* identified with the *voũc* and the one assisting each man as external, Plotinus has connected the one and the other with the human soul and has placed both of them inside the human being.

³⁰ Cf. J. HANI 1980: 225.

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