

# On Prophecy, Dreams and Human Imagination

Synesius, *De insomniis*

*Scripta Antiquitatis Posterioris*  
*ad Ethicam REligionemque pertinentia*  
XXIV

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**Mohr Siebeck**

# SAPERE

Scripta Antiquitatis Posterioris  
ad Ethicam Religionemque pertinentia

Schriften der späteren Antike  
zu ethischen und religiösen Fragen

Herausgegeben von

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und Heinz-Günther Nesselrath

unter der Mitarbeit von

Natalia Pedrique, Andrea Villani  
und Christian Zgoll

Band XXIV





# On Prophecy, Dreams and Human Imagination

Synesius, *De insomniis*

Introduction, Text, Translation and  
Interpretative Essays by

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Sebastian Gertz, Heinz-Günther Nesselrath,  
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edited by

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## SAPERE

Greek and Latin texts of Later Antiquity (1st–4th centuries AD) have for a long time been overshadowed by those dating back to so-called ‘classical’ times. The first four centuries of our era have, however, produced a cornucopia of works in Greek and Latin dealing with questions of philosophy, ethics, and religion that continue to be relevant even today. The series SAPERE (Scripta Antiquitatis Posterioris ad Ethicam Religionemque pertinentia, ‘Writings of Later Antiquity with Ethical and Religious Themes’), now funded by the German Union of Academies, undertakes the task of making these texts accessible through an innovative combination of edition, translation, and commentary in the form of interpretative essays.

The acronym ‘SAPERE’ deliberately evokes the various connotations of *sapere*, the Latin verb. In addition to the intellectual dimension – which Kant made the motto of the Enlightenment by translating ‘*sapere aude*’ with ‘dare to use thy reason’ – the notion of ‘tasting’ should come into play as well. On the one hand, SAPERE makes important source texts available for discussion within various disciplines such as theology and religious studies, philology, philosophy, history, archaeology, and so on; on the other, it also seeks to whet the readers’ appetite to ‘taste’ these texts. Consequently, a thorough scholarly analysis of the texts, which are investigated from the vantage points of different disciplines, complements the presentation of the sources both in the original and in translation. In this way, the importance of these ancient authors for the history of ideas and their relevance to modern debates come clearly into focus, thereby fostering an active engagement with the classical past.



## Preface to this Volume

When in September 2010 Donald Russell asked me what was the topic of the then latest volume of the SAPERE series and I answered that it dealt with select letters by Synesius of Cyrene (SAPERE 17), he remarked that he himself would like to produce a similar volume on Synesius' essay *De insomniis*. I was only too glad to take him up on this, and so work on this project started. Twenty months later we had assembled a team of knowledgeable contributors, most of whom presented drafts of their papers during a little conference in Oxford in July 2012. Well before that date, Donald – in his customary reliable fashion (undiminished by his age of more than ninety years) – had produced an introduction, a revised Greek text, an English translation (both accurate and readable) and a first set of explanatory notes. It took the next two years (too long a time really – for which I apologize to Donald, because much of the delay is my responsibility, as I was at times preoccupied with other things) to revise the essays, to supplement the notes and to produce a suitable layout for it all. Now, however (at last), the work is done.

Although this volume is not one of those originally planned for the SAPERE "Akademie-Projekt", it fits very well within the series, the aim of which is to make texts of the first four centuries AD that deal with still relevant ethical and religious questions accessible (again) to a modern readership. Synesius' essay *De insomniis* ('On Dreams') – written in the first years of the 5th century AD by a man who was not only an intellectual well versed in Neo-Platonic philosophy but also (in the last years of his life) a Christian bishop of the city of Ptolemais in the Libyan Pentapolis – inquires into the ways and means by which a human being, while sleeping and dreaming, may be able to make contact with higher (divine or celestial) spheres, and it considers this question in the light of a clearly recognizable Neo-Platonic concept of the soul and its salvation. Synesius' thoughts are thus an important contribution by a Greek intellectual of Later Antiquity on topics – the place of man within a spiritual universe and his means of communication with higher powers – that not only were of high concern for his contemporaries, but still are today for religiously- and philosophically-minded people.

To fully explore the content of Synesius' text, a number of essays investigate the various dimensions that can be found in it. Ursula Bittrich (Classical Philology, University of Gießen) provides a survey of opinions about dreams and their cognitive potential by Greek thinkers from the 5th



century well into Imperial times and shows how Synesius' thinking on this matter fits in. Anne Sheppard (Ancient Philosophy, Royal Holloway, University of London) considers the role and importance of the concept of *phantasia* ('imagination') – and its connection with dreams – in Synesius' text as well as its sources in earlier philosophical thought and literature. Sebastian Gertz (Ancient Philosophy, St. John's College, Oxford) inquires into the ways in which in Synesius' thinking dream divination is connected with – and perhaps important for – the Neo-Platonists' central ideal and goal, i.e. the (re-)ascent of the human soul into divine spheres. Another important feature of Synesius' conceptions in this context – namely the role and characteristics of the 'Vehicle (*ochēma*) of the Soul', which plays an essential part in the soul's downward and upward movements through the spheres – is looked into by Ilinca Tanaseanu-Döbler (Religious Studies, University of Göttingen), who investigates how Synesius draws on earlier Neo-Platonic thinkers and produces his own synthesis of their thoughts. That *De insomniis*, however, is not only an exercise ground for philosophical ideas but also characterized by a considerable amount of rhetoric, is brought out by Donald Russell's (Classical Literature, St. John's College, Oxford) essay. Finally, Börje Bydén (Classical and Byzantine Studies, University of Göteborg) shows that Synesius' text was still held in considerable esteem and deemed worthy of detailed commentary in the intellectual circles of 14th century Byzantium. All in all, these essays well illustrate the numerous interesting aspects of Synesius' text, which can provide stimulating food for thought on humans' abiding fascination with dreams even today.

Oxford / Göttingen, September 2014

Heinz-Günther Nesselrath

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## *A. Introduction*



# Introduction

*Donald A. Russell*

## 1.

Dreams are an important, and very puzzling, part of our lives. All societies and cultures speculate about their nature, cause and relation to the reality of our waking hours. Are they a way of access to an unseen world, a divine revelation, or merely a distorted reflexion of waking experiences or an unplanned exposure of our innermost thoughts? These questions were well known in classical antiquity. Dreams play a large part in religious contexts, in oracles and miraculous cures. They are a prominent theme in literature from Homer onwards: Agamemnon's dream (*Il.* 2.28–9) still features in Synesius' discussion (147D), and was much discussed. Every philosophical school offered its own theories: Plato, Aristotle, the Stoics, the Epicureans, Philo all have discussions of dreams. Guides to dream-interpretation of a less philosophical and more popular kind proliferated from the fifth century BC down to Synesius' own time.<sup>1</sup>

## 2.

Synesius (born c. 370, died after, but perhaps not long after, 413) came from a distinguished family in the ancient Greek colony of Cyrene in Libya, and claimed Spartan descent.<sup>2</sup> Although his works – *Hymns*, *Letters* and a number of speeches and short essays – all full of personal details, there remains much uncertainty about his development. It is unclear whether he had a Christian upbringing or was a late convert. What is certain is that he had a Christian marriage and that he became bishop of the Pentapolis (a group of cities including Ptolemais and Cyrene) in 412. His public career goes back well before this. He had led an embassy to the emperor Arcadius in Constantinople, which took three years of his life (397–400 or 399–402; the date is disputed).<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> See S. R. F. PRICE in *OCD*<sup>3</sup>, s.v. Dreams, for a survey and basic bibliography. U. BRITRICH surveys much of this field below, pp. 71–96.

<sup>2</sup> See e.g. *Ep.* 113, "I am a Laconian by descent".

<sup>3</sup> On all this, see LUCHNER 2010, 6f.

Given his Christian office, it is surprising how little there is in his work which reflects any kind of Christian orthodoxy. It would seem that he wrote for a highly educated, and largely pagan, readership. The major intellectual influence in his own life was the Neoplatonist philosopher and mathematician Hypatia, who was torn to pieces by the Christian mob in Alexandria in 415.<sup>4</sup>

### 3.

It is to Hypatia that, in 404 or 405, Synesius sent *De insomniis*, together with its companion piece *Dion*, a study of Dio of Prusa (c. 40 – c. 110), the orator and popular philosopher whose literary career served Synesius as a model for his own. In the accompanying letter (*Ep.* 154) he speaks of *De insomniis* as follows:

“This second book God both ordered and approved.<sup>5</sup> It is offered as a thanksgiving to our imaginative nature. In it the whole ‘phantom soul’ is discussed,<sup>6</sup> and certain other doctrines are advanced which have not before been the subject of Hellenic philosophy. Why say more? It was all completed in a single night – or rather, in what was left of the night that brought the vision ordering it to be written. There are two or three places in its argument where I felt I was another person and was joining the company as part of my audience. Even now, whenever I revisit this book, I have an extraordinary feeling, and a sort of ‘voice divine surrounds me’, as the poem says.<sup>7</sup> Whether this is not just my private experience, but might happen to another, is for you to say. For you, after me, are the first Hellene to read it.”<sup>8</sup>

In this, “Hellenic philosophy” and “you are the first Hellene” are to be noted. A common connotation of ‘Hellene’ in this period is ‘pagan’, and so Synesius’ remark that he is the first ‘Hellene’ to discuss certain subjects suggests that he may be approaching themes previously only discussed in Christian writing. One such theme would be bodily resurrection; and it is arguable that in his account of the ascent of the *pneuma* with the soul

<sup>4</sup> She is the heroine of Charles Kingsley’s novel *Hypatia* (1853), in which Synesius also appears, sympathetically drawn. For a recent evaluation, see Maria DZIELSKA, *Hypatia of Alexandria*, transl. F. LYNE (Cambridge Mass. 1995).

<sup>5</sup> Reading ἐνέκρινεν: some MSS have ἀνέκρινεν, ‘examined’.

<sup>6</sup> ‘Phantom soul’, εἰδωλική ψυχή; cf. *De ins.* 140D.

<sup>7</sup> He quotes Hom. *Il.* 2.41, θεῖη δέ μιν ἀμφέχυντ’ ὀμφή.

<sup>8</sup> *Ep.* 154 p. 276 GARZIA: Θάτερον δὲ θεὸς καὶ ἐπέταξε καὶ ἐνέκρινεν, ὃ τῆ φανταστικῆ φύσει χαριστήριον ἀνατέθειται. ἔσκεπται δ’ ἐν αὐτῷ περὶ τῆς εἰδωλικῆς ἀπάσης ψυχῆς, καὶ ἕτερα ἅττα προκεχείρισται δόγματα τῶν οὐπῶ φιλοσοφηθέντων Ἑλλήσι. καὶ τί ἂν τις ἀπομηκύνῃ περὶ αὐτοῦ; ἀλλ’ ἐξείργασται μὲν ἐπὶ μιᾶς ἅπαν νυκτός, μᾶλλον δὲ λειψάνου νυκτός, ἢ καὶ τὴν ὄψιν ἤνεγκε τὴν περὶ τοῦ δεῖν αὐτὸ συγγεγράφθαι. ἔστι δὲ οὗ τῶν λόγων δὶς που καὶ τρίς, ὥσπερ τις ἕτερος ὢν, ἑμαυτοῦ γέγονα μετὰ τῶν παρόντων ἀκροατῆς· καὶ νῦν ὁσάκις ἂν ἐπιῶ τὸ σύγγραμμα, θαυμαστὴ τις περὶ ἐμῆ διάθεσις γίνεται, καὶ τις ὀμφή με θεῖα περιχέεται κατὰ τὴν ποιήσιν. εἰ δὲ μὴ μόνον τὸ πάθος ἐμοῦ καὶ περὶ ἕτερον δ’ ἂν ταῦτα γένοιτο, σὺ καὶ τοῦτο μὴνύσεις. σὺ γὰρ δὴ μετ’ ἐμὲ πρώτη τῶν Ἑλλήνων ἐντεύξῃ.

he is seeking some way of accommodating such beliefs within a system acceptable to himself as a philosopher.<sup>9</sup>

We are of course not bound to accept his statement that the book was written in one night. This may be true; but it is safer to say that it is written in such a way as to make us believe it a hasty, almost improvised, composition. The signs of this are the fluidity of the argument (which makes any kind of ‘table of contents’ quite difficult to draw up) and the occurrence of figures of self-correction or statements like “I nearly forgot to say” (144C, 147A). Nevertheless, we must attempt a summary.

#### 4.

The Preface (*protheoria*) should be considered in the light of the letter to Hypatia. It makes two claims. The first is that it is written in the high classical style (εις τὸν ἀρχαῖον τρόπον ἐξήσκηται). This is justified so far as syntax and vocabulary are concerned, so long as Plutarch and Dio are accepted as classics. In prose rhythm, however, Synesius is of his own time: he has accentual clausulae, with a preference for leaving an even number of unaccented syllables between the last two accents of a sentence or colon-unit. His second claim is that the book exemplifies the treatment (attributed to Plato) of a serious subject in the guise of something more trivial. This is more difficult to validate. Dreams are a serious subject; philosophers of all schools paid them much attention. But there is undoubtedly a wide gap in ‘seriousness’ between Synesius’ account of the practical use of dreams to himself, as writer or as hunter, and the elaborate metaphysical themes involved in his account of φαντασία and of the soul’s ‘spiritual’ vehicle. Thus the real weight of the book may be said to lie outside its ostensible subject.

#### 5.

A ‘table of contents’.<sup>10</sup>

(i) 130C–133C (ch. 1–3): an introductory section.

Dreams are of course difficult to interpret. All knowledge of the future is hard to get, as are all valuable things. Only a few can achieve it. Zeus’ superiority is due to his wisdom and knowledge, not to brute strength: and it is in knowledge that the wise man can become akin to god.

Prophecy is therefore a great good. It depends on the connection between all parts of the kosmos, which is a living being. To read the signs is like reading a special kind of writing: astrology, augury, extispicy are

<sup>9</sup> See GERTZ below, p. 114 and n. 13.

<sup>10</sup> The divisions here suggested are also indicated in the translation.



all ways of knowing the future. If birds had reason, they would study our movements as we study theirs. All things are linked together, and if any one part of the universe is affected, other parts, not necessarily close at hand, are affected in sympathy – like the strings of a lyre which vibrate when one is struck. The kosmos is a unity made of many things: and both the unity and the multiplicity contribute to the possibility of prophecy, and also to that of magic. Both these depend on “using the kosmos against itself”; what is outside the kosmos, pure Intelligence, is immune. Magic (*teletai*) is a theme proscribed by law; but prophecy is a proper topic to discuss.

(ii) 133C–D. A transitional passage: having completed the ‘encomium’ of prophecy in general, we turn to dreams in particular. They are of course obscure: but so are oracles; this is not a special fault of dreams.

(iii) 134A–142D (ch. 4–10): the main theoretical discussion of *phantasia*.

(a) Starting from the proposition (of which he gives a formal proof) that Soul holds forms of “things that come to be”, just as *nous* holds those of “things that are”, Synesius proceeds to assert that Soul “projects” only those forms that are “relevant” (προσήκοντα),<sup>11</sup> and causes them to be reflected in *phantasia*,<sup>12</sup> which is the faculty by which we apprehend what is present in the soul. This produces a kind of parallel life of sensation (we seem to see, hear, and touch in our dreams) which is perhaps a specially privileged kind of sense, which may bring us into contact with gods, and bring us many practical advantages in life, though these are insignificant compared with the possibility of a vision that takes us beyond Nature and unites us with the Intellegible. That this is indeed possible is shown by a text of the *Chaldaean Oracles* which distinguishes teaching from revelation in sleep as a means of providing for the soul’s “ascent” (135B).

(b) This argument refutes those who deny any value to the life of *phantasia*: they are people who neglect the *Oracles*’ prohibition of sacrifice and extispicy, and despise dream-divination because it is available to all. In fact, *phantasia* is superior to the senses; it is an activity of the *phantastikon pneuma*, the first “vehicle” of the soul, and the immediate perception it provides is more “divine” than what the senses give us (136B).

(c) However, just as the senses are sometimes defective, so the *pneuma* also may become bleary or dim and require purification: the “secret philosophy” teaches this. It may however be kept pure by “life according to nature”, because (unlike the body) it varies in quality according to the goodness or badness of the soul. It is a sort of ‘no-man’s-land’ (μεταίχμιον) between the bodily and the incorporeal, and forms a link between the two (137B).

<sup>11</sup> See below, p. 62 n. 39 and SHEPPARD, p. 103.

<sup>12</sup> Reading τῆ φαντασίᾳ at 134B = 150,6 TERZAGHI.

(d) This *phantastikon pneuma* is not confined to humans: it exists in animals, where it functions as reason (*logos*), and it is the substance of whole classes of *daimones*, while in humanity it generally operates in cooperation with *nous* (137C). It can actually become a *daimon* or a god, and it is with the soul after death. It may be light and so rise, or dense and damp and so sink into darkness. The soul acquires it in her descent through the spheres, and it is her “vehicle” (*ochēma*). Indeed, they are almost indissolubly joined, and it may either drag the soul down or itself be raised by her (138D).

(e) The conjunction of body and soul means that even *nous* may be corrupted by the pleasures of the body. Purification needs Will, for without this no rituals can be effective. What are regarded as misfortunes may also be part of our purification, while good fortune may be a trap set by the rulers of the world below. What is certain is that the sweetness of this life is the “draught of forgetfulness” which leads the soul not only to fulfil her due obligation of earthly life but to fall in love with it and make a contract with Nature (or Matter) which Nature will try to enforce. The fate of the soul that does not make a successful effort to “return” is error and misery (140B).

(f) To return to the *pneuma* (140C): It has an immense range, extending from the darkness of the material world to the neighbourhood of the outermost circle of the heaven. The *Oracles* appear to say that the soul takes with her on her return ascent not only the *pneuma* itself but the particles of fire and air which were attracted to it in the descent (141B).

(g) Whether this is a correct interpretation or not, the *pneuma*, the “bodily substance” which came with the soul from on high, surely does return with her also. But between the “darkness” and the “light” there are many intermediate states, where the *pneuma* will be cloudy and the soul no true prophetess. How can we ensure that our own visions are true? By living as far as possible an ‘intellectual’ life, since this refines and lightens the *pneuma* and ensures that it occupies the bodily space (in the brain) intended for it: if it did not fill this, a worse *pneuma* might enter (142D).

(iv) Synesius now returns to the usefulness of dreams: the whole study of *phantasia* was in aid of this main theme. In fact, the practical use of our prophetic *phantasia* is far less than its power to raise the soul to higher things. A pure and simple life helps. The cultivation of this capacity does not make the soul less attentive to ordinary concerns, but more so. And the preparation is not elaborate: wash your hands, keep reverent silence, and go to sleep. No special expense, no elaborate apparatus, no class distinctions, no time taken from other occupations. It is very different from the elaborate magic, which is against the law, and which it is impossible to practice without a lot of equipment. Your private oracle, your dreams, is immune from the tyrant’s ban (145D).

(v) So let us all practice this way of telling the future. It is akin to hope, but it is hope guaranteed by God. It is of course possible to misunderstand a dream, as Penelope and Agamemnon did. The *dream* was not to blame.

So ends the 'encomium' (147D).

(vi) Dreams have helped me personally – in philosophy, in writing, and in hunting, and even when I was threatened by magicians in the time of my embassy to the emperor (148D).

(vii) When she is free of the distractions of the senses, the soul presents to us the Forms she holds and brings us messages from the divine. Such dreams are plain, but generally they come only to those who live virtuously (149B).

(viii) Another type of dream, the enigmatic, needs skilled interpretation. It is produced by the images (*eidōla*) emitted from all things (past and future as well as present), when these find rest in a soul's *pneuma*. The *pneuma* must be made ready to receive them, by philosophy and sober living. There is an art to be learned, a matter of observation and memory, like the skills of navigation or foretelling the weather (151B).

(ix) Books that collect and generalize such observations are ridiculous. One *pneuma* differs from another in its celestial origin, and it is impossible to state general rules about the significance of any particular appearance (152C).

(x) Consequently, each individual should study his own dreams and their sequels, and keep records of them. Indeed, this would be a very challenging literary task, because dreams are so inconsequential and not fettered by time or place. They contain all kinds of wonders. The animal fable perhaps developed from recollection of dreams. Making a record is not only useful in stimulating our power of prophecy, it could be the supreme exercise of the rhetorician's art – much better than declaiming imaginary cases! It would bring true literary fame.

## 6.

The text of Synesius has been well studied, and the editions of Terzaghi (1944), Garzya (1999), Susanetti (1992) and Lamoureaux-Aujoulat (2004) give ample information. The present text differs from Terzaghi's in a few places, usually from conjecture; these are listed in the textual notes, and the more important of them are discussed in the main notes. We have also followed Terzaghi's chapter-divisions, which other recent editions also use. The fluidity of the argument, however, makes any division somewhat arbitrary. Fitzgerald's translation (the only previous English version) followed Petavius' scheme, as does much earlier work, while Krabinger (1850) chose yet another way of dividing the text up. The safest way to refer to Syne-

sus is not by chapters but by the pages of Petavius' second edition (1633) which are marked in the margin of most modern editions, including ours.

## 7.

Sigla:

A:	cod. Laur. LV. 6, saec. XI
C:	cod. Laur. LXXX. 19, saec. XII
o:	cod. Par. gr. 1039, saec. XII – XIV
s:	cod. Par. Coislinianus 249, saec. XII – XIII
B:	cod. Vat. graec. 91, saec. XI – XIII
recc.:	later mss or early editions
Pet. I:	Petavius 1612
Krab.:	Krabinger 1850

Conjectures not assigned have been made independently. We record here all significant divergences from the text of Terzaghi and Garzya: we use Terzaghi's symbols.

131D	μαντεϊάν Krabinger
132C	ὄλου μέρη C ὡσπερ γὰρ A C o
133D	ὅτι <γὰρ> τὸ ξύλινον Lang
134A	μαντειῶν
134B	ἐνοπτρίζει τῇ φαντασίᾳ s
136B	{ή} θειοτέρα
136C	μείζω ταῦτὰ C <sup>2</sup> {αὐτὸ τὸ ὄμμα}
136D	πρὸς αὐτήν C
137B	ὁ πολλά
137C	ἄνθρωποι δὲ τὰ πολλά κατ' αὐτήν ἤ
138A	ἀμφίβιος
139C	ἐθελοντήν cf. 145B
140A	φθάνουσιν recc.
140D	σκύβαλον κρημνῶ Krab. (Psellus)
141A	ἐν γειτόνων
141D	ἐνάργειαν ο C
142A	ἐμπαθῆ recc. σίραιον] συρρέον Pet. I (see note ad loc.)
142B	ὀχῆματι Sorabji (cf. the opposite corruption in 137A)

- 143A ἀντὶ φλεγμαινούσης  
 144A πραγματευσαμένοις  
 144B συλλέγεται ... ὑπὸ τῶν τεχνιτευόντων recc. (see  
 note ad loc.)  
 145B ὡς <δ'> ἔγωγε  
 146B ἀπαγορεύειν γὰρ <ἄν>  
 147C περὶ τῆς ὄψεως C  
 147D ταῦτα μικρὸν recc., edd.  
 148B ἐμπεφυκότας τῇ γλώττῃ  
 150A ἐπὶ τὸ μέλλον recc., edd.  
 150C ταῦτά τῶν αὐτῶν C  
 152B τις Μελάμπους ο, Krab.  
 ὅπως ποτε ἔχοντι  
 152C τὸ προεκθορὸν τοῦ πράγατος  
 ἐλεῖν <ἐν> ἐν  
 ἐν ἐκάστῳ τόπῳ A C ο  
 153A οὕτως ἂν εἰς  
 153D οὔτε σὺν χρόνῳ recc., edd.  
 154A {αἰ} συχναῖ  
 155C ἔφασαν codd. (see note)  
 156C τὴν παραινουμένην (see note)

Each of these textual variants is marked by an asterisk in the Greek text.

*B. Text, Translation and Notes*

## ΠΕΡΙ ΕΝΥΠΝΙΩΝ

### ΠΡΟΘΕΩΡΙΑ

Ἀρχαῖον οἶμαι καὶ λίαν Πλατωνικὸν ὑπὸ προσχήματι 130A  
φαιλοτέρας ὑποθέσεως κρύπτειν τὰ ἐν φιλοσοφίᾳ σπουδαῖα,  
τοῦ μῆτε τὰ μόλις εὐρεθέντα πάλιν ἐξ ἀνθρώπων ἀπόλλυσθαι, B  
μῆτε μολύνεσθαι δήμοις βεβήλοις ἐκκείμενα. τοῦτο τοίνυν ἐξη-  
λώθη μὲν ὅτι μάλιστα τῷ παρόντι συγγράμματι· εἰ δὲ καὶ τού-  
του τυγχάνει καὶ τὰ ἄλλα περιττῶς εἰς τὸν ἀρχαῖον τρόπον  
ἐξήσκηται, ἐπιγνοῖεν ἂν οἱ μετὰ φιλοσόφου φύσεως αὐτῷ συνε- C  
σόμενοι.

## ΠΕΡΙ ΕΝΥΠΝΙΩΝ

(1) Εἰ δὲ εἰσιν ὕπνοι προφηταί, καὶ τὰ ὄναρ θεάματα τοῖς  
ἀνθρώποις ὀρέγουσι τῶν ὕπαρ ἐσομένων αἰνίγματα, σοφοὶ μὲν  
ἂν εἶεν, σαφεῖς δὲ οὐκ ἂν εἶεν, ἢ σοφὸν αὐτῶν καὶ τὸ μὴ σαφές- 131A  
κρύψαντες γὰρ ἔχουσι θεοὶ βίον ἀνθρώποισιν. ἀπόνως μὲν γε  
τῶν μεγίστων τυγχάνειν θεῖόν ἐστιν ἀγαθόν· ἀνθρώποις δὲ οὐκ  
ἄρα ἀρετῆς μόνον, ἀλλὰ καὶ πάντων καλῶν ἰδρῶτα θεοὶ προ-  
πάροιθεν ἔθηκαν. μαντεία δὲ ἀγαθῶν ἂν εἴη τὸ μέγιστον· τῷ  
μὲν γὰρ εἰδέναι, καὶ ὅλως τῷ γνωστικῷ τῆς δυνάμεως, θεὸς τε  
ἀνθρώπου καὶ ἀνθρώπος διαφέρει θηρίου.

Ἀλλὰ θεῶ μὲν εἰς τὸ γινώσκειν ἢ φύσις ἀρκεῖ· ἀπὸ δὲ μαν- B  
τείας ἀνθρώπῳ πολλαπλάσιον παραγίνεται τοῦ τῆ κοινῆ φύσει  
προσηκόντος. ὁ γὰρ πολὺς τὸ παρὸν μόνον οἶδε, περὶ δὲ τοῦ  
μήπω γενομένου στοχάζεται· ὁ δὲ Κάλχας εἰς ἄρα ἐν ἐκκλησίᾳ  
τῶν Πανελλήνων μόνος ἠπίστατο τὰ τ' ἐόντα, τὰ τ' ἐσόμενα,  
πρὸ τ' ἐόντα.

Καὶ Ὀμήρῳ δὲ ἄρα διὰ τοῦτο τῆς τοῦ Διὸς γνώμης ἐξήπται  
τὰ τῶν θεῶν πράγματα, ὅτι πρότερος γέγονει καὶ πλείονα οἶδεν,  
αὐτῷ δήπου τῷ πρεσβύτερος εἶναι. καὶ γὰρ τὴν ἡλικίαν εἰς  
τοῦτο οἶμαι συντείνειν τοῖς ἔπεσιν, ὅτι συμβαίνει διὰ τὸν χρό- C  
νον πλείω γινώσκειν, ἐπεὶ τὸ γινώσκειν ἦν ἄρα τὸ τιμιώτατον.  
εἰ δὲ τις ὑφ' ἐτέρων ἐπῶν ἀναπειθεται τὴν ἡγεμονίαν τοῦ Διὸς  
χειρῶν ἰσχὺν εἶναι λογίζεσθαι, ὅτι, φησί, βίη δ' ὄγε φέρτερος  
ἦεν, οὗτος φορτικῶς ὠμίλησε τῆ ποιήσει, καὶ ἀνήκοός ἐστι τῆς  
κατ' αὐτὴν φιλοσοφίας, τοὺς θεοὺς οὐδὲν ἄλλο ἢ νοὺς λεγού-  
σης. ταῦτη τοι προσπερονᾷ πάλιν τῷ κατ' ἀλκὴν περιεῖναι τὸ  
καὶ γενεῆ πρότερος, τὸν Δία νοῦν λέγων ἀρχεγονώτερον· νοῦ  
δὲ ἰσχὺς τί ἂν ἄλλο ἢ φρόνησις εἴη; καὶ ὅστις οὖν θεὸς ὦν ἀρ- D

*On Dreams*

Preface<sup>1</sup>

[130A] It is, I believe, an ancient practice, and a truly Platonic one, to conceal serious philosophical matters under cover of some more trivial theme,<sup>2</sup> so that hard-won discoveries [B] may not again be lost to humanity, but yet not be defiled by exposure to the profane vulgar.<sup>3</sup> This has been very much my aim in the present work. Whether it achieves this object and is moreover well crafted in the ancient style, is for readers of a philosophical [C] cast of mind to judge.

(i)<sup>4</sup>

1. If the experiences of sleep have prophetic power, and dream<sup>5</sup> visions offer humans enigmatic hints of what is to come in their waking lives, they may indeed be wise, but they would not be clear;<sup>6</sup> or perhaps their obscurity is itself wisdom; [131A] 'for the gods have hidden life from men.'<sup>7</sup> To win the greatest things without effort is a divine privilege;<sup>8</sup> for humans, 'the gods have set sweat' not only before 'virtue'<sup>9</sup> but before all good things. And divination is perhaps the greatest of goods. It is by knowing and in general by cognitive capacity that God is superior to man, and man to beast.

But whereas, for God, nature suffices for knowledge, [B] man acquires from divination knowledge many times greater than what is appropriate to his common nature. The ordinary man knows only the present; he can only guess about what has not yet come to pass. Thus Calchas<sup>10</sup> was the only man in the assembly of all the Greeks who understood 'what is, what will be, and what was before'.<sup>11</sup>

So for Homer too the affairs of the gods depend on the will of Zeus because 'he was born first and knew more'<sup>12</sup> – 'knew more' just because he was older, of course. For I think that the reference to age in these lines alludes to the fact that [C] knowing more things comes in the course of time; for knowledge, after all, is the thing that is most honoured. If, however, anyone is persuaded, on the strength of other passages, to regard the hegemony of Zeus as the strength of his hands – because 'in force he was stronger'<sup>13</sup> –, then he has been a very bad student of the poem, and has no understanding of the philosophy in it, which tells us that the gods are simply Minds.<sup>14</sup> Similarly, in another passage,<sup>15</sup> he tacks the phrase 'earlier born' on to Zeus' superiority in strength, meaning by 'Zeus' a more primordial Mind.<sup>16</sup> And what can strength of Mind be but



χειν ἀξιοῦται θεῶν, νοῦς ὧν, σοφίας περιουσία κρατεῖ, ὥστε καὶ τὸ βίη δ' ὄγε φέρτερος εἰς ταῦτ' ἡμῖν τῷ πλείονα οἶδεν ἀνακάμπτει καὶ περιόσεται. διὰ τοῦτο καὶ ὁ σοφὸς οἰκείος θεῶ, ὅτι πειροᾶται σύνεγγυς εἶναι τῇ γνώσει, καὶ πραγματεύεται περὶ νόησιν, ἢ τὸ θεῖον οὐσίωται.

(2) Αὐταὶ μὲν ἀποδείξεις ἔστων τοῦ μαντεῖαν\* ἐν τοῖς ἀρίστοις εἶναι τῶν ἐπιτηδευομένων ἀνθρώποις. εἰ δὲ σημαίνει μὲν διὰ πάντων πάντα, ἅτε ἀδελφῶν ὄντων τῶν ἐν ἐνὶ ζῳῷ, τῷ κόσμῳ, καὶ ἔστι ταῦτα γράμματα παντοδαπά, καθάπερ ἐν βιβλίῳ τοῖς οὔσι, τὰ μὲν Φοινίκια, τὰ δὲ Αἰγύπτια, καὶ ἄλλα Ἀσσύρια, ἀναγινώσκει δὲ ὁ σοφὸς (σοφὸς δὲ ὁ φύσει μαθὼν) καὶ ἄλλος ἄλλα, καὶ ὁ μὲν μᾶλλον, ὁ δὲ ἥττον, ὥσπερ ὁ μὲν κατὰ συλλαβὰς, ὁ δὲ ἀθρόαν τὴν λέξιν, ὁ δὲ τὸν λόγον ὁμοῦ, οὕτως ὁρῶσι σοφοὶ τὸ μέλλον, οἱ μὲν ἄστρα εἰδότες (ἄλλος τὰ μένοντα, καὶ ἄλλος τὰ πυρσὰ τὰ διάττοντα), οἱ δὲ ἐν σπλάγχχοις αὐτὰ ἀναγνόντες, οἱ δὲ ἐν ὀρνίθων κλαγγαῖς καὶ καθέδραις καὶ πτήσεσι τοῖς δὲ καὶ τὰ καλούμενα σύμβολα τῶν ἐσομένων ἐστὶν ἀριδηλὰ γράμματα, φωναὶ τε καὶ συγκυρήσεις ἐπ' ἄλλω γενόμεναι, σημαντικῶν ὄντων ἅπασιν πάντων, ὥστ' εἰ σοφία παρ' ὀρνισιν ἦν, τέχνην ἂν ἐξ ἀνθρώπων, ὥσπερ ἡμεῖς ἐξ αὐτῶν, ἐπὶ τὸ ἐσόμενον συνεστήσαντο. καὶ γὰρ ἡμεῖς ἐκεῖνοις, ὥσπερ ἡμῖν ἐκεῖνοι, πάννιοι καὶ προπάλαιοι καὶ πανδέξιοι.

Ἔδει γὰρ, οἶμαι, τοῦ παντὸς τούτου συμπαθοῦς τε ὄντος καὶ σύμπνου τὰ μέλη προσήκειν ἀλλήλοις, ἅτε ἐνὸς ὄλου μέρη\* τυγχάνοντα. καὶ μὴ ποτε αἱ μάγων ἰυγγες αὐταὶ· καὶ γὰρ θέλγεται παρ' ἀλλήλων ὥσπερ σημαίνεται· καὶ σοφὸς ὁ εἰδὼς τὴν τῶν μερῶν τοῦ κόσμου συγγένειαν. ἔλκει γὰρ ἄλλο δι' ἄλλου, ἔχων ἐνέχυρα παρ-όντα τῶν πλείστον ἀπόντων, καὶ φωνὰς καὶ ὕλας καὶ σχήματα· ὥσπερ γὰρ\* ἐν ἡμῖν σπλάγχχνου παθόντος ἄλλο συμπέπονθε καὶ τὸ τοῦ δακτύλου κακὸν εἰς τὸν βουβῶνα ἀπερείδεται, πολλῶν τῶν μεταξὺ μὴ παθόντων (ἐνὸς γὰρ ἦν ἀμφω ζῶου, καὶ ἔστιν αὐτοῖς τι μᾶλλον ἐτέρων πρὸς ἄλληλα) καὶ δὴ καὶ θεῶ τινι τῶν εἴσω τοῦ κόσμου λίθος ἐνθένδε καὶ βοτάνη προσήκει, οἷς ὁμοιοπαθῶν εἴκει τῇ φύσει καὶ γοητεύεται, ὥσπερ ὁ τὴν ὑπάτην ψήλας οὐ τὴν παρ' αὐτὴν, τὴν ἐπόγδοον, ἀλλὰ τὴν ἐπιτρίτην καὶ τὴν νήτην ἐκίνησεν.

wisdom? So whatever [D] god is judged fit to rule over gods, being a Mind, prevails by the superiority of his wisdom, so that the phrase ‘in force he was stronger’ turns out for us to be equivalent to ‘he knows more things’. For this reason also, the wise man is akin to god, because he tries to be near him in knowledge, and devotes himself to thought (*noēsis*), in which the divine has its existence.

2. Let these arguments stand as proofs that prophecy is among the best of human pursuits. But if it gives signs of all things through the medium of all [132A] things (because all things which are within that single living thing which is the kosmos<sup>17</sup> are akin), and if these signs are, as it were, different kinds of writings in the book of existence – Phoenician, Egyptian or Assyrian<sup>18</sup> –, and if moreover a wise man reads them (and the wise man is he who understands by nature<sup>19</sup>), and one <wise man> learns one sort of writing and another another, and one better and one less well (just as some read syllable by syllable, some word by word, some taking in the whole context) – then, in the same way, wise men see the future, some by knowing the stars (fixed stars or shooting fires<sup>20</sup>), [B] some by reading signs in entrails, others in the cries, perches or flight of birds. To some again, what are called ‘symbols’ are clear writings of the future – voices and encounters which had quite other intentions. All things have significance for all: if birds had wisdom, they would have constructed an art for knowing the future based on observing humans, as we do by observing them. We would have been to them, as they are to us, wholly young, wholly old, and wholly competent.<sup>21</sup>

It was necessary, I believe, that the limbs of this universe (*kosmos*), which feels and breathes as one, should belong to one another as parts of a [C] single whole. This may explain the bird-charms (*iynges*)<sup>22</sup> of the magicians. For <such parts> are attracted as well as signalled, by one another, and the man who knows the kinship of the parts of the kosmos is wise, for he can attract one by means of another, having what is at hand as a pledge of what is far away, be it voice or matter or form. For,<sup>23</sup> just as in us, when our bowels are affected, other organs are affected too, and a pain in the finger extends to the groin, though all the parts between are unaffected<sup>24</sup> [D] (because both belong to the same living being and there is a special relationship between them), so likewise a stone or a herb in our world may belong to some one of the gods in the kosmos,<sup>25</sup> who, in sympathy with it, yields to its nature and is charmed. Similarly, one who strikes the lowest string (*hyapatē*) <of the lyre>, sets in motion not the string next to it, the *epogdoos*, but the *epitritē* and the *nētē*.<sup>26</sup>

Τοῦτο μὲν ἤδη τῆς προγενεστέρας ἐστὶν ὁμοιοῖας· ἔστι γάρ τις ὡς ἐν συγγενείᾳ τοῖς μέρεσι καὶ διχόνοια· οὐ γὰρ ἐστὶν ὁ κόσμος τὸ ἀπλῶς ἓν, ἀλλὰ τὸ ἐκ πολλῶν ἓν. καὶ ἔστιν ἐν αὐτῷ 133A  
μέρη μέρεσι προσήγορα καὶ μαχόμενα, καὶ τῆς στάσεως αὐτῶν εἰς τὴν τοῦ παντὸς ὁμόνοιαν συμφωνούσης, ὡσπερ ἡ λύρα σύστημα φθόγγων ἐστὶν ἀντιφώνων τε καὶ συμφώνων· τὸ δ' ἐξ ἀντικειμένων ἓν ἄρμονία καὶ λύρας καὶ κόσμου.

(3) Ἀρχιμήδης μὲν οὖν ὁ Σικελὸς ἤτει χωρίον ἔξω τῆς γῆς, ὡς ἑαυτὸν ἀντιταλαντεύσων ὅλη τῇ γῆ· ἐν αὐτῇ γὰρ ὦν οὐκ ἔχειν ἔφη δύναμιν πρὸς αὐτήν. ὁ δὲ ὅτιοῦν περὶ τὴν φύσιν τοῦ κόσμου σοφός, ἔξω τεθείς, οὐκ ἂν ἔτ' ἔχοι τῇ σοφίᾳ τι χρήσασθαι· αὐτῷ γὰρ ἐπ' αὐτὸν χρῆται. διεσπασμένης οὖν τῆς συνε- B  
χείας μάτην ἂν ἴδοι, καὶ ἄψυχα ἂν κατασημαίνοιτο σύμβολα. καὶ ὅσον γὰρ ἔξω τοῦ κόσμου θεῖόν ἐστιν, ἅπαν ἐστὶν ἀγοήτευτον· ... ὁ δ' ἀφήμενος οὐκ ἀλεγίξει, / οὐδ' ὄθεται. ἡ γὰρ νοῦ φύσις ἀμείλικτος· τὸ δὲ παθητικόν ἐστὶ τὸ θελγόμενον. τὸ μὲν δὴ πλάτος ἐν τε μαντείαις καὶ τελεταῖς ἢ τῶν ἐν κόσμῳ παρέχεται C  
πληθὺς καὶ συγγένεια, διαστάντων μὲν ἢ πληθὺς, ἑνὸς δὲ ὄντων συγγένεια. καὶ τελετὰς μὲν ἀλλὰ μὴδὲ ὁ λόγος κι-νεῖται, νόμῳ πολιτείας πειθόμενος· μαντικὴν δὲ ἀνεμέσητον ἀποδέ- ξασθαι.

Καὶ δὴ τὸ ὅλον αὐτῆς ἐκ τῶν ἐνότων ἐγκεχωμίασται. τὸ δὲ νῦν ἔχον ἔστι τὴν ἀρίστην ἀποτεμόμενον ἐμφιλοχωρησαὶ τῷ περὶ αὐτὴν σκέμματι, χαρακτηῖρα κοινὸν ἐπὶ πάσαις ἔχοντα τὴν ἀσάφειαν, ὡς μηδεμιᾶς ἀξιοῦν ἔλεγχον εἶναι τὸ ἐν ὀλοκλήρῳ τῇ φύσει θεωρούμενον. ὁ δὲ λόγος ἐδείκνυ καὶ τοῦτο σεμνόν, ὡσπερ ἐν τελεταῖς τὸ ἀπόρητον. οὕτως οὐδὲ τὰ χρηστήρια D  
πᾶσι συνετὰ φθέγγεται, καὶ Λοξίας ἐκείθεν ὁ Πυθοῖ χρησιμώδης· ὅτι «γὰρ» τὸ ξύλινον\* τεῖχος, ὃ τοῖς Ἀθηναίοις ὁ θεὸς ἐδίδου σωτήριον, μάτην ἂν ἤκουσεν ἐκκλησιάζων ὁ δῆμος, εἰ μὴ Θεμιστοκλῆς ἀνέγνω τοῦ χρησιμοῦ τὴν διάνοιαν. ὥστε οὐδὲ ἐνταῦθά γε ἀπόβλητος ἢ διὰ τῶν ὑπνῶν ἂν εἴη μαντεία, κοινήν ἔχουσα πρὸς τε τὰ ἄλλα καὶ πρὸς τοὺς χρησμούς τὴν ἐπίκρου- ψιν.

This is an effect of the original<sup>27</sup> concord. There is also a discord between the parts, as in a kinship, because the kosmos is not the absolute One, [133A] but the One made up of many.<sup>28</sup> There are within it parts both according with and conflicting with other parts, their dissonance actually contributing to the concord of the whole, just as a lyre is a system of discordant and concordant sounds.<sup>29</sup> The One consisting of opposites constitutes a harmony, both in the lyre and in the kosmos.

3. The Sicilian Archimedes<sup>30</sup> asked for a place outside the earth, so as to balance himself against the whole earth, because (he said) he had no power over it so long as he was on it. But anyone who is in any way wise about the nature of the kosmos could make no use of that wisdom if he were placed outside it. He uses the kosmos against itself. His connection with it once shattered, [B] he will see in vain, the signs he points out<sup>31</sup> will have no power. Whatever divinity there is outside the kosmos is immune to magic: 'he sits apart and neither heeds nor cares.'<sup>32</sup> For it is the nature of Mind to be inflexible; it is what is capable of being affected that is subject to magic. Thus the scope of prophecies and rituals (*teletai*) is [C] assured by the multitude and the kinship of the parts of the kosmos – by their multitude because they are separated, by their kinship because they are One. As to rituals – well, let our argument comply with the laws of the country,<sup>33</sup> and leave them undisturbed; but there can be no harm in its taking on divination.

## (ii)

Now divination in general has already received its meed of praise, so far as our means have allowed: our present task is to isolate the best form of divination and concentrate our enquiry on this, remembering that obscurity is a common characteristic of all its forms, and so not regarding a feature observed over the whole field as invalidating any one of them. The argument indeed showed that obscurity too has its nobility, like the secrecy in rituals. [D] Oracles too do not utter what is comprehensible to all, and the oracle-giver at Delphi is 'Loxias',<sup>34</sup> because the assembled people would have heard without understanding of the 'wooden wall', which the god was offering the Athenians as their salvation, had not Themistocles<sup>35</sup> read aright the meaning of the oracle. Here also, therefore, divination by dreams ought not to be rejected for its obscurity, since this is something it shares with other forms, including oracles.

(4) Ἐπιθετέον δὲ μάλιστα μαντειῶν\* ταύτη, ὅτι παρ' ἡμῶν 134A  
 αὕτη, καὶ ἔνδοθεν, καὶ ἰδία τῆς ἐκάστου ψυχῆς. νοῦς μὲν γὰρ  
 ἔχει τὰ εἶδη τῶν ὄντων, ἀρχαία φιλοσοφία φησί. προσθειήμεν δ'  
 ἂν ἡμεῖς, ὅτι καὶ τῶν γινομένων ψυχῆ, ἐπειδὴ λόγος ἐστὶ νῶ  
 πρὸς ψυχὴν, ὅστις τῶ ὄντι πρὸς τὸ γινόμενον. ἐναλλάξ οὖν  
 πρῶτῳ πρὸς τρίτον, καὶ δευτέρῳ πρὸς τέταρτον· καὶ ἀνάπαλιν  
 λαβόντες, οὐδὲν ἤττον ἂν ἀληθεύοιμεν ὅροις ἐπιστήμης ἐπόμε-  
 νοι. οὕτως ἂν ἀποδεδειγμένον εἴη τὸ ὑφ' ἡμῶν ἀξιούμενον, ὅτι B  
 τὰ εἶδη τῶν γινομένων ἔχει ψυχῆ· ἔχει μὲν οὖν πάντα, προβάλλ-  
 λει δὲ τὰ προσήκοντα, καὶ ἐνοπτρίζει τῇ φαντασίᾳ\*, δι' ἧς τὴν  
 ἀντίληψιν τῶν ἐκεῖ μενόντων ἴσχει τὸ ζῶον.

Ὡσπερ οὖν οὐδὲ τοῦ νοῦ τῶν ἐνεργειῶν ἐπαῖομεν, πρὶν τῶ  
 κοινῶ τὴν ἐπιστατικὴν δύναμιν ἀπαγγεῖλαι, καὶ τὸ μὴ εἰς ἐκεί-  
 νην ἦκον λανθάνει τὸ ζῶον, οὕτως οὐδὲ τῶν ἐν τῇ πρώτῃ ψυχῇ  
 τὴν ἀντίληψιν ἴσχομεν, πρὶν εἰς φαντασίαν ἦκειν αὐτῶν ἐκμα-  
 γεία. καὶ εἰσκειν αὕτη ζωὴ τις εἶναι μικρὸν ὑποβάσα, καὶ ἐν ιδιό- C  
 τητι φύσεως σταῖσα. αἰσθητήριά γέ τοι πάρεστι κατ' αὐτήν· καὶ  
 γὰρ χρώματα ὁρῶμεν, καὶ ψόφων ἀκούομεν, καὶ ἀφῆς  
 πληκτικωτάτην ἀντίληψιν ἴσχομεν, ἀν-ενεργήτων ὄντων τῶν  
 ὀργανικῶν μορίων τοῦ σώματος.

Καὶ μὴ ποτε ἱερώτερον τοῦτο γένος αἰσθήσεως. κατ' αὐτό  
 γέ τοι καὶ θεοῖς τὰ πολλὰ συγγινόμεθα νουθετοῦσι καὶ χρώσι  
 καὶ τᾶλλα προμηθευμένοις. ὥστε εἰ μὲν τῶ γέγονε θησαυρὸς  
 ὕπνου δῶρον, οὐκ ἐν θαυμαστοῖς ἄγω· οὐδ' εἰ τις καταδαρθῶν D  
 ἄμουσος, ἔπειτα ἐντυχῶν ὄναρ ταῖς μούσαις, καὶ τὰ μὲν εἰπῶν,  
 τὰ δὲ ἀκούσας, ποιητῆς ἐστὶ δεξιός, ὥσπερ ὁ καθ' ἡμᾶς χρόνος  
 ἦνεγκεν, οὐδὲ τοῦτο τῶν λίσαν ἐστὶ παραδόξων. ἐῶ δ' ἔγωγε καὶ  
 ἐπιβουλάς καταμηνηυθείσας, καὶ ὅσοις ὕπνος ἰατρὸς ἐξάντη τὴν  
 νόσον ἐποίησεν· ἀλλ' ὅταν εἰς τὰς τελεωτάτας τῶν ὄντων ἐπ-  
 οψίας ὁδὸν ἀνοίξῃ τῇ ψυχῇ τῇ μὴ ὀρεχθείσῃ ποτέ, μηδὲ εἰς νοῦν  
 βαλομένη τὴν ἄνοδον, τοῦτο ἂν εἴη τὸ ἐν τοῖς οὔσι κορυφαί- 135A  
 ον, φύσεως ὑπερκύψαι, καὶ συνάψαι τῶ νοητῶ τὸν ἐς τοσοῦ-  
 το πεπλανημένον, ὡς μὴ ὄθεν ἦλθεν εἰδέναι.

Εἰ δέ τις μέγα μὲν οἶεται τὴν ἀναγωγὴν, φαντασίᾳ δὲ ἀπι-  
 στεῖ, μὴ τοι καὶ κατ' αὐτήν ποτε πορισθῆναι τὴν εὐδαίμονα συν-

(iii) a

4. [134A] We must devote ourselves to this form of divination<sup>36</sup> in particular, because it comes from ourselves and from within, and is peculiar to each individual's soul. Mind contains the forms of things that are, says ancient philosophy; we may add that Soul contains those of things that come to be,<sup>37</sup> since the relation of Mind to Soul is the same as that of Being to Becoming. So, *permutando*, taking the first term <of the proportion> with the third and the second with the fourth, and then reversing the pairs, we shall reach an equally true conclusion, following the rules of science.<sup>38</sup> [B] By this means, we shall have given a proof of our postulate, that Soul contains the forms of things that come to be. It does indeed contain them all, but it projects<sup>39</sup> only those that are relevant, and produces a reflection of them in the imagination, which is the faculty by which the living being acquires an apprehension of things which abide there.<sup>40</sup>

So, just as we are not aware even of the activities of the Mind until the controlling faculty has reported them to our common consciousness, and what does not reach that faculty escapes the living being's notice, so likewise we do not have any apprehension of what is in the First Soul until impressions<sup>41</sup> of this reach the imagination. This would seem [C] to be a life on a slightly lower level, standing at a special place in nature. There are indeed sense-organs corresponding to it, for we see colours, hear sounds and have an acute perception of touch, though our bodily organs remain inactive.

Perhaps indeed this is a holier form of sense-perception. At any rate, it is by its means that we commonly have contact with gods who counsel us, prophesy to us and otherwise take thought for us. I do not therefore find it surprising [D] that a man should find a treasure as the gift of a dream;<sup>42</sup> nor is it very extraordinary that an unliterary person, falling asleep, should meet the Muses in a dream, speak to them and listen to them, and prove to be a skilful poet.<sup>43</sup> Our own age has demonstrated this. I pass over discoveries of conspiracies<sup>44</sup> or people for whom sleep has been a doctor and made their illness harmless.<sup>45</sup> It is rather when a dream opens the way to the most perfect vision of reality to a soul which has never sought this or contemplated the ascent, that there [135A] occurs what must be the supreme experience of our world – that one who has gone so far astray as not to know whence he came should rise above Nature and be joined with the intelligible.

And if anyone believes that the ascent is indeed a great thing, but has no faith in the imagination, that this too is a means by which the

αφήν, ἀκουσάτω τῶν ἱερῶν λογίων, ἃ λέγει περὶ διαφόρων ὁδῶν. μετὰ δὴ τὸν ὄλον κατάλογον τῶν οἰκοθεν εἰς ἀναγωγὴν ἀφορμῶν, καθ' ὃν ἕξεσι τὸ ἔνδοθεν σπέρμα αὐξῆσαι· τοῖς δὲ (φησί) διδακτὸν ἔδωκε φάους γνῶρισμα λαβέσθαι· / τοὺς δὲ καὶ ὑπνώοντας ἔης ἐνεκάρπισεν ἀλκῆς. ὄρᾳς; ἀντιδιέστειλεν εὐμοιρίας μαθήσεων. ὁ μὲν ὕπαρ, φησίν, ὁ δὲ ὄναρ διδάσκεται· ἀλλ' ὕπαρ μὲν ἄνθρωπός ἐστιν ὁ διδάσκων, τὸν ὑπνώοντα δὲ θεὸς ἔης ἐνεκάρπισεν ἀλκῆς, ὡς ταῦτόν εἶναι τὸ μανθάνειν τε καὶ τυγχάνειν· τὸ γὰρ ἐγκαρπίσαι καὶ πλέον ἐστὶ τοῦ διδάξαι.

(5) Ἀλλὰ τοῦτο μὲν ἡμῖν παρειλήφθω παραστατικὸν τῆς ἀξίας τῆς κατὰ τὴν ἐν φαντασίᾳ ζωὴν πρὸς τοὺς ἀπογινώσκοντας αὐτῆς καὶ τὰ ἐλάττω· ὡς οὐδὲν θαῦμα οὕτω γινώσκειν ὑπὸ περιττῆς σοφίας προστετηκότας τοῖς ὑπὸ τῶν λογίων ἀποκηρύκτοις. φησί γάρ, οὐ θυσιῶν σπλάγχχνων τε τομαί· τὰδ' ἀθύρματα πάντα, καὶ φεύγειν αὐτὰ παρακελεύεται· οἱ δέ, ἅτε ὄντες ὑπὲρ τὸ πλήθος, τέχνας μὲν ἐπὶ τὸ ἐσόμενον ἄλλος ἄλλας ἀπολαμβάνοντες, ἀξιούσιν ἐργάζεσθαι, ὄνειρων δὲ ὑπερορῶσιν ὡς προὔπτου πράγματος, οὐ μέτεστιν ὁμοτίμως ἀμαθεῖ τε καὶ σοφῷ.

Τί οὖν, εἰ ταύτη σοφός, ὅτι τοῦ κοινοῦ πλέον τυγχάνει; τοι γάρ τοι καὶ τὰ ἄλλα ἀγαθὰ, καὶ τούτων γε μᾶλλον τὰ μέγιστα, κοινότατα πρόκεινται. ἡλίου γάρ οὔτε θεσπεσιώτερον ἐν τοῖς ὀρωμένοις οὐδὲν οὔτε δημοσιώτερον. εἰ δὲ τὸ αὐτοπτῆσαι θεὸν χρῆμα εὐδαιμον, τὸ διὰ φαντασίαν ἐλεῖν πρεσβυτέρας αὐτοψίας ἐστίν. αἰσθησις γάρ αἰσθήσεων αὕτη, ὅτι τὸ φανταστικὸν πνεῦμα κοινότατόν ἐστιν αἰσθητήριον καὶ σῶμα πρῶτον ψυχῆς.

Ἀλλὰ τὸ μὲν ἐνδομυχεῖ καὶ τὴν ἀρχὴν ἔχει τοῦ ζῶου καθάπερ ἐξ ἀκροπόλεως· περὶ γάρ αὐτὸ πᾶσαν τὴν τῆς κεφαλῆς πραγματείαν ἢ φύσις ὠκοδομήσατο. ἀκοή δὲ καὶ ὄψις οὐκ εἰσὶν αἰσθήσεις, ἀλλ' αἰσθήσεως ὄργανα τῆς κοινῆς ὑπηρετίδες, οἷον πυλωροὶ τοῦ ζῶου διαγγέλλουσαι τῇ δεσποίνῃ τὰ θύραθεν αἰσθητά, ὑφ' ὧν θυροκοπεῖται τὰ ἔξωθεν αἰσθητήρια. καὶ ἡ μὲν ἅπασι τοῖς μέρεσιν αὐτῆς αἰσθησις ἐστὶν ἐντελής· ὄλω τε γὰρ ἀκούει τῷ πνεύματι, καὶ ὄλω βλέπει, καὶ τὰ λοιπὰ πάντα δύναται· διανέμει δὲ τὰς δυνάμεις ἄλλην κατ' ἄλλο, καὶ προῦκυψαν ἐκ τοῦ ζῶου χωρὶς ἐκάστη, καὶ εἰσὶν οἷον εὐθειαί τινες ἐκ κέν-

blessed contact may sometimes be achieved, let him hear what the holy oracles say about the different roads. After the whole list of resources for the ascent which we have in our possession, which makes it possible to develop the seed within us, the oracle continues: **[B]** ‘To some he gave by teaching a token to grasp the light, / others he impregnated with his strength even as they slept.’<sup>46</sup> You see? It makes a contrast between good fortune and learning. One is taught in his waking hours, another in a dream. In waking hours, the teacher is human; it is the sleeper whom god ‘impregnated with his strength’, making learning and achieving the goal the same thing; for to ‘impregnate’ is more than to ‘teach’.

## (iii) b

5. Let us take this argument as an aid to demonstrating the value attaching to the life of Imagination against those who deny it even its smaller achievements. It is no wonder that they should judge so, clinging as they **[C]** do, in their superior wisdom, to practices forbidden by the Oracles, which say ‘Not <truthful are> the dissections of sacrifices and entrails: they are all playthings’,<sup>47</sup> and bid us steer clear of them. Yet these people, being supposedly superior to the masses, take up various arts for foretelling the future, and justify practising them, but despise dreams as too accessible a thing, in which the ignorant and **[D]** the wise have equal privileges.

But what if a man is wise in this respect because he has a bigger share in a common good? So too other good things and especially the greatest, are the most generally accessible. Among visible things, nothing is more divine or more public than the Sun. And if to have the vision of a god with one’s own eyes is a blessed thing, to apprehend him by imagination (*phantasia*) is a loftier kind of vision. This is in fact the sense of senses, because the imaginative *pneuma* is the most general organ of sense and the first body of the soul.

**[136A]** However, it hides within, and rules the living being, as it were, from a citadel,<sup>48</sup> for nature has built all the activity of the head around it. Hearing and sight are not senses but organs of sense, servants of the common sense,<sup>49</sup> doorkeepers of the living being, as it were, who report to their mistress the sense-impressions from outside, which knock on the door of the external organs of sense. This <common sense> is a sense perfect in all its parts: it hears with the whole *pneuma*, it sees with the whole *pneuma*, and has all **[B]** the other powers. Yet it distributes its powers among various organs, and they emerge from the living being each one separately; they are like straight lines flowing from the centre



τρου ῥυεῖσαι καὶ εἰς τὸ κέντρον συννεύουσαι, μία μὲν πᾶσαι κατὰ τὴν κοινὴν ῥίζαν, πολλαὶ δὲ κατὰ τὴν πρόοδον. ζῶνδιστατή μὲν οὖν ἢ διὰ τῶν προβεβλημένων ὀργάνων αἰσθησις, οὐδὲ αἰσθησις οὐσα πρὶν ἐπὶ τὴν πρώτην φθάσῃ· {ἢ} θειοτέρα δὲ καὶ ψυχὴ προσεχῆς ἢ ἄμεσος αἰσθησις.

(6) Εἰ δὲ τὰς σωματικὰς αἰσθήσεις διὰ τὸ γινώσκειν τιμῶν-  
τες, ὅτι μάλιστα ἴσμεν ἃ τεθεάμεθα, φαντασίαν ἀποσκορακί-  
ζοιμεν ὡς ἀπιστοτέραν αἰσθήσεως, εὐόικαμεν ἐπιλαθομένοις, C  
ὅτι μὴδὲ ὀφθαλμὸς ἅπαντα ἀληθῆ δείκνυσιν, ἀλλ' ὁ μὲν οὐδὲ  
δείκνυσιν, ὁ δὲ ψεύδεται, καὶ παρὰ τὴν φύσιν τῶν ὀρωμένων,  
καὶ δι' ὧν ὀράται (ταῖς γὰρ ἀποστάσεσιν ἐλάττω καὶ μείζω  
ταῦτά\*, καὶ τὰ καθ' ὕδατος μείζω· ἢ δὲ κώπη κεκλασμένη προσ-  
πίπτει) καὶ παρὰ τὴν ἀδυναμίαν τὴν αὐτοῦ {αὐτὸ τὸ ὄμμα}\*·  
λημῶν γὰρ συγκεχυμένα καὶ ἀδιάκριτα δείκνυσι.

Καὶ ὅστις οὖν τὸ φανταστικὸν πνεῦμα νοσεῖ, μὴ ἀπαιτεῖται  
σαφῆ μὴδὲ εἰλικρινῆ τὰ θεάματα· ἥτις δὲ αὐτοῦ νόσος, καὶ οἷς D  
λημᾶ καὶ παχύνεται, καὶ οἷς καθαίρεται καὶ ἀπειλικρινεῖται καὶ  
εἰς τὴν φύσιν ἐπάνεισι, τῆς ἀπορρήτου φιλοσοφίας πυνθάνου,  
ὕφ' ἧς καὶ καθαιρόμενον διὰ τελετῶν ἔνθεον γίνεται αἶ τε εἰσ-  
κρίσεις πρὶν τὸν θεὸν ἐπεισαγαγεῖν τὸ φανταστικὸν ἐκθέουσι.

Καὶ ὅστις αὐτὸ διὰ τοῦ κατὰ φύσιν βίου τηρεῖ καθαρὸν,  
έτοιμῳ χρῆται, ὡς ταύτη πάλιν εἶναι κοινότατον· ἐπαῖει γὰρ τὸ  
πνεῦμα τοῦτο τῆς ψυχικῆς διαθέσεως, καὶ οὐκ ἀσύμπαθές ἐστι  
πρὸς αὐτήν\*, καθάπερ τὸ ὄστρεῶδες περίβλημα. ἐκεῖνο μὲν γὰρ 137A  
καὶ ἀντίθεσιν ἔχει πρὸς τὰς ἀμείνους τῆς ψυχῆς διαθέσεις.  
ἀλλὰ τοι τὸ πρῶτον αὐτῆς καὶ ἴδιον ὄχημα, ἀγαθνομένης μὲν  
λεπτύνεται καὶ ἀπαιθεροῦται, κακνομένης δὲ παχύνεται καὶ  
γεοῦται.

Ὅλως γὰρ τοῦτο μεταίχιμιόν ἐστιν ἀλογίας καὶ λόγου, καὶ  
ἀσωμάτου καὶ σώματος, καὶ κοινὸς ὅρος ἀμφοῖν· καὶ διὰ τούτου  
τὰ θεῖα τοῖς ἐσχάτοις συγγίνεται. ταύτη καὶ χαλεπὸν ἐστὶν  
αἰρεθῆναι διὰ φιλοσοφίας τὴν φύσιν αὐτοῦ· ἐρανίζεται γὰρ τι  
προσηκόν ὡς ἐκ γειτόνων ἀφ' ἑκατέρου τῶν ἄκρων, καὶ φαντά- B  
ζεται μιᾶ φύσει τὰ τοσοῦτον ἀπωκισμένα.

and returning to the centre.<sup>50</sup> They are all one in respect of their common root, but many in respect of their outgoing (*proodos*). The most animal sense is that which comes through the outwardly projected organs; it is not even really sense until it reaches the first sense. More divine and close to the soul is the unmediated sense.

(iii) c

6. If, in the course of honouring our bodily senses for their knowledge, because we know best what we have seen, we contemptuously reject imagination, as being less trustworthy than sense, we seem to have forgotten that the eye too does not show [C] everything truly. One eye does not even show anything, another is deceptive, *first* because of the nature both of the objects seen and of the medium through which they are seen (the same things seem bigger or smaller because of distance, objects in water seem bigger, the oar<sup>51</sup> gives the impression of being bent) and *secondly* because of the incapacity of the eye itself, since if it is bleary it shows objects as confused and indistinct.

No one who has a disease of his imaginative *pneuma* should expect his [D] vision to be clear and uncontaminated. What a disease of the *pneuma* is, what makes it bleary or thickened, and by what means it is purified and decontaminated and returns to its own nature, are questions you must ask of the secret philosophy, through which, purified also by rituals, it becomes filled with god and the impurities disappear from it before the imagination can admit the god.

Whoever keeps his *pneuma* pure, through a life according to nature, has it ready for use, so that in this respect too it is the most widely available of organs: for this *pneuma* is conscious of the disposition of the soul, and is not in itself incapable of sharing its experience – unlike our oyster-like envelope;<sup>52</sup> [137A] for that is actually opposed to the better disposition of the soul. The first special vehicle of the soul, on the other hand, is refined and etherealized<sup>53</sup> as the soul becomes better, but becomes denser and more earthy when it deteriorates.

In a word, the *pneuma* is a no man's land (*metaichmion*)<sup>54</sup> between the irrational and the rational, between the incorporeal and corporeal, and the common boundary of both. It is through this that divine beings make contact with the lowest level of being [i.e. matter]. This is what makes it difficult for its nature to be grasped by philosophy, for it takes the contributions it needs from both extremes – they are its neighbours, as it were – and forms in its single nature images of things very [B] widely separated from each other.

(7) Τό γέ τοι πλάτος τῆς φανταστικῆς οὐσίας ἐξέχεεν ἡ φύσις εἰς πολλὰς μοίρας τῶν ὄντων. καταβαίνει γέ τοι μέχρι ζώων, οἷς οὐκέτι πάρεστι νοῦς, οὐδέ ἐστιν ὄχημα τότε θειοτέρας ψυχῆς, ἀλλ' αὐτὴ ταῖς ὑποκειμέναις δυνάμεσιν ἐποχεῖται, αὐτὴ λόγος οὔσα τοῦ ζώου, ὃ πολλὰ\* κατ' αὐτὴν φρονεῖ τε καὶ πράττει δεόντως. καθαίρεται γέ τοι καὶ ἐν ἀλόγοις, ὡς εἰσφρεῖσθαί τι κρεῖττον. γένη τε ὅλα δαιμόνων οὐσίωται τῇ τοιαύτῃ ζωῇ· ἐκεῖνα μὲν γὰρ καθ' ὅλον αὐτῶν τὸ εἶναι, εἰδωλικά τε ὄντα καὶ τοῖς γινομένοις ἐμφανταζόμενα, ἄνθρωποι δὲ τὰ πολλὰ κατ' αὐτὴν ἦ\* μόνην, ἢ μεθ' ἑτέρου πλείονα. τὰς γὰρ νοήσεις οὐκ ἀφαντάστους ποιούμεθα, πλὴν εἰ δὴ τις ἐν ἀκαρεῖ ποτε ἐπαφὴν ἔσχεν εἶδους ἀύλου· τὸ δὲ ὑπερκύψαι φαντασίαν χαλεπὸν οὐχ ἤττον ἢ εὐδαιμον· νοῦς γὰρ, φησί, καὶ φρόνησις ἀγαπητὸν ὄτω καὶ εἰς γῆρας ἀφίκοντο, τὴν ἀφάνταστον λέγων· ὡς ἢ γε προβεβλημένη ζωὴ φαντασίας ἐστὶν ἢ νοῦ φαντασία χρωμένου.

C

Τό γέ τοι πνεῦμα τοῦτο τὸ ψυχικόν, ὃ καὶ πνευματικὴν ψυχὴν προσηγόρευσαν οἱ εὐδαιμόνες, καὶ θεὸς καὶ δαίμων παντοδαπὸς καὶ εἰδωλον γίνεται, καὶ τὰς ποινὰς ἐν τούτῳ τίνει ψυχῇ· χρησμοὶ τε γὰρ ὁμοφωνοῦσι περὶ αὐτοῦ, ταῖς ὄναρ φαντασίαις τὴν ἐκεῖ διεξαγωγὴν τῆς ψυχῆς προσεικάζοντες, καὶ φιλοσοφία συντίθεται παρασκευὰς εἶναι δευτέρων βίων τοὺς πρώτους, τῆς τε ἀρίστης ἕξεως ἐν ψυχαῖς ἐλαφριζούσης αὐτὸ καὶ ἐναπομοργνυμένης κηλῖδα τῆς χείρονος.

D

138A

Ὀλκαῖς οὖν φυσικαῖς ἢ μετέωρον αἶρεται διὰ θερμότητα καὶ ξηρότητα, καὶ τοῦτο ἄρα ἡ ψυχῆς πτέρωσις (τό τε αὖθις {ξηρὴ} ψυχὴ σοφὴ πρὸς οὐδὲν ἄλλο τῷ Ἡρακλείτῳ τείνον εὐρίσκομεν), ἢ παχὺ καὶ ὑγρὸν γινόμενον τοῖς χηραμοῖς τῆς γῆς ἐνδύεται, ῥοπὴ φυσικὴ φωλεῦον καὶ ὠθούμενον εἰς τὴν κατάγαιον χώραν· τόπος γὰρ οὗτος οἰκειότατος ὑγροῖς πνεύμασι. κάκει μὲν κακοδαίμων τε καὶ ποιναιὸς ὁ βίος· ἕξεσι δὲ χρόνῳ καὶ πόνῳ καὶ βίοις ἄλλοις καθηραμένην ἀναδύναι. γενομένη γὰρ ἀμφίβιος\* διάυλον θεῖ, καὶ παρὰ μέρος ὁμιλεῖ τοῖς χείροσι καὶ τοῖς κρεῖττοσιν· ἦν δανείζεται μὲν ἀπὸ τῶν σφαιρῶν ἡ πρώτη ψυχὴ κατιούσα, κάκεινης ὥσπερ σκάφους ἐπιβάσα, τῷ σωματικῷ κόσμῳ συγγίνεται. ἀγῶνα δὲ ἀγωνίζεται τοῦτον ἢ συναναγαγεῖν ἢ μὴ τοι συγκαταμεῖναι· μόλις μὲν γὰρ, ἀλλὰ γένοιτ' ἂν

B

## (iii) d

7. Nature has extended the range of the imaginative substance to cover many classes (*moirai*) of beings. It descends as low as animals which do not have intellect (*nous*), and it is not then a vehicle of a more divine soul, but itself rides on the subordinate faculties, being in fact the reason (*logos*) of the animal, which<sup>55</sup> thinks and does many things rightly in accordance with it. It can be purified even in irrational creatures, with the result that some superior element is introduced into them. Entire kinds of *daimones* have their substance in life of this sort, for they are in their whole being of the phantom kind, and appear in things which come to be, whereas humans live according to it, either just by itself or, in the majority of cases, in conjunction with something else,<sup>56</sup> for we do not form thoughts without *phantasiai*, unless indeed some individual chances to make contact with an immaterial form. Yet to rise above imagination is as difficult as it is fortunate! As to intelligence and wisdom, Plato says,<sup>57</sup> a man should count himself lucky if they come to him in old age; he means the wisdom which does not involve imagination, for the life set before us (*probeblēmenē*)<sup>58</sup> is one of imagination or of Mind using [D] imagination.

The psychic *pneuma*, which the happy people also call the ‘pneumatic soul’,<sup>59</sup> may become a god, a *daimon* (of any kind) and a phantom. It is in this that the soul pays its penalties. The oracles speak with one voice on this, likening the existence of the soul in the other world to the imaginings of dreams, and philosophy agrees that our first lives are a preparation for our second, since the best state of the soul makes the *pneuma* light, and the [138A] worse rubs its own stain off upon it.

The *pneuma* therefore<sup>60</sup> is either raised up on high by a natural attraction because of its heat and dryness (this is what is meant by the soul’s ‘acquiring wings’,<sup>61</sup> and I find that Heraclitus’ ‘dry soul wise’<sup>62</sup> has precisely this reference) or becomes dense and moist and enters hollows of the earth, lurking there because of its natural downward thrust and driven into the region beneath the earth, this being the most appropriate place for damp *pneumata*. Its life there is one of misery and punishment, but by time and effort and other lives <the soul> may be purified and rise up. Born to have a double life, she runs a two-lap race,<sup>63</sup> and associates with the bad and with the good turn and [B] turn about. The first soul, in her descent, borrows this <soul> from the spheres, embarks on it (as on a boat) and thus makes contact with the corporeal kosmos. The battle she fights is either to pull <the *pneuma*> up with her or, at any rate, not to linger down below with it. She can, though with diffi-

ἀφείναι μὴ συνεπόμενον (οὐ γὰρ θέμις ἀπιστεῖν ἐγνωσμένων τῶν τελετῶν), αἰσχροῦ δ' ἂν ἐπάνοδος γένοιτο μὴ ἀποδιδούσαις τὸ ἀλλότριον, ἀλλὰ περὶ γῆν ἀπολιπούσαις ὅπερ ἄνωθεν ἠρανίσαντο.

Καὶ τοῦτο μὲν ἐνὶ καὶ δευτέρῳ δῶρον ἂν γένοιτο τελετῆς καὶ θεοῦ· φύσιν δὲ ἔχει τὴν ἅπαξ ἐγκεκεντρισμένην εἰς αὐτὸ ψυχὴν ἢ ὁμορροθεῖν ἢ ἔλκειν ἢ ἔλκεσθαι, πάντως γε μέντοι συνεῖναι μέχρι τῆς ὄθεν ἦλθεν ἐπανόδου. ὥστε καὶ βροῖθον ὑπὸ κάκης συγκατασπᾶ τὴν ἐφείσαν αὐτῷ βαρυνθῆναι ψυχὴν. καὶ τοῦτ' ἔστιν, ᾧ δεδίττεται τὰ λόγια τὸ νοερόν ἐν ἡμῖν σπέρμα·

*μηδὲ κάτω νεύσης εἰς τὸν μελαναυγέα κόσμον,*

*ᾧ βυθὸς αἰὲν ἄπιστος ὑπέστρωται καὶ ἀειδής,*

*ἀμφικνεφῆς, ῥυπῶν, εἰδωλοχαρῆς, ἀνόητος.*

νῶ γὰρ πῶς καλὸν βίος ἔμπληκτος καὶ ἀνόητος; τῷ δὲ εἰδῶλω διὰ τὴν ποιὰν τότε τοῦ πνεύματος σύστασιν ἢ κάτω χώρα προσήκει· ὁμοίῳ γὰρ τὸ ὅμοιον ἦδεται.

(8) Εἰ δὲ ἐν ἑξ ἁμφοῖν τῷ συνδυασμῷ γίνεται, καὶ ὁ νοῦς ἂν ἐμβαπτισθῆι τῷ ἦδεσθαι. καίτοι τοῦτο κακῶν ἂν εἴη τὸ ἔσχατον, μηδ' ἐπαίειν κακοῦ παρόντος· τοῦτο γὰρ ἔστι μηδ' ἀναδύναμι ζητούντων, ὥσπερ ὁ σκίρρος τῷ μηκέτι λυπεῖν οὐδὲ ὑπομιμνήσκει τοῦ σφῆζεσθαι· καὶ διὰ τοῦτο ἀναγωγὸν ἢ μετάνοια. ὁ γὰρ τὰ ἐν οἷς ἔστι δυσχεραίνων, φυγὴν μηχανᾶται· καὶ καθαρμῶν τὸ μέγιστον μέρος ἢ βούλησις. ταύτη γὰρ ὀρέγει χεῖρα τὰ δρώμενά τε καὶ τὰ λεγόμενα· ἀπούσης δὲ ἄψυχος ἅπασα καθαρτικὴ τελετῆ, κολοβὸς οὔσα τοῦ μεγίστου συνθήματος.

καὶ διὰ τοῦτο τῆδέ τε κάκει χρεῖαν τὴν μεγίστην τε καὶ ἀρίστην τῆ τάξει τῶν ὄντων αἰ κρίσεις παρέχονται, τὸ λυπηρόν ἀντεισάγουσαι καὶ τῆς ἐμπλήκτου χαρᾶς τὴν ψυχὴν ἐκκαθαίρουσαι· αἱ τε παρ' ἀξίαν καλούμεναι συμφοραὶ μέγα μέρος συμβάλλονται πρὸς τὸ λῦσαι τὴν σχέσιν, ἣν ἔχομεν πρὸς τὰ τῆδε. καὶ ἡ πρώτη πρόνοια διὰ τούτων εἰσάγεται τοῖς ἔχουσι νοῦν, δι' ὧν τοῖς οὐκ ἔχουσιν ἀπιστεῖται· ὡς οὐκ ἔστιν ὅπως ποτ' ἂν ἀποστραφείη τὴν ὕλην ψυχὴ μηδενὶ κακῷ περὶ τὰ τῆδε προσκόπτουσα. διὸ τὰς πολυθρυλήτους εὐτυχίας οἶεσθαι δεῖ λόχον ἐπὶ ψυχᾶς ἐξευρηθῆναι τοῖς ἐφόροις τῶν κάτω. ὥσθ' ὅτι

culty, let it go if it will not follow (if we know the mysteries, we must not disbelieve this), but it would be a shameful homecoming if <souls> did not restore something that is not their own, but left behind in the neighbourhood of earth the thing they had borrowed [C] from above.

This may indeed happen to one or two, as a gift of the mysteries and of god, but the natural thing is for a soul once grafted<sup>64</sup> on to <the *pneuma*> to go along with it, pull it or be pulled by it, but in any case to stay with it till it returns to the place whence it came. So also the *pneuma*, loaded with evil, drags down with itself any soul that has let herself be weighed down by it. This is the fate with which the Oracles threaten the seed of Mind within us:

‘Lean not down to the darkly gleaming world,  
[D] beneath which is spread the ever faithless, formless gulf,  
dark, foul, rejoicing in phantoms, and mindless.’<sup>65</sup>

For how can a life unstable and mindless be a good thing for Mind? But for the phantom (*eidolon*), because of the particular state of the *pneuma* at the time, the place below is the right place. ‘Like enjoys like.’<sup>66</sup>

(iii) e

8. If, as a result of the coupling, the two come to be a single unity, the Mind also may be immersed in pleasure. Yet it would be the greatest of all evils not to be aware of evil when it is present. This [139A] in fact is the condition of those who do not even seek to rise – just as a hard tumour, because it no longer gives pain, does not put us in mind of seeking a cure. And this is why repentance helps to lift one up. A man who is unhappy with his situation plans an escape. And the most important element in purification (*katharmos*) is will: for it is by this that the acts and the words stretch out a helping hand <to the worshipper>. If the will is not there, every purificatory rite is dead, shorn of its most important token (*sunthēma*).<sup>67</sup>

For this reason too, both in this world and in the other, judgements provide the greatest and best service to the order [B] of things, bringing in as they do a counterbalancing pain and purging the soul of tumultuous joy. What are undeservedly called misfortunes also contribute a great deal to loosening the connection (*schesis*) which we have to the things of this world; and the First Providence<sup>68</sup> is brought to the notice of the intelligent by the very events which lead the unintelligent to disbelieve in it, since it is impossible for a soul to turn away from matter if it has not encountered some evil in this world. We should therefore think of the much-trumpeted strokes of good fortune as designed by the rulers of the world below as an ambush to trap souls. Let others explain

μὲν ἂν ἐξελθούσαις γένοιτο πόμα λήθαιον, ἄλλος εἰπάτω· εἰσ- C  
ελθούση δὲ εἰς τὸν βίον ψυχῇ λήθαιον ὀρέγεται πόμα τὸ τῆδε  
ἤδὺ καὶ μελίχιον.

Θῆσα γὰρ κατιούσα τὸν πρῶτον βίον ἐθελοντήν\* ἀντὶ τοῦ  
θητεῦσαι δουλεύει· ἀλλὰ ἐκεῖνο μὲν ἦν λειτουργίαν τινὰ  
ἐκπλήσαι τῇ φύσει τοῦ κόσμου, θεσμῶν Ἀδραστείας ἐπιταττόν-  
των. γοητευθεῖσα δὲ ὑπὸ τῶν δώρων τῆς ὕλης, πάθος πέπονθε  
παραπλήσιον ἐλευθέρους ἐπὶ συγκείμενον χρόνον μεμισθωμέ-  
νοις, οἱ κάλλει θεραπαίνης ἐνσχεθέντες μένειν ἐθέλουσι, τῷ D  
κυρίῳ τῆς ἐρωμένης δουλεύειν ὁμολογήσαντες.

Καὶ ἡμεῖς εὐοίκαμεν, ὅταν ποτ' ἀπὸ βαθείας τῆς γνώμης  
ἡσθῶμεν ἐπὶ τῷ τῶν περὶ σώμα τε καὶ θυραίων, ἀγαθῶν εἶναι  
δοκούντων, ὁμολογεῖν τῇ φύσει τῆς ὕλης, ὅτι καλή· ἢ δὲ τὴν  
συγκατάθεσιν ἡμῶν γραμματεῖον ἀπόρρητον δέχεται, κἂν  
ἀποχωρησῶν ὡς ἐλευθέροι βουλευσώμεθα, φυγάδας εἶναι φησι  
καὶ ἐπανάγειν πειράται, καὶ ὡς δραπετευόντων ἀντιλαμβάνε-  
ται, τὸ γραμματεῖον ἐπαναγινώσκουσα.

Τότε δὴ καὶ μάλιστα ῥώμης τε δεῖ τῇ ψυχῇ καὶ ἀρωγῷ τοῦ  
θεοῦ· ὡς οὐ φαῦλος ἀγὼν ὁμολογίαν ἑαυτοῦ παραγράφασθαι, 140A  
τυχὸν δὲ καὶ βιάσασθαι. ποιναί τε γὰρ ὑλαῖαι τότε δὴ καὶ παρ'  
εἰμαρμένην κινουῦνται κατὰ τῶν ἀφηνιασάντων πρὸς τοὺς νό-  
μους αὐτῆς· καὶ τοῦτο ἄρα αἱ καλούμεναι πείραι, ἃς Ἡρακλέα  
τε ἀνατλήναί φασιν ἱεροὶ λόγοι, καὶ εἰ δὴ τις ἕτερος ἐλευθερίᾳ  
κατὰ τὸ καρτερόν ἐπεχείρησε, μέχρις ἂν ἐκεῖ τὸ πνεῦμα δια-  
βιβάσῃσιν, οὐ μὴ φθάνουσιν\* αἱ χεῖρες τῆς φύσεως.

Εἰ δὲ ἐντὸς ὄρων τὸ ἄλμα γένοιτο, κατασπάται, καὶ δεῖ  
βαρύτερων ἀγώνων· ἀφειδεῖ γὰρ ὡς ἀλλοτρίων ἦδη· κἂν ἀπο- B  
γνῶ τῆς ἀνόδου, δίκας αἰτεῖ τῆς ἐπιχειρήσεως, καὶ προβάλλει  
βίους οὐκ ἀπ' ἀμφοῖν ἔτι τῶν πίθων, οὓς Ὅμηρος ἀπορρήτως  
αινίττεται μερίδας εἶναι δύο τῆς ὕλης – καὶ ὁ Ζεὺς αὐτῷ κατ'  
ἐκεῖνο τῶν ἐπῶν θεὸς ὑλάρχιός ἐστι, τοῦ διττοῦ τῆς εἰμαρμένης  
διανομεύς, παρ' οὗ τὸ μὲν ἀγαθὸν οὐδέποτε ἀνεπίμικτον, ἦδη  
δέ τις ἀκράτου μετέσχε τοῦ χεῖρονος –, ὅλως δὲ οἱ βίοι πάντες  
ἐν πλάνῃ, τῇ μὴ μετὰ τὴν πρῶτην κάθοδον ἀναδραμούση.

(9) Θέα δὴ πόσω τῷ μέσῳ τὸ πνεῦμα τοῦτο ἐμπολιτεύεται.  
ῥεψάσης μὲν κάτω ψυχῆς, ἔλεγεν ὁ λόγος, ὅτι ἐβαρύνθη τε καὶ C  
ἔδου, μέχρις ἐγκύρση τῷ μελαναυγεί καὶ ἀμφικνεφεῖ χώρῳ· ἀν-  
ιούση δὲ συνέπεται μέχρις οὐ δύναμις ἐπεσθαι· δύναται δὲ μέ-

what draught of forgetfulness<sup>69</sup> may be given to souls when they depart; but the draught of forgetfulness that is offered to the soul [C] when she enters life is the pleasantness and sweetness of this world.

Going down the road of her first life<sup>70</sup> as a servant, she voluntarily<sup>71</sup> becomes not a servant but a slave. Her original service was the fulfilment of a duty (*leitourgia*) to the nature of the kosmos, enjoined by the laws of Adrasteia.<sup>72</sup> But, bewitched by the gifts of matter, she finds herself in the same plight [D] as free labourers who have been hired for a fixed time, but are captivated by the beauty of a maidservant and choose to stay on, consenting to be slaves of their beloved's master.

So, when, from the depth of our mind, we take pleasure in one of those things connected with body and external to us which are thought to be good, we seem to be admitting to the nature of matter that she is beautiful. And matter then accepts our agreement as a secret deed of contract, and, if we plan to leave as free men, pronounces us runaways, tries to get us back, and lays hands upon us as fugitive slaves, reading the contract over us.

Then most of all does the soul need strength [140A] and the help of God. It involves no small struggle to demur to one's own agreement and perhaps violate it. Material penalties are then set in motion, even beyond the demands of fate,<sup>73</sup> against those who rebel against the laws of matter. This is what is meant by the 'trials' which the holy writings say were endured by Heracles<sup>74</sup> and others who have striven mightily for freedom, until they have brought their *pneuma* safely across to the place where the hands of nature cannot reach.

But if the leap falls short of the boundary, <the soul> is dragged down, and more grievous struggles are needed. For <matter> shows no mercy towards what is no longer hers, and [B] even if one gives up the ascent she exacts penalties for the attempt, and offers lives that no longer come from both the jars by which Homer enigmatically suggests that there are two divisions of matter.<sup>75</sup> (In this part of the poem, Homer's Zeus is the god who rules matter, the distributor of fate's double gift, from whom good never comes unalloyed, though some have met with unmixed evil.) In a word, all lives are on an erring path for the soul that does not turn upwards again after her first descent.

9. Consider now how great is the middle region of which this *pneuma* is a citizen. When the soul [C] travelled downwards (so the argument ran), <the *pneuma*> was weighed down and sank, until it encountered the region of black light and total dark; but when she rises, it



χρῖς ἂν εἰς πλεῖστον τὸ ἀντικείμενον ἦκη. ἄκουε γὰρ καὶ περὶ  
τούτου τῶν λογίων λεγόντων·

οὐδὲ τὸ τῆς ὕλης σκύβαλον κρημνῶ\* καταλείψει,

ἀλλὰ καὶ εἰδώλω μερίς εἰς τόπον ἀμφιφάοντα·

D

οὗτος δὲ ἀντίθεσιν ἔχει πρὸς τὸν ἀμφικνεφῆ.

καίτοι τι καὶ πλέον τις ἂν ἐν τούτοις ὀξυωπήσειεν· οὐ γὰρ  
μόνην εἰς τὰς σφαίρας ἀνάγειν ἔοικε τὴν ἐκεῖθεν ἤκουσαν φύ-  
σιν, ἀλλὰ εἶ τι καὶ τῆς πυρὸς καὶ τῆς ἀέρος ἀκρότητος εἰς τὴν  
εἰδωλικὴν φύσιν ἔσπασε κατιοῦσα, πρὶν τὸ γήινον ἀμφίεσα-  
σθαι κέλυφος, καὶ τοῦτο, φησί, τῆ κρείττονι μερίδι συναναπέμ-  
πει· ὕλης γὰρ σκύβαλον οὐκ ἂν εἶη τὸ θεσπέσιον σῶμα.

Καὶ λόγον δ' ἂν ἔχοι τὰ κοινωνήσαντα φύσεως καὶ εἰς ἓν 141A  
συντελέσαντα μήτι παντάπασιν ἄσχετα εἶναι, καὶ μάλιστα οἷς  
ἐν γειτόνων\* ἢ χώρα, καθάπερ πῦρ ἐφεξῆς ἐστὶ τῷ κύκλῳ σώ-  
ματι, καὶ οὐχ ὥσπερ γῆ τῶν ὄντων τὸ ἔσχατον. εἰ δὲ τὰ κρείττω  
τοῖς χείροσιν εἶξαντα τῆς κοινωνίας ἀπέλαυσε καὶ συνετέλεσεν  
εἰς ἴλυν σῶμα ἀκήρατον, ὥσπερ ἰδιοποιηθὲν ὑπὸ τοῦ  
παραχωρηθέντος ἐν τῇ συνόδῳ κρατεῖν, τάχ' ἂν καὶ τὰ χεῖρω –  
μὴ ἀντιτείναντα πρὸς τὴν ἐνέργειαν τῆς ψυχῆς, ἀλλ' εὐήνια καὶ  
καταπειθῆ αὐτὰ τε ὁμαρτήσαντα καὶ τὴν μέσσην φύσιν ἀπερί- B  
σπαστον παρασχόμενα τῇ τῆς πρώτης ἡγεμονίᾳ – συνεξαίθε-  
ροῖτο ἂν καὶ συναναπέμποιτο, εἰ μὴ μέχρι παντός, ἀλλὰ τοὶ  
διαβαίνοι τὴν τῶν στοιχείων ἀκρότητα, καὶ γεύσασθαι' ἂν τοῦ  
ἀμφιφαοῦς· ἔχει γὰρ τινα, φησίν, ἐν αὐτῷ μερίδα, τοῦτ' ἐστὶν ἐν  
τάξει τινὶ τοῦ κυκλικοῦ γίνεται.

(10) Ἀλλὰ περὶ μὲν τῆς ἐκ τῶν στοιχείων μοίρας ταῦτα  
εἰρησθαι καὶ ἀπιστεῖν ἕξεσσι καὶ πιστεύειν· τὴν δὲ ἐκεῖθεν  
ἤκουσαν σωματικὴν οὐσίαν οὐδεμία μηχανὴ κατὰ φύσιν ἀνιού- C  
σης ψυχῆς μὴ οὐ συνεχῆραι τοῦ πτώματος ἀναστᾶσαν, καὶ ταῖς  
σφαίραις ἐναρμοσθῆναι, τοῦτ' ἐστὶν εἰς τὴν οικεῖαν φύσιν ὥσ-  
περ ἀναχυθῆναι.

Ἔσχαται μὲν οὖν αὐταὶ δύο λήξεις, ἡ μὲν ἀμφικνεφῆς, ἡ δὲ  
ἀμφιφαῆς οὐσα, εὐμοιρίας τε καὶ κακοδαιμονίας τὰ ἄκρα νει-  
μάμεναι. πόσας δὲ οἶε μεταξὺ χώρας ἐν τῷ κύτει τοῦ κόσμου,  
έτεροφαεῖς τε καὶ έτεροκνεφεῖς, ἐν αἷς ἀπάσαις δίαιταν ἔχει D  
ψυχὴ μετὰ τοῦδε τοῦ πνεύματος, ἦθη τε καὶ εἶδη καὶ βίους ἀμεί-  
βουσα; ἀναδραμοῦσα μὲν οὖν ἐπὶ τὴν οικεῖαν εὐγένειαν ἀλη-

accompanies her as far as it can – and it can go as far as the opposite extreme. Hear what the Oracles say about this:

‘Nor will it leave the rubbish of matter behind to the precipice,  
 [D] the phantom too has a part in the place full of light.’<sup>76</sup>

(This place is the opposite to that of total darkness.)<sup>77</sup>

Yet one might with a sharp eye see something more in this <passage>;<sup>78</sup> for <the soul> seems to bring back to the spheres not only the nature which came from there, but also whatever of the height of fire and air she drew into her phantom nature<sup>79</sup> in her descent, before she was clothed in her earthly husk. This, says the Oracle, is what she sends up with her better part; the ‘rubbish of matter’ cannot be the divine body.

And it would be [141A] reasonable that things sharing a common nature and contributing to a unity should not be entirely unrelated to each other, especially if the spaces they occupy are neighbours, as fire is next to the encompassing body<sup>80</sup> – not like earth, which is the lowest of the elements. And if better things which have yielded to worse reap the consequences of this association and a pure body joins the mire, characterized as it were by that which had been allowed to prevail in the union, then perhaps also inferior things – if they do not resist the activity of the soul, but go along with it pliantly and [B] obediently, and even allow the middle nature to pass undistracted under the leadership of the first – will become etherealized and carried upwards with it, if not the whole way, then at least far enough to pass through the height of the elements and have a taste of the world of total light. For as the Oracle<sup>81</sup> says, it has a part in this; that is to say, it is in a certain status in the circular <body>.

10. That this was said with reference to the part of the soul derived from the elements, we are at liberty either to believe or not to believe. But as regards the bodily substance that comes from [C] the Beyond, there is no conceivable way by which, as the soul naturally ascends, it too should not rise from its fallen state, go with it, and be united with the spheres – that is to say be resolved again as it were into its own nature.

These two regions, one of total darkness, the other of total light, are the extremes, occupying the heights of good fortune and of bad. But how many intermediate regions do you suppose there are in the hollow spaces of the universe, part light and [D] part dark, in all of which the soul dwells with this *pneuma*, repeatedly changing its character and form and way of life? When she ascends to her own noble origins, she is a storehouse of truth, for then she is pure, translucent and undefiled, a

θείας ἐστὶ ταμιεῖον (καθαρὰ γὰρ ἐστὶ καὶ διαφανὴς καὶ ἀκήρατος, θεὸς οὐσα καὶ προφήτις, εἰ βούλοιο), καταπεσοῦσα δὲ ἀχλυοῦται καὶ ἀοριστεῖ καὶ ψεύδεται (τὸ γὰρ ὀμιχλῶδες τοῦ πνεύματος οὐ χωρεῖ τὴν τῶν ὄντων ἐνάργειαν\*), μεταξὺ δὲ οὐσα τῶν μὲν ἂν ἀμάρτοι, τῶν δὲ τυγχάνοι.

Γνωματεύσαις ἂν οὕτω καὶ δαιμονίαν φύσιν ἐν ἧτινι τάξει. τὸ γὰρ ἢ πάντως ἢ παρὰ μικρὸν ἀληθίζεσθαι θεῖον ἐστὶν ἢ πέλας τοῦ θείου· τὸ δὲ γε πλάνον ἐν ταῖς προροήσεσιν ἀληκτόν ἐστὶ τῶν ἀλινδουμένων εἰς ὕλην ἐμπαθῆ\* καὶ φιλότιμον. ταύτη γὰρ ὑποδύεται τὸ σίραιον\* αἰεὶ καὶ θεὸν καὶ πρεσβύτερον δαίμονα, καὶ ἐνάλλεται καὶ καταλαμβάνει τὴν εὐτρεπισθεῖσαν χώραν τῆ φύσει τῆ μείζονι. 142A

Ἐν ἀνθρώπῳ τε οὐσης ψυχῆς τάξιν ἂν ἐνθένδε φωράσαιμεν· ὅτῳ τὸ φανταστικὸν πνεῦμα καθαρὸν καὶ εὐόριστον, καὶ ὕπαρ καὶ ὄναρ ἀληθῆ τῶν ὄντων ἐκμαγεία δεχόμενον, οὗτος ἂν ὑπόσχεσιν ἔχοι, τὸ γε ἐπὶ τῷ τῆς ψυχῆς ὀχήματι\*, βελτίονος λήξεως. οὐχ ἦκιστα δὲ ἀπὸ τῶν φαντασμάτων, ἃ προβάλλει καὶ περὶ ἃ καταγίνεται, ὅτε μὴ ἔξωθεν ὑφ' ἑτέρου κινεῖται, ἐν ὁποῖα διαθέσει τυγχάνει τὸ ψυχικὸν πνεῦμα θηρώμεν, χορηγούσης φιλοσοφίας εἰς τοῦτο κριτήρια, ὡς καὶ δεῖ τρέφειν αὐτὸ καὶ συνεπιμελεῖσθαι μήτοι ποτὲ πλανηθῆναι. τροφή δὲ ἀρίστη κατὰ τὴν ἐπιβλητικὴν δύναμιν ἐνεργεῖν, καὶ καθάπαξ νοεράν εἶναι τὴν προβολὴν τῆς ζωῆς, ὅση δύναμις, τὰς τῶν ἀτόπων καὶ προπετῶν φαντασμάτων ὀρμὰς προλαμβάνοντας· τοῦτο γὰρ ἐστὶ πρὸς τὸ κρεῖττον ἐστράφθαι καὶ ἄσχετον εἶναι τοῦ χείρονος, ὅσα ἀναγκαῖα μόνον προσομιλοῦντα. B C

Νοερὰ δ' ἐπιβολὴ χρῆμα τῶν συνισταμένων ἐπὶ τὸ πνεῦμα τμητικώτατον· λεπτύνει γὰρ ἀρρήτως αὐτὸ καὶ πρὸς θεὸν ἀνατείνει. τὸ δὲ γινόμενον ἐπιτήδειον ἔλκει τῆ συγγενείᾳ πνεῦμα θεῖον εἰς ὀμιλίαν ψυχῆς, ὥσπερ ὅταν ὑπὸ πάχους συνειληθῆ καὶ γένηται μείον ἢ ὥστε πληρῶσαι τὰς ἀποδειχθείσας αὐτῷ χώρας ὑπὸ τῆς διαπλασάσης προνοίας ἀνθρώπων (αἱ δὲ εἰσὶν ἐγκεφάλου κοιιλίαι) τότε, τῆς φύσεως οὐκ ἀνεχομένης ἐν τοῖς οὐσι κενοῦ, πονηρὸν πνεῦμα εἰσκρίνεται. καὶ τί οὐκ ἂν πάθοι γενομένη συνέστιος ἀποτροπαίῳ κακῷ; τὰς γὰρ ἐπ' αὐτῷ τούτῳ γενομένας τοῦ πνεύματος εἶναι χώρας φύσις ἐστὶν ἢ χείρονος ἢ βελτίονος εἶναι πλήρεις. ἀλλὰ τοῦτο μὲν ἀθέων δίκη τῶν μολυνάντων τὸ ἐν αὐτοῖς θεῖον· ἐκεῖνο δὲ τέλος εὐσεβείας, ἢ ὅ τι ἀγχοῦ τοῦ τέλους. D

goddess and, if she chooses, a prophetess. When she falls, on the other hand, she is befogged, vague and mendacious, for the cloudiness of the *pneuma* does not admit the clarity<sup>82</sup> of real things. Between these states, she sometimes hits the mark and sometimes misses.

You can make a judgement in this way too of the status of a daemonic nature. [142A] To be always or nearly always true is divine or nearly divine, whereas invariable error in prophecies is a mark of beings wallowing in matter, which is subject to passion and pride. In this way, the 'syrup'<sup>83</sup> always takes on the guise of a god or a superior *daimon*, and jumps on and occupies the place prepared for the greater nature.

The way to discover the status of a soul in a human is as follows. One whose imaginative [B] *pneuma* is pure and well-defined and receives true impressions of things both in waking visions and in dreams, probably has a promise, so far as the vehicle<sup>84</sup> of his soul is concerned, of a better lot. But it is especially from the appearances (*phantasmata*) which it projects and with which it is occupied when not affected by external influences, that we trace the condition of the psychic *pneuma*, philosophy supplying criteria for this – how to nurture it and help it not to go astray. The best nurture is to be active in accordance with our power of application and to ensure that [C] the development of our life should, so far as possible, be completely intellectual, so that we forestall the assaults of weird and precipitate visions. This involves being turned towards the better and not being linked to the worse, but associating with this only so far as is absolutely necessary.

Intellectual application is our sharpest weapon against the things which conspire against the *pneuma*, for it refines it indescribably and stretches it out towards God; and <the *pneuma*>, becoming receptive, attracts, through its kinship, a divine *pneuma* into the company of the soul – just as, when it contracts because of its density [D] and becomes too small to occupy the areas designated for it by the providence that fashioned humankind (these are the cavities of the brain<sup>85</sup>), then (since nature does not allow a vacuum in beings) an evil *pneuma* intrudes. And what may <the soul> not suffer in sharing a home with an abominable evil! For it is the nature of spaces which came into existence simply to be the place of *pneuma* to be filled either with a bad *pneuma* or a good. The former is the punishment of the godless who have defiled the divine element in them; the latter is the goal of piety, or something very near it.

(11) Ἡμεῖς μὲν οὖν περὶ τῆς δι' ὀνειρώων μαντικῆς λέγειν 143A  
 ἐπιβαλλόμενοι, ὡς ἂν μὴ ἀτιμάζοιεν αὐτὴν ἀλλ' ἐπιτηδεύοιεν  
 οἱ ἄνθρωποι, χρεῖαν τῷ βίῳ παρέχουσιν, ἐπὶ τούτῳ τὴν  
 φανταστικὴν φύσιν περιειργάσμεθα. ἐκ δὲ τοῦ λόγου τὸ μὲν  
 ἐνθάδε χρεῖῳδες ἔλαττον ἀναπέφηνεν, καρπὸς δὲ ἀμείνων ὑγι-  
 οὺς πνεύματος ἀναγωγὴ ψυχῆς, ἰερόν ὄντως κέρδος· ὥστε καὶ  
 μελέτη τις εὐσεβείας ἐστὶ πειρασθαι μαντικὸν ἡμῖν αὐτὸ εἶναι.  
 καὶ τινες ἤδη διὰ τὸ τοιοῦτο λιχνεῖα δελεασθέντες προγνώσεως,  
 τράπεζάν τε ἀντὶ φλεγμαινούσης\* ἰεράν καὶ ἄτυφον προὔ-  
 θεντο, καὶ κοίτην ἠσπάσαντο καθαρὰν καὶ ἀμόλυντον. ὁ γὰρ B  
 ὅσα τῷ Πυθοῖ τρίποδι τῇ κλίνῃ χρησάμενος, πολλοῦ δεῖ μάρτυ-  
 ρας ἀκολασίας τὰς ἐν αὐτῇ νύκτας ποιήσασθαι· ὁ δὲ καὶ προσε-  
 κύνησε θεὸν καὶ προσήυξατο. γίνεται δὲ πολὺ τὸ κατὰ μικρὸν  
 συντιθέμενον, καὶ τὸ δι' ἄλλο γινόμενον εἰς μείζον ἀπετελεύτη-  
 σεν, ἐρασθῆναι θεοῦ προίοντας καὶ συναφθῆναι ποτε τοὺς οὐκ  
 ἐπὶ τοῦτο τὰ πρῶτα ὀρμήσαντας.

Οὐκ οὖν ἀξιὸν ἀμελεῖν μαντικῆς ὁδοιπορούσης ἐπὶ τὰ θεῖα  
 καὶ παρφυσιτάμενον ἐχούσης τῶν ἐν ἀνθρώπου δυνάμει τὸ  
 τιμώτατον. οὐδὲ γὰρ διὰ τοῦτο ἐλάττων ἢ τῆδε χρεῖα τῆς συν- C  
 ημμένης ψυχῆς τῷ θεῷ, ὅτι τῆς ἐπαφῆς τῶν κρειττόνων ἠξίω-  
 ται· οὔτε γὰρ ἀνεπίστρεπ-τός ἐστὶ τοῦ ζώου, καὶ ἐκ περιωπῆς  
 ἐπισκοπεῖται τὰ κάτω πολὺ πονοτρανότερον ἢ μετ' αὐτῶν οὐσα  
 καὶ συμπεφυρμένη τοῖς χείροσιν, ὥστε μένουσα ἀτρεμῆς δώσει  
 τῷ ζῳῷ τὰ τῶν γινομένων ἰνδάματα. καὶ τοῦτ' ἔστι τὸ λεγόμε-  
 νον, *κατιόντα μὴ κατιέναι*, ὅταν ἀσχέτως ὁ κρείττων ἐπιμελῆται  
 τοῦ χείρονος.

Ταύτην ἐγὼ τὴν μαντικὴν ἐμαυτῷ τε ἀξιῶ παρεῖναι καὶ D  
 παισὶ καταλιπεῖν· ἐφ' ἣν οὐ δεῖ βαδίζειν συσκευασμένους ὁδὸν  
 μακρὰν ἢ πλοῦν ὑπερόριον, ὥσπερ Πυθῶδε καὶ ἐς Ἄμμωνος,  
 ἀλλ' ἀρκεῖ καταδαρθεῖν χεῖρα νηψάμενόν τε καὶ εὐφημήσαντα·  
*ἡ δ' ὑδρηναμένη, καθαρὰ χροῖ εἶμαθ' ἑλοῦσα, / εὔχετ' Ἀθηναίη.*

(12) Οὕτως αἰτήσομεν ὄνειρον, ὥσπερ ἴσως Ὅμηρος ἤτη-  
 σεν. κἂν ἐπιτηδεῖος ἦς, πάρεστιν ὁ πόρρω θεός, ὅτε γε καὶ μηδὲ  
 ταῦτα πραγματευσαμένοις\* ἐκάστοτε παραγίνεται μόνον 144A  
 καταδαρθοῦσι· καὶ τοῦτ' ἔστιν ἢ πᾶσα πραγματεία τῆς τελετῆς,  
 δι' ἣν οὐδεὶς πω πενίαν ὠδύρατο, ὡς ταύτη μειονεκτῶν τοῦ  
 πλουσίου. ἔναι γέ τοι τῶν πόλεων τοὺς ἱεροφάντας, ὥσπερ

(iv)

[143A] 11. My object in speaking of divination by dreams has been to ensure that man should not despise it, but practise it because of the usefulness it offers for life. It is in this connection that I have made a thorough study of the imaginative substance. However, it results from our argument that its usefulness in this world appears rather slight; the better outcome of a healthy *pneuma* is the uplifting (*anagogē*) of the soul, a truly holy gain. To try to make our *pneuma* prophetic is thus also an exercise in piety. Some people, for reasons like this, enticed by their eagerness for foreknowledge, have [B] chosen a holy and unpretentious table rather than an inflamed<sup>86</sup> one, and welcomed a pure and unpolluted bed. The man who treats his bed like the tripod at Delphi is a long way from making the nights he spends in it witnesses of his incontinence! He has worshipped God and prayed. Little added to little becomes much, and what was begun for one purpose ends in something more important: those who did not start out with this intention go on to love God and at some point to be united with Him.

It is wrong therefore to neglect divination, which treads a path to the divine and brings with it the most precious thing that is within the power of man. The usefulness in [C] this world of a soul united with God is not lessened by her having been judged worthy of contact with higher beings. For she does not thereby become inattentive to the living creature, and she sees the things below more clearly from her vantage-point<sup>87</sup> than if she were down among them and mingling with inferior things. Remaining herself at rest, she will give the living creature images of things that come to be. This is what is meant by the saying 'going down without going down',<sup>88</sup> when the superior takes care of [D] the inferior while remaining independent of it.

This divination I claim to possess myself and to leave to my children.<sup>89</sup> To practise it, one does not have to pack for a long journey or a voyage to foreign parts, to Pytho<sup>90</sup> (for instance) or to Ammon.<sup>91</sup> It is enough to wash one's hands, keep a reverent silence, and go to sleep. 'She washed herself and put on clean clothes: / then she prayed to Athena.'<sup>92</sup>

12. In this spirit, we shall ask for a dream, as perhaps Homer did. And if you are 'receptive', [144A] the distant god is close at hand; even when people have taken no trouble, he is there every time, if they simply go to sleep. This is all there is to this mystery (*teletē*). No one has ever lamented his poverty because of it, on the ground that he has less of it than the rich. Some cities in fact choose hierophants, as the Athenians

Αθηναῖοι τοὺς τριηράρχους, ἀπὸ τῶν μεγίστων τιμημάτων αἰροῦνται. καὶ δεῖ δαπάνης συχνῆς καὶ τύχης οὐχ ἥκιστα συγκομίσαι Κρηῶσαν βοτάνην καὶ πτερόν Αἰγύπτιον καὶ ὄστέον Ἰβηρικόν, καὶ νῆ Δί' εἰ τι τεράστιον γῆς ἢ θαλάσσης ἐν παραβύστω φύεται τε καὶ τρέφεται ἡμῖν δυσομένον Ὑπερίονος ἢ δ' ἀνιόντος. συλλέγεται\* γὰρ τοι καὶ ταῦτα καὶ πολλὰ τοιαῦτα ὑπὸ τῶν τεχνιτευόντων\* τὴν θύραθεν μαντικὴν, πρὸς ἃ τίς ἂν ιδιώτης ἀπὸ τῶν ὑπαρχόντων ἀρκέσειεν;

Ἐνύπνιον δὲ ὄρα μὲν ὁ πεντακοσιομέδιμνος, ὄρα δὲ ὁ τριακοσιομέδιμνος· ἀλλὰ καὶ ὁ ζευγίτης οὐδὲν ἦττον, ὁ τὴν ἐσχατιὰν ἀπεργαζόμενος ὥστε ἀποζῆν· ἀλλὰ καὶ ὁ πρόσκωπος καὶ ὁ θῆς ὁμοίως, ὃ τε ἰσοτελής καὶ ὁ τιθείς τὸ μετοίκιον. διαφέρει δὲ οὐδὲν τῷ θεῷ, τίς ὁ Ἐτεοβουτάδης καὶ τίς ὁ Μανῆς ὁ νεώνητος· καὶ τὸ δημοτικὸν αὐτῆς μάλα φιλόσοφον, καὶ τὸ λιτὸν καὶ τὸ αὐτόσκευον μάλα φιλόσοφον, καὶ τὸ μὴ βίαιον εὐσεβές, καὶ τὸ πανταχοῦ παρεῖναι, καὶ μὴ καταλαβεῖν ὕδωρ ἢ πέτραν ἢ χάσμα γῆς, τοῦτο μέντοι γε θεοειδέστατον· τὸ δὲ μήτε πρὸς μίαν προᾶξιν ἀσχόλους ἡμᾶς διὰ τὴν τοιάνδε μαντικὴν γίνεσθαι, μηδὲ ἀφαιρεῖσθαι καιρὸν ὑπ' αὐτῆς, τοῦτο καὶ πρῶτον ἄξιον ἦν εἰρησθαι. οὐδεὶς γὰρ ἀπολιπὼν τι τῶν προῦργου καὶ ἐν χερσὶν ᾤχετο καθευδήσων οἴκαδε, συγκείμενον αὐτῷ πρὸς ἐνύπνιον· ἀλλ' ὁ χρόνος, ὃν ἀνάγκη τῷ ζῶντι δαπανᾶν εἰς τὴν φύσιν, οὐκ ἀρκούσης ἡμῖν τῆς οὐσίας εἰς ἐνέργειαν ἐργηγοσεως, οὗτος ἤκει κομίζων ἀνθρώποις τοῦτο δὴ τὸ λεγόμενον, ἔργου μείζον τὸ πάρεργον, ἐπισυντιθείς τὸ αἰρετὸν τῷ ἀναγκαίῳ, καὶ τὸ εὖ εἶναι τῷ εἶναι.

Ἄλλ' αἶ γε προγνώσεις αἶ διὰ τῶν ποικίλων ὀργάνων παραγινόμεναι, ἀγαπητὸν εἰ τὴν πλείω μερίδα τοῦ βίου νειμάμεναι, παραχωρήσειάν τι ταῖς λοιπαῖς ἀπάσαις καὶ χρεῖαις καὶ πράξεσιν. ὣν εἰ πάνυ πρὸς τινι γένοιο, χαλεπῶς ἂν εἰς αὐτὴν ὑπὸ τῆς μαντικῆς ὠφελοῖο· οὔτε γὰρ καιροῦ παντός, οὔτε τόπου παντός δέξασθαι κατασκευὴν τελετῆς, οὔτε πᾶσα εὐμάρεια συμπεριφέρειν τὰ ἐπ' αὐτὴν ὄργανα. ἵνα γὰρ ἄλλο μηδέν, ἀλλ' ἐφ' οἷς πρώην ἐστενοχωρήθη τὰ κολαστήρια, ἀπήνης ἐστὶν ἢ νεῶς κοίλης φορτία, μεθ' ὧν ἄλλα μέρη τῆς τελετῆς, ἀπογραφεῖς ἄνδρες καὶ μάρτυρες (οὕτω γὰρ εἰπεῖν ἀληθέστερον), τοῦ καθ' ἡμᾶς χρόνου πολλὰ διὰ τῶν ὑπηρετησάντων τοῖς νόμοις καταμηνύσαντος, ὑφ' ὧν ἐξαγορευθέντα δήμου βεβήλου γέγονε θεάματά τε καὶ ἀκροάματα. πρὸς οὖν τῷ σχέτιον εἶναι

chose trierarchs, from the highest-rated taxpayers. And it certainly demands great expense and no little good fortune to bring together a Cretan herb, an Egyptian feather, an Iberian bone,<sup>93</sup> or whatever wonderful thing grows or is nurtured in some corner of land or sea, 'by setting sun or rising'.<sup>94</sup> These, and many things of the same sort, are collected<sup>95</sup> by those who practise the art of external divination; and what private individual could meet these demands from his own resources?

Dreams, on the other hand, are seen by the man worth five hundred medimni, by the man worth three hundred, [C] and no less by the 'Zeugite'<sup>96</sup> and the subsistence farmer on marginal land, but also by the rower at the oar, the worker, the immigrant who has citizen rights and the one who pays residence tax. It does not matter to God who is an Eteoboutades<sup>97</sup> and who a Manes,<sup>98</sup> just bought as a slave. The democratic nature of this <form of divination> is very humane; its simple do-it-yourself quality is very philosophical; its unforcedness is pious; its universal availability, its not needing some water or rock or chasm in the earth to inhabit, is the most divine feature of all. But I ought to have said at the outset, that this kind of divination does [D] not leave us without leisure for other occupations, nor are we robbed of time by it. No one abandons urgent work and goes home to sleep because he has an appointment with a dream! Instead, the time which every living creature has necessarily to spend to support its nature, because the resources of our being are not enough to keep us active and awake, that same time brings humans the proverbial 'sideshow'<sup>99</sup> that is more important than the 'main show', adding the desirable to the necessary, well-being to mere being.

With prophecies dependent on elaborate equipment on the other hand, one would be only too happy if, occupying as they do a major part of life, they [145A] were to leave any spare time for all our other needs and actions. If you *are* deeply into any of these, you will hardly get any help in it from <this sort of> prophecy. For it is not every time and every place that allows the preparation of the rites, nor is it always easy to cart the necessary apparatus around with you. To speak of nothing else, but only of the circumstances which lately filled the houses of correction,<sup>100</sup> there are waggon-loads and ship-loads, with record-keepers and witnesses as part of the ritual (for that is the right way to describe it<sup>101</sup>). [B] Our age has brought many such things to light by the agency of the servants of the laws; once thus published, these have become the spectacle and entertainment of a profane public. As well as its being disgraceful to



συγκύπτειν εἰς τὰ τοιάδε, ὡς <δ'> ἔγωγε\* πείθομαι, καὶ ἀπηχθη-  
 μένον θεῶ· τὸ γὰρ μὴ ἐθελοντὴν περιμένειν ὄντιν οὖν, ἀλλ'  
 ὠθισμῶ καὶ μοχλείᾳ κινεῖν, ὁμοίον ἐστὶ βιαζομένοις, ὁ μὴδ' ἐπ'  
 ἀνθρώπων γενόμενον ὁ νομοθέτης εἴασεν ἀτιμώρητον.

Πρὸς οὖν ἅπασιν τούτοις, ἅπερ ἐστὶ χαλεπά, τοῖς οὕτω μετι-  
 οῦσι τὸ μέλλον ὑπάρχει καὶ τὸ διακόπτεσθαι τὴν ἐνέργειαν, καὶ  
 ὑπερορίοις ἰοῦσιν, ὥσπερ ἀπολείπειν τὴν τέχνην. ἔργον γὰρ οὐ C  
 μικρὸν ἀπανταχοῦ βαδίζοντας σκευαγωγεῖν τὰ ἐπὶ ταύτην ἐφό-  
 δια.

Ἀλλὰ τῆς γε δι' ὄνειρων μαντικῆς αὐτὸς τίς ἐστὶν ἕκαστος  
 ὄργανον· ὥστε οὐδὲ βουλομένοις ἔξεστιν ἀπολιπεῖν τὸ χρηστή-  
 ριον· ἀλλὰ καὶ μένοντι συνοικουρεῖ, καὶ ἀποδημούντι  
 συμπεριέροχεται, καὶ συστρατεύεται, καὶ συμπολιτεύεται, καὶ  
 συγγεωργεῖ, καὶ συνεμπορεύεται. ταύτην οὐδὲ οἱ νόμοι τῆς βα-  
 σκάνου πολιτείας κωλύουσιν, οὐδ' ἂν, εἰ βούλοιντο, δύναιντο  
 κατὰ γὰρ τῶν χρωμένων οὐκ ἔχουσιν ἔλεγχον. τί δ' ἂν καὶ ἀδι- D  
 κοίμεν καθεύδοντες; οὐδ' ἂν διατάξαιτο τύραννος ὄνειρων ἀθε-  
 ἀμονας εἶναι, οὐκ εἰ μὴ γε καὶ τὸ καθεύδειν ἐκ τῆς ἀρχομένης  
 ἀποκηρύξειεν. ἀλλὰ τοῦτο ἀνοήτου μὲν ἐστὶν, οἷς ἀδύνατα βού-  
 λεται, ἀσεβοῦς δέ, οἷς ἐναντία νομοθετεῖ τῆ τε φύσει καὶ τῷ  
 θεῶ.

(13) Ἰητέον οὖν ἐπ' αὐτὴν καὶ γυναικὶ καὶ ἀνδρὶ, καὶ πρεσ-  
 βύτῃ καὶ νέῳ, καὶ πένητι καὶ πλουσίῳ, καὶ ἰδιώτῃ καὶ ἀρχοντι,  
 καὶ ἀστικῷ καὶ ἀγροδιαίτῳ, καὶ βαναύσῳ καὶ ῥήτορι. οὐ γένος, 146A  
 οὐχ ἡλικίαν, οὐ τύχην, οὐ τέχνην ἀποκηρύττει. πᾶσι πανταχοῦ  
 πάρεστι, προφήτις ἔτοιμος, ἀγαθὴ σύμβουλος, ἐχέμυθος. αὕτη  
 μυσταγωγός τε καὶ μύστις, εὐαγγελίσασθαι μὲν ἀγαθόν, ὥστε  
 μακροτέραν ποιῆσαι τὴν ἡδονὴν προαρπάσαντα τὴν ἀπόλαυ-  
 σιν, καταμηνύσαι δὲ τὸ χεῖρον, ὥστε φυλάξασθαι καὶ προαπο-  
 κρούσασθαι. καὶ γὰρ ὅσα ἐλπίδες, αἱ τὸ ἀνθρώπων βόσκουσι  
 γένος, ὀρέγουσι χρησά τε καὶ μείλιχα, καὶ ὅσα φόβος ἔχει προ-  
 μηθῆ τε καὶ ὀνήσιμα, πάντα τοῖς ὄνειροις ἐνι, καὶ ὑπ' οὐδενός  
 οὕτως ἐλπίζειν ἀναπειθόμεθα. καίτοι τὸ χρῆμα τῶν ἐλπίδων B  
 οὕτως ἐστὶν ἐν τῇ φύσει πολὺ καὶ σωτήριον, ὥστε φασὶν οἱ κομ-  
 ψοὶ σοφισταὶ μὴδ' ἂν ἐθελῆσαι ζῆν τοὺς ἀνθρώπους ἔχοντας ὡς  
 ἐγένοντο τὴν ἀρχὴν. ἀπαγορεύειν γὰρ ἄν\* ὑπὸ τῶν περικεχυ-  
 μένων τὸν βίον δεινῶν, εἰ μὴ τὰς ἐλπίδας αὐτοῖς ἐνέχεεν εἰς τὴν  
 φύσιν ὁ Προμηθεύς, διαμονῆς φάρμακον, ὑφ' ὧν παραγόμενοι  
 πιστότερον ἡγῆνται τοῦ φαινομένου τὸ προσδοκώμενον· αἱ δὲ

stoop to such devices, it is also, I believe, hateful to God, since not to wait for another to act voluntarily, but to employ pressure and levers to shift him, is much like using violence, which the lawgiver does not allow to go unpunished even against humans.

Over and above all these difficulties, which are real, those who pursue the future after this fashion are liable also to have their activity interrupted, and, if they go abroad, to leave their skill, as [C] it were, behind them. It is no light matter, if you travel everywhere, to take the apparatus needed for this in your baggage.

With dream divination, on the other hand, everyone is his own instrument. You cannot leave your oracle behind, even if you want to. It stays at home with you, it travels with you, it is with you on campaign, in politics, on the farm, in your business. Even the laws of a malevolent government do not forbid it – they could not, even if they wished, for they have no proof against those who practise it. What crime would we be [D] committing when we are asleep? No tyrant could order us not to see dreams, unless he were to banish sleep too from his dominions. And that would be the act both of a fool, inasmuch as he wants the impossible, and of an impious person, inasmuch as he is passing a law contrary to nature and to God.

(v)

13. So we must all apply ourselves to dream divination – woman and man, old and young, poor and rich, private citizen and ruler, townsman and countrydweller, tradesman and orator.<sup>102</sup> [146A] There is no gender, age, fortune or skill that it excludes. It is available to everyone everywhere, a prophetess always at hand, a good counsellor, and discreet; it is both initiator and initiate, able to bring good news and lengthen the pleasure of it by anticipating the enjoyment, and also to give notice of trouble, so that we can guard against it and take precautions to fend it off. All the good and pleasant things that hopes, which ‘nourish the race of men’,<sup>103</sup> offer, and all the forethought and profit that fear gives us – all this is to be found in dreams. Nothing else so much [B] convinces us to hope. And hope is so powerful and so salutary a thing in nature that clever sophists say that humans would not have wanted to live in their original condition, for they would have given up in the face of the dangers surrounding their life, had not Prometheus injected hope into their nature,<sup>104</sup> the drug of perseverance, which has led them to think expectation more trustworthy than appearance. Such is the

τοσαύτην ἔχουσι τὴν ἰσχύν, ὥστε ὁ δεδεμένος ἐν πέδαις, ὅταν ἐφῆ τῷ βουλομένῳ τῆς γνώμης ἐλπίσαι, καὶ λέλυται, καὶ στρατεύεται, καὶ αὐτίκα διμοιρίτης ἐστί, καὶ μετὰ μικρὸν λοχαγός, C  
 ἔπειτα στρατηγός, καὶ νικᾷ καὶ θύει καὶ στεφανηφορεῖ καὶ παρατίθεται τράπεζαν, εἰ μὲν βούλοιο, Σικελικὴν, εἰ δὲ βούλοιο, Μηδικὴν, καὶ μέντοι τοῖν ποδοῖν ἐπιλήσμων ἐστίν, ἕως εἶναι βούλεται στρατηγός.

Καίτοι πᾶν τοῦτο ὕπαρ ἐστὶν ὄνειρώττοντος καὶ ἐγρηγορότος ἐνύπνιον· περὶ γὰρ ταῦτῶν ὑποκείμενον ἄμφω συνίστανται, τὴν φανταστικὴν φύσιν, ἣν ὅταν μὲν ἡμεῖς εἰδωλοποιεῖν ἐθελήσωμεν, ἐν τοῦτο παρέχεται χρήσιμον· ἐπαλείφει τὸν βίον ἡμῶν εὐθυμία, καὶ κολακεύουσα τὴν ψυχὴν ταῖς πεπλανημέναις ἐλπίσιν, ἀναλαμβάνει τῶν δυσχερῶν τῆς αἰσθήσεως· ὅταν D  
 δὲ αὐτεπίτακτος ἡμῖν ἐλπίδα προβάληται – τοῦτο δὲ γίνεται καθευδόντων –, ἐνέχυρον ἔχομεν τοῦ θεοῦ τὴν τῶν ὕπνων ὑπόσχεσιν· ὥστε ἤδη τις εὐτρεπίσας τὴν γνώμην εἰς τὸ χρῆσασθαι μείζοσι πράγμασιν, ἃ προὔτεινεν αὐτῷ τὸ ἐνύπνιον, διττὸν ἠνέγκατο κέρδος, τό τε ἡσθῆναι πρὸ τῶν πραγμάτων καὶ τὸ παραγενομένοις ἐπισταμένως χρῆσασθαι τῷ πάλαι προεσκέφθαι περὶ αὐτῶν, ὡς προσηκόντων αὐτοῦ τῷ βίῳ. ὥστε ἦν 147A  
 ὕμνησε τὴν ἐλπίδα ὁ Πίνδαρος περὶ ἀνδρὸς λέγων εὐδαίμονος, ὅτι ἄρα αὐτῷ γλυκεῖα καρδίαν ἀτάλλοισα κουροτρόφος συναορεῖ ἐλπίς, ἃ μάλιστα θνατῶν πολὺστροφον γνώμαν κυβερνᾷ, φαίη τις ἂν οὐ περὶ τῆς ὕπαρ λέγεσθαι, τῆς ἀπατηλῆς, ἣν ἡμεῖς ἑαυτοῖς διαπλάττομεν. ἀλλ' ὅλον τοῦτο μικροῦ μέρους ἐνυπνίων ἔπαινος εἴρηται τῷ Πινδάρῳ.

Ἡ περὶ τοὺς ὄνειρους οὖν μαντικὴ, σὺν τέχνῃ μειοῦσα τὸ πεφηνός, βεβαιότεραν τὴν ἐλπίδα παρέχεται, ὥστε μὴ τοῦ φαυλοτέρου γένους δοκεῖν. ἡ δὲ Ὀμήρου Πηνελόπη, διττὰς B  
 ὑποτίθεται πύλας ὄνειρων, καὶ ποιεῖ τοὺς ἡμίσεις ἀπατηλοῦς, ὅτι σοφὴ τὰ περὶ ὄνειρων οὐκ ἦν· εἰ γὰρ ἠπίστατο τέχνην ἐπ' αὐτούς, πάντας ἂν διὰ τῶν κεράτων παρήνεγκεν. πεποίηται γοῦν ἐξελεγχομένη καὶ ἀμαθίαν ὀφλισκάνουσα περὶ αὐτὴν δήπου τὴν ὄψιν, ἣ μὴ δέον ἠπίστησε· χήνες μὲν μνηστῆρες· ἐγὼ δὲ τοι αἰετὸς ὄρνις, εἴμ' Ὀδυσσεύς. ὁ δὲ ἦν ὁμωρόφιος, καὶ πρὸς C  
 ὄν ἠδολέσχει περὶ τῆς ὄψεως\*.

Δοκῶ μοι διὰ τῶν τοιούτων ἀκούειν Ὀμήρου λέγοντος, ὡς οὐκ ἄξιον ἀπογινώσκειν {οὔτε} ὄνειρων, οὐδὲ τὴν ἀσθένειαν τῶν χρωμένων ἐπὶ τὴν φύσιν μετατιθέναι τῶν ὀρωμένων. παρ'

strength of hopes that the prisoner in fetters,<sup>105</sup> once he allows his will to hope, is freed, [C] becomes a soldier, then instantly a lieutenant, then a captain, then a general, wins a battle, sacrifices, is garlanded, and has set before him, at his choice, a banquet of Sicilian or Median fare.<sup>106</sup> And as long as he chooses to be a general, he forgets his feet!

All this is the dreamer's waking vision and the wakeful man's dream;<sup>107</sup> for both <hope and dream> are states of the same subject, the imaginative nature. When we *wish* it to make images, it does us just one useful service: it covers our life with [D] contentment, and, by flattering the soul with deluding hopes, relieves her of the perception of disagreeable things. When, on the other hand, it offers us hope without being told to do so (which happens when we are asleep), we have the dream's promise guaranteed by God. Thus it has happened before now that someone who has prepared his mind to deal with greater affairs offered by his dream, has profited twice over, by having pleasure in advance of the event and by handling the circumstances knowledgeably when they happen, [147A] because he has already given thought to them as something important in his life. So the hope which Pindar praises when he says of a fortunate man that 'With him dwells sweet hope, heart-fostering nurse of youth which most of all steers mortals' fickle mind',<sup>108</sup> is not (we may say) the deceptive hope of waking hours which we fashion for ourselves: the whole passage is Pindar's praise of a small class of dreams.

Divination by dreams, therefore, by studying the appearances scientifically, gives a more secure hope, and should not be [B] thought to come under the inferior category. Homer's Penelope assumes two 'gates' of dreams,<sup>109</sup> and makes half of all dreams deceptive. She was not wise on the subject of dreams; if she had understood the art relating to them she would have made them all pass through the gate of horn. She is in fact represented in the poem as being proved wrong and guilty of ignorance in respect of the very vision which she wrongly disbelieved: 'The geese are the suitors: I am the eagle.' 'I am Odysseus.'<sup>110</sup> [C] He was actually under the same roof; it was he to whom she was chattering about her dream.<sup>111</sup>

In such passages, I fancy I hear Homer saying that one should not lose confidence in dreams, or transfer the weakness of the dreamer to the nature of the visions. On this principle, Agamemnon too was not

ὁ μὴδὲ Ἀγαμέμνων δίκαιός ἐστιν ἐγκαλεῖν ἀπάτην ὀνειρώων, κακῶς ὑπολαβὼν περὶ τῆς νίκης τῆς μαντευτῆς· *θωρῆξαι σε κέλευσε κάρη κομόωντας Ἀχαιοὺς / πανσυδίη· νῦν γὰρ κεν ἔλοις πόλιν εὐρυάγνιαν*. πρόεισιν οὖν ὡς αὐτοβοεῖ τὴν πόλιν αἰρήσων, ὅτι τοῦ πανσυδίη παρήκουσεν, ὃ φησιν, εἰ πρὸς ἓνα τὸ Ἐλληνικὸν ἐξοπλίσειεν· τῷ δ' Ἀχιλλεύς τε καὶ ἡ Μυρμιδόνων φάλαγξ ἀπόμαχος ἦν, τὸ εὐψυχότατον τοῦ στρατεύματος. D

(14) Ἄλις ἐγκωμίων, καὶ καταβάλωμεν. ἀλλ' ἢ παρὰ μικρὸν ἀγνωμοσύνης ἐάλωκα· ὅτι μὲν ἀγαθὴ συνεκπλευσαί τε καὶ συγκαταμείναι, καὶ συνεμπορεύσασθαι, καὶ συστρατηγῆσαι καὶ πᾶσι πάντα συγκατεργάσασθαι, ταῦτα μικρὸν\* πρόσθεν εἶπον, τὰ δὲ εἰς αὐτὸν ἐμὲ παρ' αὐτῆς οὕτω δημοσιεύσας. 148A

Καίτοι γε οὐδὲν οὕτω συνδιατίθεται τοῖς ἀνθρώποις ὡς συμφιλοσοφεί, καὶ πολλὰ τῶν ὕπαρ ἀπόρων, ἐπειδὴ καθεύδοιμεν, τὰ μὲν ὅλα ἔφηνε, τὰ δὲ συνηυπόρησε. γίνεται γὰρ τι τοιοῦτον, ὡς νῦν μὲν εὐοκίεμαι πυνθανομένῳ, νῦν δὲ αὐτὸν εἶναι τὸν ἐξευρίσκοντα καὶ διανοούμενον· ἐμοὶ δὴ θαμὰ καὶ συγγράμματα συνεξείργασται. καὶ γὰρ νοῦν ἠτύτρεπισε, καὶ λέξιν ἐνήρμοσε, καὶ τὸ μὲν διέγραψε, τὸ δὲ ἀντεισήγαγεν. ἤδη δέ ποτε καὶ τὴν ὄλην κατασκευὴν τῆς γλώττης ὑλομανοῦσάν τε καὶ φλεγμαίνουσαν ὀνομάτων καινότητι, ζήλω τῆς ἐκφύλου, τῆς ἀρχαίας Ἀτθίδος, ἢ δὲ διὰ θεοῦ νουθητήσασα – τὸ μὲν τι εἰπόντος, τὸ δὲ τί ἐστιν εἰπόντος, τὸ δὲ δεῖξαντος ὄχθους τινὰς ἀπολεαίνειν ἐμπεφυκότας τῇ γλώττῃ\* – ἐπανήγαγέ τε ἐς τὸ σῶφρον, καὶ τὸ οἰδοῦν ἐκόλασε. B

Καὶ κυνηγετοῦντί ποτε συνεπαλαμῆσατο μηχανὰς ἐπὶ τὰ σὺν τέχνῃ τῶν θηρίων καὶ θέοντα καὶ κρυπτόμενα, καὶ ἀπειπόντι δέ ποτε καὶ ἀναζευγνύντι προσεδρεῖαν ἐπέταξε, καὶ τὴν τύχην εἰς κυρίαν ὑπέσχετο, ὥστε ἥδιον θυραυλῆσαι πιστεύσαντα· ἢ δέ, ἐπειδὴ παρῆν, ἢ κυρία, καὶ ἢ τύχη παρῆν, ἢ γε ὑπέδειξεν ἐσμούςς δικτυαλῶτων καὶ δοριαλῶτων θηρίων. C

Ἐμοὶ μὲν οὖν βίος βιβλία καὶ θήρα, ὅτι μὴ πεπρέσβευκά ποτε. ὡς οὐκ ὄφελον ἀποφράδας ἰδεῖν ἐνιαυτούς τρεῖς ἐκ τοῦ βίου· καὶ μέντοι τότε πλείστα δὴ καὶ μέγιστα ὠνάμην αὐτῆς. ἐπιβουλάς τε γὰρ ἐπ' ἐμὲ ψυχοπομπῶν γοήτων ἀκύρους ἐποί-

justified in blaming the deceitfulness of dreams when he made a wrong inference about the prophesied victory: '<Zeus> has bidden you arm the long-haired Achaeans / in their full strength: for now you may take the wide city.'<sup>112</sup> [D] He proceeds as if he could take the city just by shouting, because he misunderstood 'in their full strength', which means 'if he armed the Greek host to a man' – whereas Achilles and the phalanx of the Myrmidons, the bravest part of the army, were absent from his battle-line.

(vi)

14. Enough of encomium: let us drop this. No; I am near to being convicted of ingratitude! That <this kind of divination> is a good companion on a voyage or at home, in business or in command of troops – indeed to help anyone to achieve anything – all this [148A] I mentioned just now,<sup>113</sup> but without hitherto making public what it has done for me personally.

Yet there is nothing in which it cooperates with men more than in philosophy. Many problems which have puzzled us in waking hours it has either revealed completely or helped to solve in our sleep. What happens is that sometimes one seems to be asking questions and sometimes to be oneself the discoverer and the thinker. Certainly it has often collaborated with me in writing books. It has shaped my thought, fitted my words to it, deleted one <phrase> [B] and substituted another. Sometimes, when my whole style was running riot<sup>114</sup> and inflamed with novelties of vocabulary, owing to my passion for the *recherché*, the ancient Attic, <the vision> has conveyed a reproof through the voice of a god – who says something or explains something or instructs me how to smooth away the awkward lumps growing on my tongue<sup>115</sup> – and so has restored it to sanity and controlled its turgidity.

[C] Again, once when I was out hunting, it helped me to devise stratagems against animals which were very clever at running away and hiding; and once, when I had given up and was going to break camp, it commanded me to keep up my watch, and promised success for a certain day, so that I was happy to stay overnight in the field in perfect confidence; the 'certain day' arrived, and our good luck with it, which showed us hordes of animals to net or to spear.

Now my life is all books and hunting, except that I once went on an embassy.<sup>116</sup> Would that I had not seen those three abominable years taken out of my life! Yet even then I enjoyed very many great benefits from dream-divination. It [D] nullified the plots of necromantic magi-

ησε, καὶ φήνασα καὶ ἐξ ἀπασῶν περιώσασα, καὶ κοινὰ συνδι- D  
ώκησεν ὥστε ἄριστα ἔχειν ταῖς πόλεσι, καὶ ἐς τὴν βασιλέως  
ὀμιλίαν τῶν πώποτε Ἑλλήνων θαρραλεώτερον παρεστήσατο.

Ἄλλοις δὲ ἄλλων μέλει· ἡ δὲ πάρεστι πᾶσι δαίμων ἀγαθὸς  
οὔσα ἐκάστω, καὶ ἐπιτεχνωμένη τι ταῖς ἐν ἐρηγοροσί φροντί-  
σιν. οὕτω σοφὸν τι χρῆμα ψυχὴ σχολάσασα τοῦ κατακλυσμοῦ  
τῶν ἀγοραίων αἰσθήσεων ἐπεισαγουσῶν αὐτῇ παντοδαπὸν τὸ  
ἀλλότριον. ἅ τε γὰρ ἔχει τὰ εἶδη καὶ ὅσα παρὰ νοῦ δέχεται, 149A  
μόνη γενομένη παρέχει τοῖς ἐστραμμένοις ἐπὶ τὰ εἶσω, καὶ τὰ  
παρὰ τοῦ θεοῦ πορθμεύει. συγγίνεται γὰρ αὐτῇ καὶ θεὸς ἐγκό-  
σμιος οὕτως ἐχούση, τῷ τὴν φύσιν αὐτῆς ὁμόθεν εἶναι.

(15) Τὰ μὲν δὴ γένη ταῦτα τῶν ἐνυπνίων θεσπεσιώτερά  
ἐστὶ, καὶ ἢ πάντως ἢ παρὰ μικρὸν πάντως τρανὰ καὶ σαφῆ, καὶ  
ἤκιστα τέχνης δεόμενα· ἀλλὰ ταῦτα μόνοις ἂν παραγένοιτο  
τοῖς κατ' ἀρετὴν ζῶσιν εἴτε φρονήσει πεπορισμένην, εἴτ' ἔθεισιν  
ἐγγενομένην. εἰ δέ ποτε καὶ ἄλλω τῷ, μόλις μὲν, ἀλλὰ γένοιτ'  
ἂν· πάντως γε οὐκ ἐπὶ σμικρῷ δὴ τινι τῶν ἀρίστων γενῶν ἐνύ-  
πνιον τῷ τυχόντι παρέσται. τὸ δὲ λοιπὸν καὶ πολὺ καὶ κοινότα- B  
τον γένος, ἐκεῖνο ἂν εἴη τὸ ἠνιγμένον, καὶ ἐφ' ὃ δεῖ τὴν τέχνην  
παρασκευάσασθαι. γένεσιν τε γὰρ ἔσχεν, ὡς οὕτως εἰπεῖν, ἄτο-  
πον καὶ ἀλλόκοτον, καὶ ὡς ἐκ τῶν τοιούτων βλαστῆσαν ἀσαφέ-  
στατον πρόεισιν.

Ἔχει γὰρ ὧδε περὶ αὐτοῦ· ὅσα φύσις ἔχει πάντων ὄντων,  
γενομένων, μελλόντων – ἐπεὶ καὶ τοῦτο τρόπος ὑπάρξεως –  
εἰδῶλα ἀπορρεῖ, καὶ τῆς ὑποστάσεως αὐτῶν ἀποπάλλεται. εἰ  
γὰρ ἕκαστον αἰσθητὸν εἶδος ἐστὶν ὕλη συνδυασθέν, ἐφωράσα- C  
μεν δὲ τῆς ὕλης ἐν τῷ συνθέτῳ τὴν ἐκροήν, ὁ λόγος αἰρεῖ καὶ  
τὴν τῶν εἰδῶλων φύσιν ἐξοχετεύεσθαι, ἵνα κατ' ἄμφω τὰ μέρη  
τῆν τοῦ ὄντος ἀξίαν ἀρνήσῃται τὰ γινόμενα.

Τούτων ἀπάντων τῶν ἀπορρεόντων εἰδῶλων τὸ φανταστι-  
κὸν πνεῦμα κάτοπτρόν ἐστιν ἐμφανέστατον. περινοστοῦντα  
γὰρ ἄλλως καὶ διολισθαίνοντα στάσεως τῇ τε ἀοριστίᾳ τοῦ εἶ-

cians against me, revealed them and brought me safely through them all. It helped me to manage the public business in the way best for the cities, and made me more confident than any Greek ever was in my address to the emperor.

(vii)

People all have their various interests; but <dream-divination> is accessible to all, everyone's good *daimon*, contriving plans to supplement the thoughts of our waking hours – such a wise thing is the soul freed from the flood of the everyday sense-impressions that bring down upon her alien concerns of every kind! For, when [149A] she is alone, she offers to those who have turned inwards both the forms which she holds and everything that she receives from Mind; and she ferries over to them whatever comes to her from the divine. For a cosmic god associates with a soul in this condition, because that soul's nature comes from the same source.

(viii)

15. These kinds of dreams are the more divine, and are, in all or almost all cases, plain and clear, and not in need of art. But these will only occur to those who live according to virtue, whether this is acquired by wisdom or ingrained by habit. They *may* occur to others, but hardly ever, and certainly a dream of the best kind will never come to an ordinary [B] individual for any trivial reason. The other type, numerous and most common, is the enigmatic dream, to interpret which we do need to acquire the art. For its origin, so to speak, was strange and weird, and coming from such beginnings it emerges as very obscure.

Its story is as follows. From all things that are within nature, present, past, or future (for the future too is a mode of existence), there flow out images (*eidōla*), and these spin away from their substance. For, if every perceptible thing is form combined with matter, and we have found that in the compound [C] matter flows away, then the argument demands that the substance of images also should be channelled off, so that in both cases 'that which comes to be' renounces the status of reality.

The imaginative *pneuma* is the clearest mirror of all these outflowing images. Wandering purposelessly around and slipping off their base because of the indeterminateness of their being and because they are not



ναι καὶ τῷ παρὰ μηδενὸς τῶν ὄντων ἐπιγινώσκεισθαι, ἐπειδὴν ἐγκύρωση τοῖς ψυχικοῖς πνεύμασιν, εἰδώλοις μὲν οὖσιν, ἔδραν δὲ ἔχουσιν εἰς τὴν φύσιν, τούτοις προσαπερείδονται καὶ ὡσπερ εἰς D  
 ἐστίαν αὐτὰ ἀναπαύονται. τῶν μὲν οὖν γενομένων, ἄτε ἤδη παρελθόντων εἰς τὴν τοῦ εἶναι ἐνέργειαν, σαφῆ τὰ εἰδῶλα ἀποστέλλεται, μέχρις ἂν ὑπὸ χρόνου πλήθους ἀμνηνὰ καὶ ἐξίτηλα γένηται· τῶν δὲ ὄντων, ἄτε ἐστώτων ἔτι, μᾶλλον ἔμβια καὶ ἀριδηλότερα, ἀοριστότερα δὲ τῶν μελλόντων καὶ ἀδιάκριτα· προκυλινδήματα γὰρ ἐστὶν οὐπω παρόντων, φύσεως ἀτελοῦς ἐξανθήματα, οἷον ἀποσκοιζῶντα καὶ ἐξαλλόμενα σπερμάτων ἀπο- 150A  
 κειμένων αἰνίγματα. ταῦτη καὶ δεῖ τέχνης ἐπὶ τὸ μέλλον\*. ἐσκι-αγραφημένα γὰρ ἐπ' αὐτοῦ πρόεισιν εἰδῶλα, καὶ οὐκ ἐμφανεῖς εἰκόνες, ὡσπερ ἀπὸ τῶν ὄντων· θαυμαστά γέ τοι τὴν φύσιν ἐστὶ καὶ οὕτως ἔχοντα, ὅτι ἀπὸ μήπω γενομένων ἐγένετο.

**(16)** Ἀλλ' ἤδη γὰρ τι καὶ περὶ τῆς τέχνης ῥητέον, ὡς ἂν παραγέναιτο. ἄριστον μὲν οὖν οὕτως παρεσκευακέναι τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ θεῖον, ὡς ἐφορείας ἀξιουῖσθαι νοῦ καὶ θεοῦ, ἀλλὰ μὴ δεξαμενὴν εἶναι τῶν ἀορίστων εἰδώλων. τροφή δὲ ἀρίστη διὰ τε φιλοσοφίας γαλήνην ἐμποιοῦσης παθῶν (ὕφ' ὧν κινήθωντων B  
 τὸ πνεῦμα, καθάπερ χώρα, καταλαμβάνεται) καὶ διὰ μετρίας διαίτης καὶ σώφρονος, ἥκιστα μὲν ἐξοιστρώσης τὸ ζῶον, ἥκιστα δὲ σάλον ἐμποιοῦσης εἰς τὸ ἔσχατον σῶμα· φθάνοι γὰρ ἂν ὁ κλόνος μέχρι τοῦ πρώτου, τὸ δὲ ἀτρεμές τε δεῖ καὶ ἀκλόνητον εἶναι. ἀλλ' ἐπειδὴ τοῦτο συνεύξασθαι μὲν ἅπαντι ῥάδιον, συγκατεργάσασθαι δὲ ἀπάντων ἀμηχανώτατον, ἡμεῖς δὲ βουλόμεθα μηδενὶ τὸν ὕπνον ἀνόνητον εἶναι, φέρε τινὰ κἂν τοῖς ἀορίστοις ὄρον ζητήσωμεν, τοῦτ' ἔστι τέχνην περὶ τὰ εἰδῶλα συστησώμεθα.

Ἔχει δὲ οὕτως· ὡσπερ ἐπὶ τῶν διαποντίων πλεόντων, ὅταν ποτὲ σκοπέλω τινὶ προεντύχωσι, κἄτ' ἀποβάντες ἰδῶσι πόλιν C  
 ἀνδρῶν, ὅσάκις ἂν τὸν αὐτὸν σκόπελον ἰδῶσι, τὴν αὐτὴν πόλιν σημαίνονται· καὶ ὡσπερ ἐπὶ τῶν στρατηγῶν, οὓς οὐχ ὀρώντες ἀπὸ τῶν προδρομῶν ἴσμεν ὅτι παρέσσονται – τῶν γὰρ αὐτῶν φανέντων ἀεὶ ποτε παρεγένοντο –, οὕτω καὶ τοῖς εἰδώλοις ἐκάστοτε σημαίνόμεθα τὴν τῶν ἐσομένων ἐνέργειαν· πρόδρομα γὰρ ἐστὶ ταῦτ' αὐτῶν\*, καὶ ὅμοια τῶν ὁμοίων. ὡσπερ οὖν κυβερνήτου κακία ταυτοῦ σκοπέλου φανέντος μὴ ἐπιγνώσκειν μηδ' ἔχειν εἰπεῖν παρ' ἧντινα γῆν τὸ σκάφος σαλεύει, καὶ ὁ τοιοῦτος ἀτέκμαρτα πλεῖ, οὕτως ὁ τὴν αὐτὴν ὄψιν πολλά- D

recognized by any really existing being, when then they encounter psychic *pneumata* (which are indeed images (*eidōla*) but do have a fixed place [D] in nature), they fasten themselves to these and find in them a home, as it were, wherein to rest. Now the images emitted from things which have happened, as these have already passed over into the activity<sup>117</sup> of being, are clear, until the passage of time renders them faint and feeble. Images from present things, which are still set firm, are therefore more vivid and distinct, while those from the future are less defined and less distinct, for they are the harbingers<sup>118</sup> of things not yet present, the eruption of a nature still incomplete, [150A] riddles that skip and leap out, as it were, from hidden seeds. This is also why we need art to view the future:<sup>119</sup> the images that come from it are vague sketches, not clear pictures, such as come from present things. Yet even so they are marvellous in their nature, because they have come to be out of what has not yet come to be.

16. It is time now to say something about how this art can be acquired. The best thing is to have prepared the divine *pneuma*<sup>120</sup> to be worthy of being supervised by Mind and God, and not to be a receptacle of the ill-defined images. Its best nurture is, first, by means of philosophy, which produces a calm state of the passions [B] (for, if these are excited, the territory of the *pneuma*, as it were, comes under enemy occupation); and secondly, by a moderate, sober life-style, which avoids over-exciting the living creature and avoids producing a turbulence in the material body – for such disturbance would reach the first body, which ought to remain at rest and undisturbed. But since it is easy for anyone to pray for this, and uniquely difficult to bring it to pass, and since we want no one's sleep to be without profit, let us look for some definition even in the undefined – that is to say, let us put together an Art of Images.

It goes like this: sailors who [C] cross the seas, if they have once encountered a rock and disembarked and seen an inhabited city, thereafter, whenever they see the same rock, infer that the same city is there. So also with generals: though we do not see themselves, we foresee their coming from their outriders, because they always have appeared when the same outriders have been seen. In the same way, we regularly infer the realization of future events from images (*eidōla*), because the same images are precursors of the same things, and like images of like things. So, just as it is a bad fault in a helmsman if he fails to recognize the same rock when it comes in sight and cannot say what coast it is off which his [D] ship is tossing – a helmsman like that is steering blind! – similarly, if

κικ ιδών, εἰ μὴ κατεσημήνατο τίνος αὐτῶ προφητικὸς ἐγένετο πάθους ἢ τύχης ἢ πράξεως, ἀνοήτως χρῆται τῷ βίῳ, καθάπερ ὁ κυβερνήτης ἐκεῖνος τῷ σκάφει.

Καὶ τὰς διοσημείας προαγορεύομεν ἐν εἰρήνῃ βαθεῖα τοῦ περιέχοντος, περὶ τὴν σελήνην ἄλλως ἰδόντες, ὅτι πολλάκις ἰδόντων οὕτω χειμῶν ἠκολούθησεν·

*τῇ μὲν ἰῆ ἀνέμοιο γαληναίης τε δοκεύειν,  
 ῥηγνυμένη ἀνέμοιο, μαραινομένη δὲ γαλήνης.  
 αἰ δύο δ' ἂν χειμῶνι περιτροχάοιντο σελήνην.  
 μείζονα δ' ἂν χειμῶνα φέροι τρισέλικτος ἀλωή,  
 καὶ μάλλον μελανεῦσα, καὶ εἰ ῥηγνύατο μάλλον.*

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οὕτως ἐπὶ πάντων Ἀριστοτέλης τε καὶ ὁ λόγος φησὶν· ἡ μὲν αἴσθησις μνήμη, ἡ δὲ μνήμη πείρα, ἡ δὲ πείρα τέχνην ἐποίησεν. οὕτω καὶ τὴν ἐπὶ τοὺς ὄνειρους βαδίσωμεν. B

(17) Ἡθροισται μὲν οὖν ἐνίοις ἤδη βιβλία συχνὰ τῆς τοιᾶσδε παρατηρήσεως· ἀλλ' ἔγωγε αὐτῶν ἀπάντων καταγεῶ, καὶ ὀλίγον ὄφελος ἦγμαι. οὐ γάρ, ὥσπερ τὸ σῶμα τὸ ἔσχατον, τῶν καθωμιλημένων στοιχείων ἡ σύνοδος δύναται δέξασθαι τέχνην καθόλου καὶ λόγον τῇ φύσει συμπαρατείνοντα – ὡς γὰρ ἐπὶ πλείστον ὑπὸ τῶν αὐτῶν ταυτὰ πάσχει, μικρᾶς οὐσης ἐν τοῖς ὁμοειδέσει τῆς διαφορᾶς τῆς πρὸς ἀλληλα, καὶ τὸ παρὰ φύσιν ἔχον ἐν αὐτοῖς οὐ λανθάνει νοσοῦν, οὐδὲ χρώμεθα τῷ τοιούτῳ γνώμονι – οὐχ οὕτως ἐπὶ τοῦ φανταστικοῦ πνεύματος, ἀλλὰ καὶ τῇ πρώτῃ φύσει διενήνοχεν ἄλλο ἄλλου· ἄλλο γὰρ ἄλλη σφαίρα προσήκει τῷ πλείονι τοῦ φυράματος·

C

*ἢ μάλα δὴ κεῖναι γε μακάρταται ἔξοχα πασέων  
 ψυχᾶων ποτὶ γαίαν ἀπ' οὐρανόθεν προχέονται·  
 κείναι δ' ὄλβισταί τε καὶ οὐ φατὰ νήματ' ἔχουσαι,  
 ὅσσαι ἀπ' αἰγλήεντος, ἀναξ, σέθεν, ἠδὲ καὶ αὐτοῦ  
 ἐκ Διὸς ἐξεγένοντο, μίτου κρατερῆς ὑπ' ἀνάγκης.*

D

καὶ τοῦτ' ἄρα ἦν ὅπερ ἠνίξατο Τίμαιος, διδοὺς ἐκάστη ψυχῇ σύννομον ἄστρον.

Αἰ δὲ καὶ τῆς φύσεως ἐκστᾶσαι, τῷ φιλοχωρῆσαι περὶ τὴν ὕλην, ἡ μὲν ἦττον, ἡ δὲ μάλλον, ὡς ἐκάστη ῥοπῆς ἐδυστύχησε, τὸ πνεῦμα ἐμόλυνεν. ἐνοικίζονται δὲ σώμασιν οὕτως ἔχουσαι, καὶ γίνεται βίος ὅλος ἐν ἀμαρτία καὶ νόσῳ τοῦ πνεύματος, αὐτῷ μὲν παρὰ φύσιν διὰ τὴν πρώτην εὐγένειαν· τῷ ζῶν δὲ

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a man who has repeatedly had the same vision fails to notice what misfortune or chance or act it portends, he is handling his life as foolishly as the helmsman handles his ship.

Again, we foretell stormy weather when the atmosphere is quite calm, if we see halos round the moon, because a storm has often followed when we have seen them before:

[151A] With one halo, expect calm or wind,  
wind if the halo is broken, calm if it is faint;  
in storm, two halos may encircle the moon,  
and a threefold halo bring a greater storm,  
even more if it is dark, even more if it is broken.<sup>121</sup>

Aristotle<sup>122</sup> and reason state the general principle: [B] perception produces memory, memory experience, and experience art. Let us approach the art of dreams in the same way.

(ix)

17. Whole heaps of books of such observations have been written by certain people. I find them all ridiculous, and think them of little use. The physical body, the union of the commonly recognized elements, does indeed admit of a general art and rational account conformable to its nature, because for the most part it experiences the same effects from the same causes, there being little difference between individuals in groups of things of the same kind, and also because unnatural states in this <body> are seen to indicate disease [C] and we do not treat such a <diseased body> as a norm. With the imaginative *pneuma*, on the other hand, this is not so: one <*pneuma*> differs from another in its primary origin, because they each belong to a different sphere in respect of the predominant element in their composition:

Truly blessed above all souls are they  
who are poured down from heaven to the earth;  
yet the happiest of all, whose lot is ineffable,  
[D]are those, o Lord, who are born of thy brightness  
and of Zeus himself, by the strong necessity of fate.<sup>123</sup>

This was what Timaeus<sup>124</sup> hinted at, when he assigned to each soul its 'kindred star'.

But souls which have gone right outside their nature by lingering around matter – some less, some more according to the downward pull to which each has unhappily succumbed – these souls have defiled their *pneuma*. So in this condition they settle in bodies, and their whole life is passed in error and disease of the *pneuma* – contrary to its nature, [152A] because of its original nobility, but in conformity with the nature of the

κατὰ φύσιν, ὑπὸ γὰρ οὕτως ἔχοντος ἐψυχώθη· εἰ μὴ καὶ αὐτῶ φύσις ἐστὶν ἢ τάξις, εἰς ἣν ὑφ' ἑαυτοῦ τάττεται κακία καὶ ἀρετὴ χρώμενον. οὐδὲν γὰρ οὕτως ὥσπερ πνεῦμα εὐτράπελον.

Πῶς ἂν οὖν ἐν τοῖς ἀνομοίοις καὶ φύσει καὶ νόμῳ καὶ πάθει, ταῦτ' ἂν ὑπὸ τῶν αὐτῶν ἐμφανίζοιτο; οὐκ ἔστι τοῦτο, οὐδ' ἂν γένοιτο. πῶς δ' ἂν γένοιτο τὸ τεθολωμένον ὕδωρ καὶ τὸ διαφανές, καὶ τὸ μένον καὶ τὸ κινούμενον ὑπὸ τῆς αὐτῆς μορφῆς ὁμοίως διατεθῆναι; εἰ δὲ καὶ ὁ θολὸς ἄλλος ἐν ἄλλῳ κατὰ διαφορὰς χρωμάτων, καὶ αἱ κινήσεις ἐν σχηματισμοῖς πλείοσιν, B οὕτως ἂν ἐν μὲν εἴη τῷ γένει τὸ ἀμαρτεῖν τῆς ἀκριβοῦς εἰκόνας. εἰ δ' ἔστι διάφορον, εἴτ' οὖν Φημονόη τις, εἴτε τις Μελάμπους\*, εἴτε ἕτερός τις ἀξιώσει καθόλου τι περὶ τῶν τοιοῦτων ἀφορίζειν καὶ διατάττεσθαι, πυθώμεθα αὐτῶν, εἰ φύσιν ἔχει καὶ τὸ ὀρθὸν καὶ τὸ διάστροφον κάτοπτρον, τό τε ἐξ ἀνομοίων ὑλῶν ὁμοιον ἀποδιδόναι τοῦ δεικνυμένου τὸ εἶδωλον. ἀλλ' ἐκεῖνοί γε οὐδὲ τὴν ἀρχὴν, οἶμαι, πεφιλοσοφήκασί τι περὶ τοῦ πνεύματος, τὸ δὲ οἰκείον αὐτῷ ὅπως ποτὲ ἔχοντι\* ἀπάντων ἠξίωσαν εἶναι κα- νόνα καὶ γνώμονα. καὶ ἔγωγε οὐκ ἀναιρῶ τὸ καὶ διὰ πάντων C εἶναι τῶν διαφερόντων ἐμφέρεϊαν, ἀλλὰ τὸ ἀσαφές διασπώμενον ἀσαφέστερον γίνεται· ἦν δὲ δήπου καὶ τὴν ἀρχὴν δυσεπίγνωστον τὸ προεκθορὸν τοῦ πράγματος\* εἶδωλον. ἔτι δὲ χαλεπώτερον ἐλείν «ἐν» ἐν\* ἐκάστῳ τόπῳ\* κοινῶ φαντάσματι παραπλήσιον.

(18) Διὰ ταῦτα μὲν ἀπογνωστέον τοῦ κοινούς ἅπασιν νόμους γενέσθαι· ἑαυτὸν δὲ τις ἕκαστος ὕλην ἐχέτω τῆς τέχνης· ἐγγραφέτω τῇ μνήμῃ τίσι καὶ πότε συνηνέχθη πράγμασιν, ἐπὶ D ποδαπαῖς ποτε ταῖς ὄψεσιν. οὐ χαλεπῶς ἕξις ἀθροίζεται περὶ τὸ σὺν χρεῖα τινὶ μελετώμενον· ὑπομνήσκει γὰρ τῆς μελέτης ἢ χρεῖα, καὶ μάλιστα ὅταν εὐπορῇ τῆς ὕλης ἐκάστοτε. τί δ' ἂν ἐνυπνίων γένοιτο ἀφθονώτερον; τί δ' ἐπαγωγότερον; ἂ καὶ τοὺς ἠλιθίους ἐφέλκεται, περὶ αὐτῶν τι φροντίσαι, ὥστε αἰσχρὸν ἂν εἴη τοὺς τὰ δέκα ἀφ' ἧβης γεγονότας ἐτέρου μάντεως ἔτι προσδεῖσθαι, ἀλλὰ μὴ παρ' ἑαυτῶν συνηνοχέειν τῆς τέχνης πάμ- πολλα θεωρήματα.

Σοφὸν δ' ἂν εἴη καὶ γράφειν τὰ τε ὕπαρ καὶ ὄναρ ὀράματα 153A καὶ συμπτώματα, εἰ μὴ πρὸς τὸ καινὸν τῆς ἐπινοίας ὁ τῆς πό-

living being, because this was given soul by <a *pneuma*> in this condition – unless indeed ‘nature’ for <the *pneuma*> is simply the station in which it is placed by its own doing, through its practice of vice and virtue. Nothing is so volatile as *pneuma*.

How then could the same <appearances> be generated by the same causes in beings which are so dissimilar in nature, habit (*nomos*) and experience (*pathos*)? It is not so, it could not be so. How could muddy water and clear water, stagnant water and running water, all be similarly affected by the [B] same shape? And if the muddiness varies according to differences of colour, and the movements take various forms, the one generic characteristic would be the failure to produce an accurate likeness. And if there is variety, then, if some Phemonoe<sup>125</sup> or Melampus,<sup>126</sup> or another, claims to give a general definition and prescription about such matters, let us ask them whether it is natural for a true mirror, a distorting mirror, and a mirror made of unlike materials all to reflect an image resembling the object.<sup>127</sup> These writers, I believe, have not so much as begun to think philosophically about the *pneuma*, though they have claimed that what is characteristic of it, in whatever state it is,<sup>128</sup> deserves to be the measure and standard of [C] everything. I do not deny that there is a resemblance running through all the things that differ, but the obscure becomes even more obscure when it is fragmented. Anyway, it was hard enough to begin with to grasp the image (*eidōlon*) leaping out ahead<sup>129</sup> from the object, and it is harder still to grasp a single thing resembling a common appearance (*phantasma*) in each individual place.<sup>130</sup>

(x)

18. These are reasons for despairing of universally applicable rules: instead, let each individual regard himself as the material of his art. Let him inscribe in his memory what circumstances he encountered and when, [D] and what visions preceded. A habit is easily developed when the exercise is of practical use. The use reminds us to do the exercise, especially when there is material in plenty on every occasion. What can be more readily available or more fascinating than dreams? They attract even fools to give thought to them, so that it would be shameful for people ten years into adult life to need any other prophet, and not to have collected many principles of the art from their own experience.

[153A] It would be a clever move also to write down the visions and occasions, both of waking and of sleeping, unless the culture of the

λεως τρόπος ἀγροικιεύεται. ἐπεὶ ἡμεῖς ἀξιόσομεν ταῖς καλουμέναις ἐφημερίσι τὰς ὑφ' ἡμῶν ὀνομαζομένας ἐπινυκτίδας συνάπτοντας ἔχειν τῆς ἐν ἑκατέρῃ ζωῇ διεξαγωγῆς ὑπομνήματα· ζῶν γὰρ τινα τὴν κατὰ φαντασίαν ὁ λόγος ἐτίθετο, νῦν μὲν βελτίω, νῦν δὲ χείρω τῆς μέσης, ὡς ἂν ὑγιείας ἔχη τὸ πνεῦμα καὶ νόσου. οὕτως ἂν εἰς\* τὴν παρατήρησίν τι προῦργου ποιοῖμεν, ὑφ' ἧς ἡ τέχνη συναύξεται, οὐδενὸς ἡμῖν ἐκ τῆς μνή- B  
μης διολισθαίνοντος, καὶ τὰ ἄλλα ἀστεία τις ἂν εἴη ψυχαγωγία, ἱστορία τιμᾶν ἑαυτὸν ἐργηγορότα τε καὶ καθεύδοντα.

Ἀλλὰ καὶ οἷς ἐπιμελές ἐστί τῆς γλώττης, οὐκ οἶδ' εἰ τις ὑπό-  
θεσις ἀντὶ ταύτης ἑτέρα παντοδαπὸν ἂν γύμνασμα γένοιτο τῆς  
ἐν τῷ λέγειν δυνάμεως. εἰ γὰρ τὰς ἐφημερίδας ὁ Λήμνιος σοφι-  
στής ἀγαθὰς εἶναι διδασκάλους φησὶ τοῦ περὶ ἅπαντος εὐ εἰ-  
πεῖν τῷ μηδὲ τῶν μειόνων ὑπερορᾶν, ἀλλ' ἀνάγκην εἶναι διὰ  
πάντων ἰέναι φαύλων τε καὶ σπουδαίων, πῶς οὐκ ἄξιον ἄγε- C  
σθαι τὰς ἐπινυκτίδας εἰς ἐρμηνείας ὑπόθεσιν; ἴδοι δ' ἂν τις ὅσον  
τὸ ἔργον, ἐπιχειρήσας συμπαρατείνειν τὸν λόγον τοῖς φάσ-  
μασιν, ὑφ' ὧν χωρίζεται μὲν τὰ φύσει συνόντα, συνάγεται δὲ τὰ  
φύσει κεχωρισμένα, καὶ δεῖ τῷ λόγῳ τὸν μὴ πεφαντασμένον  
φαντάσαι.

(19) Ἀλλ' οὐ τί γε φαῦλον τὸ ἔργον, ἐν τῇ ψυχῇ γενόμενον  
ἀλλόκοτον κίνημα διαβιβάζειν ἐφ' ἕτερον. ὅταν δὲ τῇ φαντασίᾳ  
ἐξωθῆται μὲν τοῦ εἶναι τὰ ὄντα, ἀντεισάγηται δὲ εἰς τὸ εἶναι τὰ  
μηδαμῆ μηδαμῶς μήτε ὄντα μήτε φύσιν ἔχοντα εἶναι, τίς μηχανή D  
τοῖς οἰκοθεν ἀεννοήτοις παραστήσαι φύσιν ἀκατονόμα-  
στον; ἢ δὲ ταῦτ' οὔτε εἶδη πολλὰ καὶ ἅμα πάντα, οὔτε σὺν  
χρόνῳ\* φέρουσα δείκνυσι, καὶ μέντοι ταῦτα ὡς ἂν ἔχη τε καὶ  
ὀρέγη τὸ ἐνύπνιον· οἰόμεθα γὰρ ἅπαν ὅ τι ἂν βούληται. ἐν οἷς  
ἅπασιν καὶ τὸ διαγενέσθαι μὴ λίαν ἀσχημονοῦντα τελειοτάτης  
ἂν εἴη ὀητορικῆς.

Νεανιεύεται δ' ἡμῶν καὶ κατ' αὐτῆς ἤδη τῆς γνώμης, ἐνδι-  
δοῦσά τι πλέον τοῦ οἶεσθαι· οὐδὲ γὰρ οὐδὲ ἀπαθῶς διακεῖμεθα  
περὶ τὰ θεάματα, ἀλλ' ἰσχυραὶ μὲν αἰ συγκαταθέσεις τε καὶ 154A  
προσπάθειαι, ἀποστυγοῦμεν δὲ οὐχ ἥκιστα. καὶ {αἰ} συχναι\*  
περὶ ταῦτα μαγανεῖαι καθεύδουσιν ἐπιτίθενται· ἢ τε ἡδονῇ  
τότε δὴ καὶ μάλιστα μειλιχώτατον, ὡς ἐναπομόργνυσθαι ταῖς  
ψυχαῖς μίση καὶ ἔρωτας εἰς τὴν ὑπαρ ζῶν.

city is too boorish to accept such a novel idea. We, for our part, by combining what we call by the invented name ‘nocturnals’ with what are commonly called ‘journals’, will aim to have a record of what passes in both our lives; for our argument assumed a certain life of imagination (*phantasia*), sometimes better, sometimes worse than normal, according to the health or sickness of our *pneuma*. [B] We should thus make progress in observation by which art is developed, because nothing would slip out of our memory, while it would also be an elegant amusement to honour ourselves by a history of our waking and sleeping selves.

Indeed, for speech professionals, there is perhaps no other theme which could prove so versatile an exercise in the power of speech. If the sophist of Lemnos<sup>131</sup> says that journals are good teachers of the ability to speak well on any subject, because they do not skip even [C] minor details, but one is forced to include everything, serious and trivial alike, how could it not be right to introduce ‘nocturnals’ as a stylistic exercise? You would find out what a big job it is if you tried to make the words match the visions, in which things that go together in nature are separated, and things which in nature are separate are brought together. Moreover, one has, by speech, to bring the vision to a hearer who has not had it.

19. It is indeed no light matter to convey a strange movement in the soul to another person. But when, through the workings of imagination (*phantasia*), existing things are expelled from the realm of being and there are introduced into it in their place things which do not exist anywhere in any way and do not have [D] the nature to exist, what possible means is there of presenting a nameless nature to those who fundamentally cannot conceive it?<sup>132</sup> The <imagination> displays these impressions to us, not as many forms and simultaneously, nor yet in temporal sequence; it does so in whatever way the dream holds them and offers them to us, for we believe whatever it wants us to believe. Just to get through all this without too much disgrace would indicate a very accomplished mastery of rhetoric!

<Imagination> plays naughty tricks even on our reason, allowing it to do something more than just believe. Our reactions to [154A] the visions are certainly not unemotional, our assents and attachments are strong, and not least our feelings of disgust; many enchantments connected with this attack us in sleep, and it is then that pleasure is at its most seductive, so that hatred and love rub off on our souls and persist into our waking life.



Εἰ δὴ τις μέλλοι μὴ ἄψυχα φθέγγεσθαι, ἀλλ' ὅτου χάριν ἐσπουδάσθῃ ὁ λόγος ἐπιτελεῖν – ἐν ταύτῳ πάθει καὶ ταῖς αὐταῖς ὑπολήψεσι καθιστάναί τὸν ἀκουστήν –, κινουμένων ἂν δέοιτο τῶν ῥημάτων. ἤδη δέ τις ἅμα καὶ νικᾷ καὶ βαδίζει καὶ ἵπταται, καὶ χωρεῖ πάντα ἢ φαντασία· πῶς δ' ἂν λέξις χωρήσειε; καὶ καθεύδει τις ὄναρ, καὶ ὄναρ ὄρα, καὶ διανέστη καθεύδων, ὡς οἶεται, καὶ τὸν ὕπνον ἀπετινάξατο κείμενος, καὶ φιλοσοφεῖ τι περὶ τοῦ φανέντος ὄνειρου, καθὰ οἶδε, καὶ τοῦτο ὄνειρος, ἀλλ' ἐκεῖνο διπλοῦς· εἴτ' ἀπιστεῖ, καὶ οἶεται τὸ παρὸν ὕπαρ εἶναι, καὶ ζῆν τὰ φαινόμενα. ἐντεῦθεν ἀνὰ κράτος ἢ μάχῃ, καὶ ὄνειρώττει τις ἀγῶνα πρὸς αὐτὸν, ἀπολιπεῖν τε καὶ διεγείρεσθαι, καὶ πείραν λαβεῖν ἑαυτοῦ, καὶ τὴν ἀπάτην φωρᾶσαι.

Οἱ μὲν οὖν Αἰωάδαὶ κολάζονται τὰ Θετταλῶν ὄρη τοῖς θεοῖς ἐπιτειχίζοντες· καθεύδοντι δὲ οὐδεὶς Ἀδραστείας νόμος ἐμποδῶν, τὸ μὴ οὐκ ἀπάραι τῆς γῆς εὐτυχέστερον Ἰκάρου, καὶ ὑπερπτήναι μὲν ἀετούς, ὑπεράνω δὲ καὶ αὐτῶν γενέσθαι τῶν ἀνωτάτω σφαιρῶν. καὶ τὴν γῆν τις ἀποσκοπεῖται πόρρωθεν, καὶ οὐδ' ὄρωμένην τῇ σελήνῃ σημαίνεται. ἔξεστι δὲ καὶ ἀστροσι διαλέγεσθαι, καὶ τοῖς ἀφανέσιν ἐν κόσμῳ συνεῖναι θεοῖς. τὸ γέ τοι χαλεπὸν λεγόμενον τότε ῥάδιον γίνεται, θεοὶ φαίνονται ἐν ἀργεῖς· οὐδὲ τούτων μέντοι φθόνος οὐδὲ εἰς. μετὰ γὰρ μικρὸν ἐπὶ γῆς οὐδὲ ἦλθεν, ἀλλ' ἔστιν. οὐδὲν γὰρ οὕτως ἐνυπνίων, ὡς τὸ κλέψαι τοὺν μέσῳ, καὶ μὴ σὺν χρόνῳ ποιῆσαι.

Εἶτα προβατίοις τε διαλέγεται, καὶ τὴν βληχὴν ἠγεῖται φωνήν, καὶ λεγόντων ξυνήσιν. οὕτω μὲν καινόν, οὕτω δὲ πολὺ τὸ πλάτος τῶν ὑποθέσεων, εἴ τις αὐταῖς ἐπαφιέναι τοὺς λόγους θαρσῆσειεν. ἐγὼ μὲν γὰρ οἶμαι καὶ τοὺς μύθους ἐξουσίαν παρὰ τῶν ἐνυπνίων λαβεῖν, οἷς καὶ ταῶς καὶ ἀλώπηξ καὶ θάλαττα φθέγγονται. ὀλίγα ταῦτα πρὸς τὴν αὐτονομίαν τῶν ὕπνων. ἀλλὰ καίπερ ἐλαχίστη μερὶς τῶν ἐνυπνίων ὄντες οἱ μῦθοι, ὅμως ὑπὸ τῶν σοφιστῶν ἠγαπήθησαν εἰς παρασκευὴν ἐρμηνείας. καίτοιγε οἷς ἀρχὴ τῆς τέχνης ὁ μῦθος, πρέπον ἂν γένοιτο τέλος ἐνύπνιον· καὶ πρόσσεστι τὸ μὴ μάτην ἠσκηκέναι τὴν γλῶτταν, ὥσπερ ἐπὶ τῶν μύθων, ἀλλ' εἶναι καὶ γνώμη σοφώτερον.

(20) Ἴτω δὴ πᾶς, ὅτω σχολῇ καὶ εὐμάρεια ζῆν, εἰς ἀναγραφὴν τῶν τε ὕπαρ καὶ ὄναρ αὐτῷ συμπιπτόντων· δαπανᾶτω τι τοῦ χρόνου, ἀφ' οὗ κράτιστον μὲν τὸ παραγινόμενον ἀπὸ τῆς

So if one is to utter not just lifeless phrases, but achieve the goal of the study of eloquence – namely to put the hearer into the same emotional state and the same ways of thinking as the speaker – one will need words that have some animation in them. People win battles, walk, fly, all at the same time: [B] the imagination has room for it all. How can words prove adequate? A man sleeps in a dream, sees in a dream, gets up in his sleep (as he thinks), shakes off sleep as he lies in bed, speculates about the dream that has appeared to him, as far as he knows it – and this too is a dream, and the other was a double dream. Then he has doubts, he thinks that what is before him is a waking experience, and that the appearances are really alive. Then the battle grows fiercer; he dreams of a fight with himself, that he loses heart and rouses himself, tests himself [C] and discovers the illusion.

The Aloadae<sup>133</sup> are punished for piling up the mountains of Thessaly against the gods; but no law of Adrasteia<sup>134</sup> forbids a sleeper to rise above the earth with better luck than Icarus, to fly higher than eagles, even to ascend above the highest spheres. One views the earth from afar, or without seeing it infers its presence from the moon.<sup>135</sup> One can converse with the stars and keep company with the invisible gods of the kosmos. What is proverbially said to be difficult now becomes easy: ‘the gods appear plainly’,<sup>136</sup> and there is no jealous withholding of [D] their presence. A moment passes: he has not *come down* to earth, he is already there. Nothing is so characteristic of dreams as to suppress intermediate stages and not do things in temporal sequence.

Then the dreamer has a conversation with sheep, thinks their bleating to be speech, and understands what they say. So novel, so broad is the range of themes, if only someone had the courage to let his eloquence loose on them! I suspect that fables,<sup>137</sup> in which the peacock and the fox and the sea talk, took this licence from dreams, though [155A] this indeed is a small thing compared to the freedom of a dream! Yet, though fables thus make up only a minute part of dreams, they have been privileged by the sophists for training in style. If the fable is the beginning of the curriculum, however, the dream might appropriately be its culmination, with the further advantage that we do not exercise the tongue to no purpose, as with fables, but actually become wiser in judgement.

20. So let everyone who has leisure and a comfortable life go and record what happens to him in waking and in sleeping. Let him expend some [B] of his time on this. The most important result will be what comes from the subject of his writing, namely the arousal in him of the

διανοίας τοῦ γράμματος, ἀγείραι τὴν μαντικὴν, ἣν ὑμνήκαμεν, ἧς οὐδὲν ἂν γένοιτο προᾶγμα πολυωφελέστερον.

Οὐ μὴν οὐδὲ ἡ λέξις ἀπόβλητον τὸ τῶν πραγμάτων ἐφόλκιον· φιλοσόφῳ μὲν γὰρ ἂν γένοιτο παίγνιον, χαλῶντι τοῦ τόνου καθάπερ οἱ Σκῦθαι τὰ τόξα· ῥήτορι δὲ αὐτὴν ἐπιτάξωμεν κολοφῶνα τῶν ἐπιδείξεων. ὡς οὐκ ἐν καιρῷ μοι δοκοῦσιν ἐμμελετᾶν τὴν δεινότητα Μιλτιάδῃ καὶ Κίμωνι καὶ τισι καὶ ἄνωνύμοις, καὶ πλουσίῳ καὶ πένητι τὰ ἐκ πολιτείας ἐχθροῖς, ὑπὲρ ὧν C ἐγὼ καὶ πρεσβύτας ἀνθρώπους εἶδον ἐν θεάτρῳ ζυγομαχοῦντας· καίτοι γε ἦσθη ἐπὶ φιλοσοφίᾳ μάλα σεμνῶ, καὶ εἰλκέτην ἐκάτερος αὐτοῖν, ὡς εἰκάσαι, τάλαντα πῶγωνος· ἀλλ' οὐδὲν αὐτοὺς ἐκάλυπεν ἡ σεμνότης λαιδορεῖσθαι τε καὶ ἀγανακτεῖν, καὶ τῷ χεῖρε περιδιναῖν ἀκόσμως ἐν τῷ διατίθεσθαι λόγους ἀποτάδην ὑπὲρ ἀνδρῶν, ὡς μὲν ἐγὼ τότε ᾤμην, ἐπιτηδεῖων, ὡς δὲ ἔφασαν\* οἱ μεταδιδάξαντες, οὔτε ὄντων, οὔτε γενομένων ποτέ, μὴ ὅτι ἐπιτηδεῖων, ἀλλ' οὐδὲ τὴν ἀρχὴν ἐν τῇ φύσει. D

Ποῦ γὰρ ἂν εἴη καὶ πολιτεία τοιαύτη, γέρας ἀριστεῖ διδούσα κτεῖναι πολίτην ἀντιπολιτευόμενον; καίτοι γε ὅστις ἐνενηκοντούτης ὧν πλάσμα ἀγωνίζεται, εἰς ποῖον καιρὸν ἀνατίθεται τὴν τῶν λόγων ἀλήθειαν; ὅλως δὲ οὐδὲ ἐπαῖτει μοι δοκοῦσι τοῦ τῆς μελέτης ὀνόματος, ὅτι φησὶ δι' ἄλλο σπουδάζεσθαι· οἱ δὲ τὴν παρασκευὴν τέλος ἤγηνται, καὶ τὴν ὁδόν, ὡς ἐφ' ὃ δεῖ βαδίζειν, ἠγάπησαν· τὴν γὰρ μελέτην ἀγῶνα πεποιήνται, ὥσπερ εἴ τις ἐν παλαιστρα χειρονομήσας ἀξιῶσει παγκράτιον 156A ἐν Ὀλυμπίᾳ κηρύττεσθαι.

Τοσοῦτος ἄρα νοῦ μὲν αὐχμός, ἐπομβρία δὲ λέξεων τοὺς ἀνθρώπους κατέσχεν, ὡς εἶναι τινας, οἱ δύνανται λέγειν, οὐκ ἔχοντες ὅ τι δεῖ λέγειν, δέον ἀπολαύειν ἑαυτῶν, ὥσπερ Ἀλκαῖός τε καὶ Ἀρχίλοχος, οἱ δεδαπανήκασιν τὴν εὐστομίαν εἰς τὸν οἰκείον βίον ἐκάτερος. καὶ τοίνυν ἡ διαδοχὴ τοῦ χρόνου τηρεῖ τὴν μνήμην ὧν τε ἤλγησαν ὧν τε ἦσθησαν. οὔτε γὰρ κενεμβατούντας τοὺς λόγους ἐξήνεγκαν, ὥσπερ τὸ νέον τοῦτο τὸ σοφὸν γένος ἐπὶ συμπεπλασμέναις ταῖς ὑποθέσεσιν, οὔτε ἑτέροις κατεχαρίσαντο τὸ σφέτερον ἀγαθόν, ὥσπερ Ὅμηρος καὶ Σησιχορος τὸ μὲν ἥρωικὸν φύλον διὰ τὰς ποιήσεις αὐτῶν ἐπικυδέστερον ἔθεσαν – καὶ ἡμεῖς ὠνάμεθα τοῦ ζήλου τῆς ἀρετῆς –, αὐτοὶ δὲ τό γε ἐφ' ἑαυτοῖς ἠμελήθησαν, περὶ ὧν οὐδὲν ἔχομεν C εἰπεῖν, ἢ ὅτι ποιηταὶ δεξιοί.

power of prophecy, which we have praised, than which nothing is more widely useful.

Not that we should neglect the <development of> style, which follows in the wake of the subject. For a philosopher, this may be just a game, allowing him to relax his tension, as Scythians do their bow.<sup>138</sup> For the rhetorician, on the other hand, let us prescribe it as the culmination of his performances. I do not think they do well to exercise their powers on Miltiades and Cimon<sup>139</sup> and a variety of nameless characters – like the rich man and the poor man who are political [C] enemies, over whom I once saw two old men<sup>140</sup> contending in the theatre. Both had great pretensions in philosophy, both carried some talents' weight (one would guess) of beard, but their solemn airs did not prevent them exchanging insults and showing temper and whirling their arms around uncontrollably as they developed speeches at great length on behalf (as I supposed) of friends of theirs – who were, however, as those who put me right explained,<sup>141</sup> far from being friends, but only persons who [D] existed neither in the present nor in the past, nor indeed in nature.

For where could there be a state which grants a war-hero the privilege of killing a fellow-citizen who opposed him in politics?<sup>142</sup> And if a ninety-year-old pleads in an imaginary case, how long is he putting off speaking about real things?<sup>143</sup> In a word, they do not seem to me to understand the word 'exercise', which means something undertaken for another purpose; they regard the preparation as the goal, and are happy [156A] to take the road for the destination. They have made 'exercise' into a real contest, as though a man who had sparred in the wrestling-school were to think he should be proclaimed winner of the *pankration* at Olympia!

Such a dearth of sense and such a deluge of words have possessed mankind that there have come to be people who have the capacity to speak but have nothing that they ought to say. What they should do is to make good use of themselves, like Alcaeus<sup>144</sup> and Archilochus,<sup>145</sup> both of whom lavished their eloquence on their own lives;<sup>146</sup> [B] subsequent ages have therefore preserved the memory of their sorrows and of their pleasures. They did not produce words treading on air, as this clever modern generation does with its fictitious themes. Nor did they make a present of their good gifts to others, as did Homer and Stesichorus,<sup>147</sup> who made the race of heroes more glorious by their poetry (and we have profited by their enthusiasm for virtue), whereas they themselves, so far as their own intentions go, [C] have been consigned to oblivion, and we can say nothing about them except that they were accomplished poets.

Ὅστις οὖν ἐρᾷ τοῦ παρ' ἀνθρώποις εἰς ἔπειτα λόγου, καὶ σύννοιδεν ἑαυτῷ δυναμένῳ τίκτειν ἐν δέλτοις ἀθάνατα, μετίτω τὴν παραινουμένην\* ὑφ' ἡμῶν συγγραφὴν. θαρρῶν ἑαυτὸν παρατιθέσθω τῷ χρόνῳ· ἀγαθός ἐστι φύλαξ, ὅταν κατὰ θεόν τι πιστεύηται.

So let anyone who desires fame among men in the future, and knows himself capable of producing immortal works on tablets, pursue the kind of writing I recommend.<sup>148</sup> Let him confidently put himself in the hands of time: it is a good guardian, when something is entrusted to it in accordance with god.

## Notes on the Translation

- \* The asterisk in the Greek text refers to the list of textual variants found at the end of the Introduction.
- 1 The term *προθεωρία* denotes a preface which explains the scope (and the problems) of the work. It is applied to the preliminary remarks prefacing declamations in Himerius, Libanius, Themistius and Choricus. See R. J. PENELLA, *Rhetorical Exercises from Late Antiquity. A Translation of Choricus of Gaza's Preliminary Talks and Declamations* (Cambridge 2009) 15–16.
  - 2 Trivial theme: Socrates' fondness for humdrum examples was well known, but it is not easy to see how Synesius' claim is valid for this book: see Introduction, p. 5.
  - 3 The second part of this sentence (τοῦ μήτε τὰ μόλις εὐρεθέντα πάλιν ἐξ ἀνθρώπων ἀπόλλυσθαι, μήτε μολύνεσθαι δήμοις βεβήλοις ἐκκεείμενα) is reminiscent of the famous introductory sentence of Herodotus' *Histories* (ὡς μήτε τὰ γενόμενα ἐξ ἀνθρώπων τῷ χρόνῳ ἐξίτηλα γένηται, μήτε ἔργα μεγάλα τε καὶ θωμαστά ... ἀκλεᾶ γένηται). [N.]
  - 4 For these headings, see Introduction, p. 5.
  - 5 Synesius has no precise terminology for dreams, and seems to use ὕπνος, ἐνύπνιον, ὄναρ, ὄνειρον without the distinctions that other writers have (e.g. Macrobius, *In Somn. Scip.* 1.3). The sense encourages us to take the neuter plural τὰ ὄναρ θεάματα as subject of a plural verb: cf., e.g., 135D. (Alternatively, translate: "and the dream visions which they offer to humans are enigmatic hints of what will happen in waking hours".)
  - 6 Cf. Eur. *Orestes* 397 (σοφόν τοι τὸ σαφές, οὐ τὸ μὴ σαφές).
  - 7 Hesiod, *Works and Days* 42. Hesiod uses βίος in the meaning 'livelihood', but Synesius takes it to mean the events of our lives.
  - 8 Simonides fr. 18 PAGE = PMG 357 = fr. 245 POLTERA: not even the υἱές ἡμίθεοι of gods had ἄπνονον ... βίον.
  - 9 Hesiod, *Works and Days* 289.
  - 10 Calchas was the seer of the Greek army that besieged Troy. [N.]
  - 11 Hom. *Il.* 1.70.
  - 12 Hom. *Il.* 13.355.
  - 13 Apparently a conflation of two Homeric reminiscences: *Il.* 15.165 (ἐπεὶ ἔο φημί βίη πολὺν φέρτερος εἶναι, Zeus speaking) and *Od.* 18.234 (βίη δ' ὄ γε φέρτερος ἦεν, of Odysseus vis-à-vis the beggar Irus). Synesius applies the wording of the second passage to the context of the former.
  - 14 Cf. Iamb. *Myst.* 1.15, citing Porphyry's *Letter to Anebo*: λέγεις γὰρ θεοῦς εἶναι νόας καθαρούς.
  - 15 Hom. *Il.* 15.166: καὶ γενηὲ πρότερος.
  - 16 Zeus here is equivalent to the demiurge: cf. Porphyry, *Περὶ ἀγαλμάτων* fr. 5 p. 6\* BIDEZ.
  - 17 Cf. Plat. *Timaeus* 30d. It is common ground to Platonism and Stoicism that the Kosmos is a living thing, with soul and body and parts or limbs.
  - 18 Assyrian: i.e. Chaldaean. That the world is like a book to be read by those who are in this sense 'literate' is a fairly common analogy: cf. Plut. *De genio* 582B (in a somewhat rationalistic account of divination), Plot. *Enn.* 2.3.7, Porph. *De abstinentia* 2.41.4. In selecting types of writing here, Synesius is also thinking of types of divination.
  - 19 An echo of Pindar *Ol.* 2.94: σοφός ὁ πολλὰ εἰδὼς φυᾶ.
  - 20 Comets or meteors.
  - 21 There is perhaps a literary allusion in this whimsical passage: compare the claims to age and skills made by the birds' chorus in Aristophanes' *Birds*, 685–721. πάννυοι,

- 'wholly young', is apparently modelled on παμπάλαιοι, for which see Plat. *Tht.* 181b (and πανδέξιοι may be an echo of πάσσοφοι in the same *Theaetetus* passage [N.]).
- 22 The ἰνυξ was a bird (wryneck) which was spreadeagled on a wheel and spun round as a charm to attract a lover (see D'ARCY THOMPSON, *A Glossary of Greek Birds* [Oxford 1895]), s.v., and Theocr. 2.17 with Gow's note). The word was later used for a 'charm' generally, and in Synesius' time it was also applied to beings localized in the spheres which magical rites could attract and use: see, e.g., *Or. Chald.* fr. 223 DES PLACES, and SUSANETTI'S note on our passage.
- 23 The insertion of γὰρ has MS authority: with our punctuation, the apodosis begins at καὶ δὴ καὶ (where some MSS omit the second καὶ).
- 24 Cf. Plot. *Enn.* 4.32.13A, Sext. *Emp. Math.* 9.80; but Synesius' particular example (finger – or toe? – and groin) is not found in these discussions.
- 25 Cf. Sallustius § 6 Nock: "of the gods, some are intramundane (ἐγκόσμιοι), some supramundane (ὑπερκόσμιοι). By the former, I mean the gods which make the kosmos". He proceeds to describe their functions, and to show that there are twelve of them.
- 26 The musical analogy is explained at length by Nicephorus Gregoras, whose account is studied in detail by PIETROSANTI 1999. The *hypatē* is the string 'at the top' of the lyre (on the right) which produces the lowest note. The *nētē* is the string 'at the bottom', on the left, giving the highest note, an octave above the *hypatē*. The *epitritē* is at an interval of a fourth, the *epogdoos* (which is *not* affected by striking the *hypatē*) is one tone different from the *hypatē*. Cf. Agathias, *Anth. Pal.* 11.352: δεξιτέραν ὑπάτην ὅποτε πλήκτροισι δονήσω, / ἢ λαυῆ νητὴ πάλλεται αὐτομάτως. ("When I strike the *hypatē* on the right with the plectrum, the *nētē* on the left quivers of its own accord".)
- 27 'Original': A variant reading in some MSS is προσεχέστερας 'closer'.
- 28 For the Neoplatonists the 'absolute One' is the transcendent First Principle. There are lower 'Ones' at lower metaphysical levels such as the 'One-many' (ἓν πολλά) which for Plotinus is at the level of Intellect (see *Enn.* 5.3.15). The physical kosmos is at a lower level still but derives its unity ultimately from the One. [Sh.]
- 29 Cf. Plat. *Symp.* 187a. [R.] The conception of the kosmos as a musical system is widespread in Neoplatonism. Some of the material is discussed in D. J. O'MEARA, "The Music of Philosophy in Late Antiquity", in: R. W. SHARPLES (ed.), *Philosophy and the Sciences in Antiquity* (Aldershot 2005) 131–47 and in S. F. MORO TORNESE, "Music and the return of the soul in Proclus' commentaries on Plato's *Timaeus* and *Republic*", in A. SHEPPARD (ed.), *Ancient Approaches to Plato's Republic* (London 2013) 117–28. [Sh.]
- 30 See Plutarch, *Marcellus* 14.12: Ἀρχιμήδης ... εἶπεν ὡς εἰ γῆν εἶχεν ἐτέραν, ἐκίνησεν ἂν ταύτην μεταβὰς εἰς ἐκείνην.
- 31 Or 'the signs which are indicated', if κατασημαίνοντο is passive. Some late MSS read κατασήμαιοι τὰ σύμβολα, which certainly gives the sense needed.
- 32 Hom. *Il.* 15.106.
- 33 There was considerable legislation against magic and theurgy in the fourth century (*Cod. Theod.* 9.16.1–12), and Porphyry, for example (*De regressu animae* fr. 2 BIDEZ) speaks of the risks involved in violating the law.
- 34 If this interpretation is right, Synesius alludes to the derivation of 'Loxias' from λοξός 'oblique'. This was explained both as referring to the 'oblique' path of the sun through the zodiac and as denoting the 'indirectness' of Apollo's oracular responses. See I. RAMELLI (ed.), *Anneo Cornuto. Compendio di teologia greca* (Milan 2003) 406–7 (n. 275), on Cornutus p. 67 LANG (= 32,7 ll. 1348–51 BERDOZZO / NESSELRATH).
- 35 This story is told in Herodotus, 7.141–3.
- 36 Since Synesius is speaking of a particular kind of divination, we conjecture μαντεῶν, for μαθήσεων, but μάθησις might perhaps have the special sense of 'prophetic art', like μάθημα (*LSJ* s.v. μάθησις 4).



- 37 Cf. Iambl. *Myst.* 3.3: ὁ μὲν νοῦς τὰ ὄντα θεωρεῖ, λόγους δ' ἢ ψυχὴ τῶν γιγνομένων ἐν αὐτῇ πάντων περιέχει.
- 38 Synesius uses the rules set out in the fifth book of Euclid's *Elements*. If Mind : Soul :: Being : Becoming, then Mind : Being :: Soul : Becoming, and thus Becoming : Soul :: Being : Mind.
- 39 The terminology of the passage has a close parallel in Proclus, *In Euclidem* 1. p. 141 FRIEDLEIN (translated in SORABJI 2004, 3.299), and in Porphyry, *Sent.* 29. See A. SHEPPARD, below p. 103.
- 40 'Abide there': ἐκεῖ seems to mean 'in the soul' rather than (as often) 'in the other world'.
- 41 'Impressions' (ἐκμαγαεῖα): In philosophic (especially Platonic) tradition, the word ἐκμαγαεῖον (the literal meaning of which is 'napkin') is sometimes used to visualize how the human mind receives and stores bits of information that reach him from outside. In Plato, ἐκμαγαεῖον several times means "that on or in which an impression is made", "recipient of impressions" (*Tht.* 191c, 196a, *Ti.* 50c), but also the impress/impression itself (*Tht.* 194d, 194e); thus Proclus (*In Plat. Cra.* 85) can state: ἐκμαγαεῖον δ' ὁ Πλάτων καὶ τὸ ἐκμάσσον καλεῖ καὶ τὸ ἐκμασσόμενον. Both meanings are also found in later texts: for 'impression' see Albinus *Didasc.* 12.1 (σφραγιδος μιᾶς ἐκμαγαεῖα γίνεταί πολλαῖ), Pollux 9.130, Clem. Al. *Protr.* 98.4; for "that on or in which an impression is made", see Albinus *Didasc.* 4.5, 8.2, Pollux 6.93, Julian, *In matr.* 4, p. 163A. [N.]
- 42 This is a familiar type of story: cf. Cic. *Div.* 2.134 (from Chrysippus). In Libanius, *Decl.* 31.23, the miser dreams of a place where treasure is buried, only to be disappointed at the poor outcome of his excavation.
- 43 Editors refer to the introductory part of Hesiod's *Theogony*, but Synesius clearly also has a contemporary instance in mind, because he adds 'our own age has demonstrated this'.
- 44 Nicephorus Gregoras reports a story that it was a dream by which Hannibal was warned of Flaminius' coming attempt on his life, which he forestalled by suicide. The accounts of this in historians (e.g. Plut. *Flam.* 21) make no mention of a dream.
- 45 Dreams were important in the cult of Asclepius, who appeared to dreamers to suggest cures more often than to offer a miraculous cure on the spot. Synesius may well be thinking of Aelius Aristides' records of his visions in his *Sacred Tales*.
- 46 *Or. Chald.* fr. 118 DES PLACES, perhaps from a poem on dreams.
- 47 *Or. Chald.* fr. 107.8 DES PLACES (the sentence starts in the line before: Αἰθριος ὀρνίθων ταρσός πλατύς οὐποτ' ἀληθής, "never truthful is the birds' wide wingspread in the sky").
- 48 The *pneuma* is in fact located in the head (see 142D), and this is the 'citadel' from which it rules. The imagery is Platonic (*Timaeus* 70a, 90a), and Synesius makes use of it again in *Encomium of Baldness* 76A.
- 49 For the notion 'the common sense' (αἰσθήσεως ... τῆς κοινῆς) see the essay of ANNE SHEPPARD, below p. 108.
- 50 Similar imagery in Synesius' *Hymn* 9.69–70, and in Plotinus (*Enn.* 4.7.6).
- 51 A standard example in discussion of vision: Lucr. 4.436–42, Tertullian, *De anima* 17.2, Sex. Emp. 1.118ff. Repunctuating this sentence, and deleting αὐτὸ τὸ ὄμμα as a gloss restores the structure of the argument: optical illusions are due *either* to the object *or* to the medium *or* to defects in the eye.
- 52 'Oyster-like envelope': i.e. the physical body. The image comes from Plat. *Phaedrus* 250c: Τοῦτου ὃ νῦν δὴ σῶμα περιφέροντες ὀνομάζομεν, ὄστρεοῦ τρόπον δεδουμένον. Hence, e.g., Porph. *Sent.* 29.3 τὸ γεῶδες ὄστρεον, Iambl. *Myst.* 4.13 τὸ ὄστρεῶδες καὶ γήινον σῶμα. Synesius' point is that, whereas the body may be healthy or not whatever the state of the soul, the *pneuma/ochēma* is affected by the soul's virtue or vice. See FESTUGIÈRE 1953, 218 n. 3.

- 53 'Etherealized' (ἀπαιθεροῦται): i.e. made like, or coming to be composed of, *aither*, thought of as something associated with the heavens, and finer (i.e. less material) even than air and fire.
- 54 *Metaichmion*: literally, the space between opposing armies, 'no man's land'.
- 55 'The animal, which': Reading ὁ for καί, since the ζῷον must be the subject of the following clause.
- 56 A difficult, and probably corrupt, sentence. With the text we propose, the sense is that while the entire substance of classes of *daimones* is made up of the *phantastikē ousia*, humans exist sometimes entirely on this level, but more often according to a combination of *phantasia* and *nous*. *Noēsis* without *phantasia* is a rare privilege.
- 57 A reference to *Laws* 653a [R.], which is also made use of (in a similar context) in Porphyry, *Ad Gaurum* 50.23–5 KALBFLEISCH (see SMITH 1974, 80; DEUSE 1983, 222–4). [Sh.]
- 58 'Set before us' (προβεβλημένη): the verb here does not seem to have the special sense of 'projected'. [R.] Cf., however, Porphyry, *Sent.* 29.11 BRISSON (p. 18.9 LAMBERZ): Ἐκ δὲ τῆς πρὸς τὸ σῶμα προσπαθείας τὸν λόγον ἔχουσα τὸν μερικὸν προβεβλημένον ... [Sh.]
- 59 We cannot identify the 'happy people'. Porphyry evidently used this formula (it is *anima spiritalis* in Augustine, *De civ. D.* 10); but Synesius easily moves between different expressions for the *pneuma*, or the soul taken together with it. See S. GERTZ, below pp. 114–115.
- 60 With the whole section 138A–C, cf. Porphyry, *Sententiae* 29 and the commentary in BRISSON 2005. [Sh.]
- 61 Cf. Plat. *Phaedrus* 246d.
- 62 Heraclitus 22 B 118 DK, a favourite text of Platonists (cf. Plut. *Romulus* 28, *De def. or.* 432F, Porph. *De antro nympharum* 11).
- 63 'Two-lap race' (*diaulos*, one of the race events at e.g. the Olympic Games): the soul both descends and ascends and her 'double life' is a race and a struggle.
- 64 'Grafted' (ἐγκεκεντροισμένην): a striking metaphor, also in a passage of the *Chaldaean Oracles* (fr. 143 DES PLACES); cf. also *Romans* 11.17.
- 65 *Or. Chald.* fr. 163.1–3 DES PLACES.
- 66 Proverbial: first in *Odyssey* 17.218 (ὡς αἰεὶ τὸν ὁμοῖον ἄγει θεὸς ὡς τὸν ὁμοῖον).
- 67 Synesius means that the ritual words or objects which theurgists and others used are not the most essential part of the rite; that is in the mind of the performer. See in general É. DES PLACES (ed.), *Jamblique. Les mystères d'Égypte* (Paris 1966) on *Iambl. Myst.* 5.23.
- 68 'First Providence' (πρώτη πρόνοια) is concerned with some or all of the divine, the heavens and the common good rather than with individual or trivial details. The distinction in Plato, *Ti.* 41c and 42e between the activity of the demiurge and the role of the secondary gods gave rise in later Platonism to a distinction between three levels of providence which appears in Apuleius, *De Platone* 1.12, Ps.-Plutarch, *De Fato* 9.572F–573A, and Nemesius, *Nat. hom.* 43.125.21–126.12 MORONI. See further J. M. DILLON, *The Middle Platonists* (London <sup>2</sup>1996) 324–6 and R. W. SHARPLES, "Threefold Providence: the history and background of a doctrine", in: R. W. SHARPLES / A. SHEPPARD (eds.), *Ancient Approaches to Plato's Timaeus*. BICS Supplement 78 (London 2003) 107–27. [Sh.]
- 69 The meaning of myths concerning Lethe, and especially the 'river of unconcern' in Plat. *Resp.* 621a, was much debated. Synesius here distances himself from the idea of oblivion following death, and interprets the draught of oblivion given the souls before birth as the material pleasures, the enjoyment of which cuts them off from memory of better things in the world from which they have come. His view is probably also Porphyry's.

- 70 The accusative βίον implies that her 'first life' is a road she goes down; it does not seem necessary to add <ἐπι> or <πρός>, 'to', her first life. The expression also implies reincarnation.
- 71 It is not the descent that is optional, but the acceptance of 'slavery'. Cf. *Hymn* 1.573–6: "Instead of a serf I became a slave; matter fettered me with her sorceries" (ἀντί δὲ θήσασα / γενόμεαν δούλα / ὕλα με μάγοις / ἐπέδησε τέχνας).
- 72 Adrasteia ('Inescapable') is sometimes the epithet of the goddess Nemesis and often simply a synonym for cosmic Necessity. [N.]
- 73 'Beyond the demands of fate': this is the natural sense of παρ' εἰμαρμένην. The soul's tribulations in her original service were subject to Adrasteia (i.e. to necessity); what she suffers by committing herself to 'slavery' to Matter or Nature is self-inflicted, not laid down by destiny (FITZGERALD 1930 gets this right, GARZYA 1989 and AUJOULAT 2004 do not).
- 74 The ἱεροὶ λόγοι here mentioned may be Orphic texts. Plotinus, *Enn.* 4.3.14.15–17 and Damascius, *In Phd.* 130.3 WESTERINK interpret the story of Heracles freeing Prometheus (Hesiod, *Theogony* 526–32) as an allegory of the deliverance of the soul; cf. J. PEPIN, "Héraclès et son reflet dans le néoplatonisme", in: *Le néoplatonisme* (Paris 1971) 177. On Orphic interpretation of Heracles, see M. L. WEST, *The Orphic Poems* (Oxford 1983) 192–4. On allegories of the labours of Heracles more generally, see F. BUFFIÈRE, *Les mythes d'Homère et la pensée grecque* (Paris 1956) 376–7 and 576, n. 68. [Sh.]
- 75 'Two divisions of matter': this refers to Hom. *Il.* 24.526–32, where Zeus is represented as having two jars, one of bad things, one of good; he gives people either some of each, or else only the bad. Discussion began with Plat. *Resp.* 379d, and this was a favourite text: see esp. Proclus' account (*In Rempublicam* 1.98ff.).
- 76 *Or. Chald.* fr. 158 DES PLACES. Synesius is to give a subtle interpretation. The 'precipice' is of course this material world: the 'rubbish of matter' is neither the body nor the *pneuma* (that could not be thought 'rubbish'), but the elements of fire and air which became attracted to the soul and *pneuma* in the descent through the spheres. He will not insist on this interpretation, but he will insist that the *pneuma* itself will rise with the soul. See GERTZ below, p. 114 n. 13.
- 77 It is not quite certain that this is Synesius' gloss on the oracle, rather than a later gloss on Synesius' own text.
- 78 For a good general discussion of the passage 140D–141B, see VOLLENWEIDER 1985, 183–7. [Sh.]
- 79 'Phantom nature' (εἰδωλική φύσις): i.e. the 'vehicle'.
- 80 This is to read κύκλω; the alternative κυκλικῶ would mean 'circular'. The 'encompassing' body is the sphere of the fixed stars.
- 81 'The Oracle': i.e. the passage quoted above, 140D.
- 82 'Clarity': reading ἐνάργειαν (with MSS support). The alternative ἐνέργειαν 'activity' makes a less clear contrast with the 'befogged', 'mendacious', 'cloudiness' of the *pneuma*.
- 83 'Syrup': This translates the paradosis τὸ σίραιοον. The word has a culinary meaning, 'wine reduced to a syrup', and is known from Aristophanes (*Wasps* 878) and some comic fragments (e.g. Alexis fr. 193 KASSEL–AUSTIN). It is also found frequently in medical texts in the sense of a 'concentrate' of wine or other liquids used in medicine (cf. also Nicander, *Alexipharmaca* 153). It is thus conceivable that Synesius found it an appropriate metaphor for the 'cloudy' or dense *pneuma* which is too closely involved with matter even to give truthful prophecies. But it does seem strange, especially as no apology (e.g. ὡσπερ) is given for it. Presumably, Hypatia understood? The reading has justifiably been questioned. Albert JAHN proposed σεραιοον, which KRABINGER 1850 was the first to adopt. This is supposed to mean an inferior member of the 'chain' (σειρά) to which the god or *daemon*, whose place is to be usurped, belongs. Synesius does indeed know the notion of such a chain (*Hymn* 1.191, 2.192),

- though it is more characteristic of later Platonism (Proclus, *Elements* 108, with DODDS' note). TERZAGHI accepted this in his commentary on *Hymn* 2.192, though he firmly rejected it in his (later) note on our passage. LANG 1926 (p. 16) accepts it and translates: "Deshalb nimmt das im Rang unter den Göttern stehende Geschlecht die Maske eines Gottes." This remains cryptic. PETAVIUS' first edition (1612) has συρρέον, 'flowing together', presumably a conjecture. It should be seriously considered, and may well be right, despite the difficulty of supposing that an obviously *difficilior lectio* has been replaced by a *facilior*. KISSLING 1922, 329 asks *what* it is that 'flows together': the answer presumably is 'the cloudy and fallacious *pneuma*.' The presence of ἀεὶ is also an argument in favour of the participle συρρέον. It cannot be true that the 'usurpation' *always* happens, but ἀεὶ in the sense of 'from time to time' would fit: 'that which collects at any one time puts on the mask of (or insinuates itself into?) a god or higher *daimon*.' On balance, however, it seems wise to retain σίραιον, taking due note of its oddness.
- 84 'Vehicle': ΣΟΡΑΒΓΙ's emendation (2004, 1.68) seems an improvement. It is the state of the *pneuma* which is at stake. With the *paradosis* σχήματι, 'shape', this point is not clear.
- 85 'Cavities of the brain': That a πνεῦμα ψυχικόν is located in the brain and is affected by humidity is also a medical doctrine, to be found in Galen (e.g. *De usu partium* 9.4, *De placitis Hippocratis et Platonis* 7.3); but Synesius' point of view is more religious and metaphysical.
- 86 'Inflamed': Or perhaps 'inflaming'. The expression comes from Plutarch, *Quaest. conv.* 660F: πολυτελείς καὶ φλεγμαίνουσαι τράπεζαι. The Plutarch parallel guarantees that we do not want a compound of φλεγμαίνειν here. We read ἀντί for ἀπό. [R.] There may also be an allusion here to Plato's comparison between a ὑγίης τις πόλις, which is content with simple fare, and a φλεγμαίνουσα πόλις, which requires more elaborate food, in *Resp.* 372e–373a. [N.]
- 87 For the word περιωπή cf. Plato, *Politicus* 272e, where it signifies the vantage-point to which the creator retires when he leaves the world to the care of *heimarmenē*.
- 88 'Going down without going down': a proverb used by Synesius also in *Ep.* 41, apparently to signify doing some good without losing anything. The phrase has a significance in Neoplatonic thought, as it expresses the idea that beings on a higher level of reality can serve those on lower levels without loss to themselves.
- 89 Synesius assumes his gift to be hereditary. This accords with the general Greek belief that prophecy runs in families: Calchas is the son of the *mantis* Thestor, Amphilochus of Amphiaraus; other examples in W. R. HALLIDAY, *Greek Divination. A Study of its Methods and Principles* (London 1913) 79–82. At Delphi, too, the Pythia regularly came from certain local families.
- 90 Pytho is a more poetical name for Delphi. [N.]
- 91 While Delphi was now 'silent', the Libyan oracle of Ammon may still have been in use; but Synesius is not confined to contemporary conditions, and these two oracles are often named together (e.g. *Plat. Laws* 738e).
- 92 'Prayed to Athena': A conflation of Hom. *Od.* 4.750 (ἀλλ' ὕδρηναμένη, καθαρά χροῖ εἶμαθ' ἑλοῦσα), 752 (εὐχε' Ἀθηναίη κούρη Διὸς αἰγιόχοιο), 759 (ἡ δ' ὕδρηναμένη, καθαρά χροῖ εἶμαθ' ἑλοῦσα): Penelope prays to Athena, on Euryycleia's advice, for the safety of Telemachus.
- 93 These exotic requirements for the performance of magical rites are not easy to identify: the 'Cretan herb' may be *dictamnium* (cf. *Virg. Aen.* 12.412), the Egyptian feather that of the ibis; the 'Iberian bone' should perhaps be a mineral object. Curiously, SUSANETTI 1992 ad loc. mentions an ὄστέον Ἴβεως which is in fact a plant: this may be pure coincidence. It is perhaps also worth bearing in mind that ὄστέον may mean the 'stone' of a fruit.

- 94 'By setting sun or rising': A slightly adapted quotation of Hom. *Od.* 1.24 (οἱ μὲν δυσομένου Ὑπερίωνος, οἱ δ' ἀνιόντος). [R.] In fact, Synesius' wording is reported by Strabo 1.2.24 as a variant reading of the Homeric verse favoured by the Pergamene critic Crates of Mallus. [N.]
- 95 'Are collected': the MSS give 'are said about ...' (λέγεται), but this greatly weakens the argument. Synesius has listed elaborate and expensive things, and will go on to complain that private persons could not meet these demands. We expect to be told that the diviners 'assemble' this material, and not to regard this as a matter of hearsay. The sense would be given by <συλ>λέγεται ... ὑπό, and we (hesitantly) print this.
- 96 'The 'Zeugite': i.e. 'Teamster' or perhaps 'hoplite'. This information about Solon's organisation of the Athenian citizenship is found in Plutarch, *Solon* 18.1–2, which may be Synesius' principal source; see in general, Aristotle, *Ath. Pol.* 7.3–4, with P. J. RHODES, *A Commentary on the Aristotelian Athenaion Politeia* (Oxford 1981) 137–46.
- 97 'Eteoboutades': i.e. a member of the élite family which provided the priest of Erechtheus in classical Athens: see W. BURKERT, *Homo Necans. Interpretationen altgriechischer Opferriten und Mythen* (Berlin / New York <sup>2</sup>1997) 162.
- 98 'Manes': A slave-name, derived from the name of an Anatolian god, and a common name in comedy: see Dunbar on Aristophanes' *Birds* 523.
- 99 'Sideshow': Cf. Aristotle, *Eth. Nic.* 1098a32.
- 100 'Houses of correction': this presumably refers to some recent prosecution on charges of magic and treason; an event of 371, related in Amm. 29.1.25–32 (and also in Socrates 4.19, Sozomen 6.35, Zosimus 4.13) and discussed by E. R. DONDS, 'Supernormal Phenomena in Classical Antiquity', in: id. *The Ancient Concept of Progress* (Oxford 1973) [156–210] 193–4, would fit what Synesius says. It involved elaborate apparatus, something like a modern ouija-board, and it clearly had a political purpose.
- 101 The punctuation adopted in text and translation assumes that Synesius means to stress that the 'record-keepers and witnesses' should be regarded as part of the performance.
- 102 'Rhetor' in classical Attic usage often means 'political speaker', 'politician'. For Synesius it would more naturally mean a teacher of rhetoric. We translate 'orator' to cover both possibilities.
- 103 'Hopes, which 'nourish the race of men': an allusion to Sophocles, fr. 948 RADT (ἐλπὶς γὰρ ἡ βόσκουσα τοὺς πολλοὺς βροτῶν).
- 104 An allusion to Aeschylus, *PV* 249–50: Prometheus has given humanity a medicine (*pharmakon*) for fear of death in the form of 'blind hope'.
- 105 'The prisoner in fetters': cf. Plut. *De superstitione* 165D–E, which seems to be Synesius' model.
- 106 'Sicilian or Median fare': Cf. Plat. *Resp.* 404d (Sicilian fare) and *Laws* 695a (Median luxury).
- 107 'Wakeful man's dream': Cf. Quint. 6.2.30, Ael. *VH* 13.29 (Plato so described hope).
- 108 Pindar, fr. 214 SNELL-MAEHLER. Plato cites this passage in *Resp.* 331a, but with γηροτρόφος, 'nurse of age', instead of κουροτρόφος.
- 109 The two gates – of ivory and of horn – are described in *Od.* 19.562–7: false dreams come out of the ivory gate, true dreams through the dreams of horn. See also ΒΥΔΕΝ below, p. 184.
- 110 'I am Odysseus': Penelope has described to the stranger (whom she does not yet know to be Odysseus) the dream in which an eagle kills her pet geese and then reveals himself as her husband (*Od.* 19.515–33). The line 'I am Odysseus' does not occur in this context, but in *Od.* 9.19, where Odysseus reveals himself to Alcinous. Synesius has conflated the passages.
- 111 'About her dream': MSS vary between περί and διά. She was indeed talking *in* her dream to her (unrecognized) eagle-husband, but she is also, now awake, talking *about* her dream to the stranger whom she does not yet know to be Odysseus. It seems to make a better point if *this* is referred to, and we read περί.

- 112 Hom. *Il.* 2.28–9. Plat. *Resp.* 383a mentions the passage as ‘not to be commended’, and it was much discussed later: e.g. Macrobius, *In Somn. Scip.* 1.7.5–6, Proclus, *In Remp.* 1.115–17 KROLL.
- 113 ‘Just now’: in 145C.
- 114 ‘Running riot’: this rare metaphorical use of ὑλομανεῖν (lit. of plants ‘bolting’ or running to too much leafage) comes from Plut. *Aud. poet.* 15E. See R. HUNTER / D. RUSSELL (eds.), *Plutarch. How to Study Poetry (De audiendis poetis)* (Cambridge 2011) ad loc.
- 115 ‘On my tongue’: there is not much to choose between ἐκπεφυκότας ... γλώσσης and ἐμπεφυκότας ... γλώσση, but ἐμπεφυκότας... γλώσσης (the paradosis) cannot be right.
- 116 ‘On an embassy’: to Constantinople, to obtain some relief for his province: the date is debated (397–400 or 399–402). His address to the emperor Arcadius survives (*De regno*). We know nothing of the ‘plots’ against him which he claims to have forestalled because of a dream.
- 117 Or ‘clarity’, if we conjecture ἐνάργειαν. This does seem to fit better with the contrast between the clear and the faint; on the other hand, it may seem tautologous. ἐνέργεια and ἐνάργεια are frequently confused.
- 118 ‘Harbingers’: literally ‘precursor waves’.
- 119 ‘To view the future’: later MSS and early editors rightly read ἐπὶ τὸ μέλλον: the ‘art’ is meant to attack the future.
- 120 ‘The divine *pneuma*’: i.e. the soul’s ‘vehicle’, divine because it too comes from the higher regions of the universe. It is also ‘the first body’ mentioned just below (150B). See below, SHEPPARD, p. 107 and TANASEANU-DÖBLER, pp. 129–130.
- 121 Aratus, *Phaenomena* 813–17.
- 122 Aristotle, *Metaphysics* 1.980a20–981a7.
- 123 *Or. Chald.* fr. 218 DES PLACES. Apparently a description of some elect group of theurgists; the ‘Lord’ of line 4 is probably Apollo/Helios.
- 124 Plat. *Timaeus* 41d.
- 125 ‘Phemonoe’: said to have been the first *promantis* at Delphi and to have first used hexameters for the oracle (Paus. 10.5.7).
- 126 ‘Melampus’: a mythical Theban prophet and healer, the subject of an early epic (*Melampodeia*), and said by Herodotus (2.49) to have founded a cult of Dionysus. – If τῷ is right, it means ‘Melampus according to some authority’; but there is MS authority for the easier τις.
- 127 Cf. Plutarch, *De Pyth. or.* 404C.
- 128 ‘In whatever state it is’: reading ἔχοντι; it is the state of the *pneuma*, not of what is ‘characteristic’ of it, that is at issue.
- 129 ‘Leaping out ahead’: the text here is doubtful; our conjecture assumes that it is the εἰδωλον which ‘leaps out ahead’ from the object. The transmitted text (τὸ τοῦ προεκθορόντος πράγματος εἰδωλον) would mean ‘the image of the object which has leapt out ahead’. In the very next sentence, ἓν, ‘one’, must be added, or substituted for ἐν.
- 130 Reading τόπω (with MSS support) rather than τρόπω.
- 131 ‘Sophist of Lemnos’: Philostratus *VS* 2.9.1, on Aristides’ *Hieroi Logoi*.
- 132 Or ‘of conferring a nameless nature on things fundamentally inconceivable’, if we take τοῖς ... ἀεννοήτοις as neuter.
- 133 ‘Aloadae’: Otus und Ephialtes, gigantic sons of Poseidon, who piled Ossa on Olympus and Pelion on Ossa: Hom *Od.* 11.305–20.
- 134 On Adrasteia, see above n. 72. [N.]
- 135 ‘From the moon’: The sense has been variously taken; but the parallel with the sailor who infers from seeing a certain rock that a certain city is near (150C) seems to settle the question. The dreamer has risen above the earth, but can still see the moon.

- 136 Cf. Hom. *Od.* 16.161 (οὐ γὰρ πως πάντεσσι θεοὶ φαίνονται ἐναργεῖς). In *Od.* 7.201, the same words are introduced into another context.
- 137 'Fables': Synesius argues that the μῦθος, the easiest exercise (*progymnasma*) in the rhetorical curriculum, acquired its characteristic liberty of making animals talk (as often in 'Aesop') from the experience of dreams. The fox is of course a standard character in fables: for the peacock claiming the kingdom of birds see Aesop 244 HAUSRATH; the sea, in the guise of a woman, talks to a shipwrecked sailor in Aesop 178 HAUSRATH.
- 138 The Scythians were noted archers, and 'loosening the bow' is a common image for relaxation; see esp. Horace, *Odes* 2.10.19 with R. G. M. NISBET / M. HUBBARD, *A Commentary on Horace. Odes Book 1* (Oxford 1970) ad loc.
- 139 'Miltiades and Cimon': These famous Athenian generals of classical times are both favourite subjects of rhetorical exercises: see, e.g., Libanius, *Decl.* 11, Sen. *Controv.* 9.1. See R. KOHL (ed.), *De scholasticarum declamationum argumentis ex historia petitis* (Paderborn 1915) nos. 48–52.
- 140 'Two old men': Nicephorus Gregoras says that Libanius is meant, and this has often been accepted, e.g. RUSSELL 1983, 21. But if so, his age is exaggerated (he died in the 390's, aged about 80), but it is possible that Synesius passed through Antioch at some time and heard him, (though not at the time of his embassy, for Libanius would then be dead).
- 141 'Explained': reading ἔφρασαν, as many MSS do (see AUJOULAT 2004 ad loc.). With ἔφθασαν, it would be best to delete οἱ: 'as they hastened to correct me'.
- 142 'The privilege of killing a fellow-citizen who opposed him in politics': The theme contains familiar elements: the hero's choice, the rich-poor enmity. Nicephorus Gregoras identifies the scenario: "Poor Man and Rich Man are enemies. Rich Man promises to provide food for the city if the poor man is put to death. The demos agrees. The rich man fails to bring up the poor man's children, and they starve to death. He is accused of murder." Nicephorus adds that this is a case of 'letter and spirit'; it seems rather one of the definition of murder. There is a similar situation (but not the same case) in Libanius, *Decl.* 35. Nicephorus' suggestion takes no account of the 'hero's choice' which Synesius implies is involved in the declamation he heard. There is a rather more relevant case in Sopater, vol. 8 p. 145–161 WALZ (= p. 94–104 WEISSENBERGER), though here the poor man kills himself, and his rich enemy is charged with his murder. See RUSSELL below, p. 158.
- 143 'About real things': Primarily, this means 'real cases in court'; but Synesius is perhaps hinting also that they should take up philosophy.
- 144 Alcaeus: a famous lyric poet from Lesbos and contemporary of the poetess Sappho (both lived in the later 7th and early 6th centuries BC). [N.]
- 145 Archilochus: a famous iambic poet from Paros, who lived in the earlier and middle decades of the 7th century BC [N.]
- 146 'On their own lives': Alcaeus' poetry was often concerned with the politics of Mytilene, the tyrant Myrsilus, and his own exile. Archilochus too wrote of his own life in politics and war, and his personal enmities, e.g. with Lycambes.
- 147 Stesichorus: a famous poet of choral lyric from Himera in Sicily, who lived in the later 7th and early 6th centuries BC and is best known for treating epic themes in lyric metres; he was always held to be 'Homeric' in language and matter.
- 148 'I recommend': The paradosis παρανομουμένην can only mean 'victimized', 'subject to unlawful treatment'; there seems no evidence for a middle use meaning 'unlawful', 'unusual' or 'unorthodox'. In fact what Synesius recommends is not against the law. We suggest παραινουμένην 'recommended'. It is curious that translators slip this sense in: GARZYA 1989 writes "lo stile svincolato dalle norme quale noi raccomandiamo", and LANG 1926 "diese von uns empfohlene ungewöhnliche Schreibart."

*C. Essays*





# Outline of a General History of Speculation about Dreams<sup>1</sup>

*Ursula Bittrich*

The *De insomniis* of Synesius of Cyrene is certainly one of the most fervent writings in the area of religiously founded speculation about divination through dreams. At the same time, it is an important representative of Greek oneirological thinking. Although the tradition of writing about dreams can be traced back to Mesopotamia, Egypt and Israel,<sup>2</sup> I will, within the given limits of this article, confine myself to Greek authors, trying to show, by way of certain key themes, the most important landmarks in Greek speculation about dreams and their interpretation.

For a highly imaginative people like the ancient Greeks, who with their marked interest in the uncanny and the supernatural were fascinated by phenomena which cannot be explained in rational terms, dreams and the interpretation of dreams were an object of constant attention, ever since Homer paid his tribute to them in his epic poems. Theoretical speculation about dreams was divided between oneirological thinkers, who inquired into the nature of dreams from a psychological, philosophical and religious perspective, and a rather esoteric group of oneirocritics, professional interpreters of dreams with an apparent tendency to analyse dream images systematically and from an almost linguistic perspective.

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<sup>1</sup> My thanks go to A. Sheppard and H.-G. Nesselrath for their precious hints and comments. The translations in this article are my own, if not otherwise specified.

<sup>2</sup> Out of the vast literature in the field of non-Greek oneirological texts, I single out only a few titles: for the interpretation of dreams in Mesopotamia, see A. L. OPPENHEIM, *The Interpretation of Dreams in the Ancient Near East*. Transactions of the American Philosophical Society 46. 3 (Philadelphia 1956); S. B. NOEGEL, "Dreams and Dream Interpreters in Mesopotamia and in the Hebrew Bible (Old Testament)", in: K. BULKELEY (ed.), *Dreams and Dreaming: A Reader in Religion, Anthropology, History, and Psychology* (Hampshire 2001) 45–71; for the Jewish tradition, see A. KRISTIANPOLLER / M. TILLY, *Traum und Traumdeutung im Talmud* (Wiesbaden 2006); for the Egyptian tradition, see A. RUIZ, *The Spirit of Ancient Egypt* (New York 2001) 169–76; see further U. WILCKEN, *Urkunden der Ptolemäerzeit. Ältere Funde*, 2 vols. (Berlin 1927) and M. TOTTI-GEMÜND, "Aretalogie des Imuthes-Asklepios (P. Oxy. 1381, 64–145)", in: GIRONE 1998, 169–93 for dreams in Ptolemaic Egypt.

## 1. Antiphon

The pioneer of the oneirocritical tradition was certainly Antiphon, who in the fifth c. BC wrote a treatise *Περὶ κρίσεως ὄνειρων* of which unfortunately only a few fragments survive.<sup>3</sup> If we are in agreement with the traditional identification of Antiphon the oneirocritic with Antiphon the sophist, we can infer from the latter's preoccupation with linguistic symbols, which characterizes works such as *Περὶ ἀληθείας* and *Πολιτικός* and might have contributed to his characterization as *Λογομάγειρος*,<sup>4</sup> that his interest in dreams was mainly a technical one:<sup>5</sup> his dreambook was probably not much more than a compilation of dream images and their corresponding meanings, following the example of traditional 'oneirocritical tablets' (*πινάκια ὄνειροκριτικά*).<sup>6</sup> At the same time, he is taking over a principle already well known in the Egyptian and Assyro-Babylonian oneirocritical tradition, according to which the meaning of a given dream image varies depending on the gender, age, social rank, and profession of the recipient.<sup>7</sup>

## 2. Democritus and the Atomists

In the field of Greek oneirological speculation the foundations were laid by Democritus.<sup>8</sup> Although the material at our disposal is too scant for a full reconstruction of his theory, we can at least infer from a passage in

<sup>3</sup> For the name of this treatise, see Antiphon, *DK* 87 A 1; for fragments of this work and those of other Greek oneirocritical authors, see DEL CORNO 1969, 45–7; for his oneirocritical method, see DEL CORNO 1969, 129–32; VAN LIESHOUT 1980, 224–9.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Antiphon, *DK* 87 A 1: Σuid. Ἀντιφῶν Ἀθηναῖος τερατοσκοπὸς καὶ ἐποποιὸς καὶ σοφιστής· ἐκαλεῖτο δὲ Λογομάγειρος.

<sup>5</sup> See, e.g., verbal definitions from *Περὶ ἀληθείας* in Antiphon, *DK* 87 A 29–30, 33, 39 and from the *Πολιτικός* in Antiphon 80 A 73–7. See further Cic. *Div.* 1.51.116, who characterizes Antiphon's method as an *artificiosa interpretatio*.

<sup>6</sup> For the tradition of these *πινάκια ὄνειροκριτικά* which obviously lived up to the times of the Roman Empire see the anecdote in Plut. *Arist.* 27.4 about Lysimachos, a grandson of Aristides, who used such a *πινάκιον* to make his living as an interpreter of dreams.

<sup>7</sup> For this differentiating principle in Antiphon, see Ps.-Melampus, *Περὶ παλμών μαντικής* 19: Ὁφθαλμοῦ δεξιῦ τοῦ ἄνω βλέφαρον ἔαν ἄλληται, ἐπίκτησιν πάντως δηλοῖ, κατὰ δὲ Ἀντιφῶντα πράξιεν καὶ ὑγείαν· δούλω ἐπιβουλὴν, χήρα ἀποδημίαν ("If the right eye's upper eyelid twitches, it means, at all events, fresh gain; however, according to Antiphon, it means activity and health; evil plotting for the slave, exile for the widow.") On this passage, see VAN LIESHOUT 1980, 225. For examples of differentiation in Assyro-Babylonian texts, see A. BOISSIER, *Choix de textes relatifs à la divination Assyro-Babyloniennne*, vol. 2 (Geneva 1906) 3, nr. 21–2; 4, nr. 25. Compare also the division of dreamers into concomitants either of Horus or Seth in the hieratic dreambook Pap. Beatty III, see A. VOLTEN, *Demotische Traumdeutung* (Pap. Carlsberg XIII und XIV verso). *Analecta Aegyptiaca* 3 (Kopenhagen 1942) 8.

<sup>8</sup> For an overview over Democritus' theory of dreams, see VAN LIESHOUT 1980, 85–97, and BICKNELL 1969.

Plutarch that he conceived of dreams as a manifestation of ‘spectral films’ (εἶδωλα) and ‘effluences’ (ἀπόρροιαί) which detach themselves from certain objects so as to enter through the pores into the body of a dreamer.<sup>9</sup> He depicts the εἶδωλα as physical creatures of an almost semi-divine power, ‘enormous’ (ὑπερφύη) and ‘hard to destroy’ (δύσφθορα), beneficial or harmful, which enable their recipients to gain insights into the future.<sup>10</sup> In the course of this article we will see that the atomistic model that is characteristic also of Epicurean oneirology up to Lucretius, had a considerable impact both on Aristotle and Synesius, who used it, albeit in slightly modified versions, as one possible explanation of the phenomenon of precognition in dreams.<sup>11</sup>

### 3. Plato

Democritus’ focus on the awe-inspiring potential of dreams has been preserved in the philosophy of Plato, who in a locus classicus in *Symposium* 202d–203a, places dreams alongside divination, priestcraft, soothsaying, and sorcery under the command of the demonic (τὸ δαιμόνιον) as a principle midway between the divine and the human. While the gods themselves stand aloof from human affairs, the demonic, in turn, is the means of all society (ὀμιλία) and conversation (διάλεκτος) between the gods and men. The emphasis on the intermediate status of divination sets the tone for Plato’s awareness of the ambiguity of dreams, the multi-faceted potential of which he assesses on the grounds of his doctrine of the tripartite soul. In the *Timaeus* 71a7–b1 Plato introduces a theory of divination by dreams in which the most important role is assigned to the desiring part of the soul. It is envisaged as located in the dwelling-place of the liver, which by means of its smooth and shiny surface serves as a mirror to reflect certain thoughts proceeding from the brain in the shape of images.<sup>12</sup> Thus,

<sup>9</sup> Cf. Democritus, *DK* 68 A 77 (Plut. *Quaest. conv.* 8.10.2, p. 735A): ... τοῦτο δὴ τοῦπιδήμιον ὁ φησι Δ. “ἐγκαταβυσοῦσθαι τὰ εἶδωλα διὰ τῶν πόρων εἰς τὰ σώματα καὶ ποιεῖν τὰς κατὰ ὕπνον ὄψεις ἐπαναφερόμενα ...” (“... he assumed the commonplace found in Democritus ‘that spectral films deeply penetrate the body through the pores and that when they rise they bring about the visual impressions received in sleep ...’”); see further Democritus, *DK* 68 B 166.

<sup>10</sup> For the εἶδωλα as ‘physical creatures’, see BICKNELL 1969, 319–20: “... they are a kind of physical creature in its own right, albeit a tenuous, vaporous and insubstantial kind ...”. See further Sext. *Emp. Math.* 9.19.

<sup>11</sup> Compare also ENDERS 1924, 10: “Wir werden sehen, wie diese Lehre des Demokrit von den Traumbildern, die wir uns als materielle Wesen vorstellen müssen, durch die Jahrhunderte hindurch in den Köpfen der Philosophen gespukt hat, und wie selbst solche Denker, die sie ausdrücklich bekämpften, sich nicht vollständig von ihr losmachen konnten.” On the impact of the atomistic model on Synesius’ oneirological speculation, see also SHEPPARD, p. 101 in this volume.

<sup>12</sup> Cf. Plat. *Ti.* 71a7–71b1.

the liver acquires the quality of a virtual ‘seat of divination’ (μαντεῖον) located in the human body which might attain to the truth – ἀληθείας πη προσάπτοιτο – by means of images that send messages to the desiring part as if in recompense for its exclusion from rational thinking.<sup>13</sup> A characteristic of ‘the dreams of the liver’ is their highly symbolic character which can be decoded only by a skillful interpreter of dreams. While divination in this case (just like sickness and frenzy) is conceived of as characterized by ἀφροσύνη, viz. a temporary disengagement of reason,<sup>14</sup> we find some diametrically opposed remarks in the *Republic*. In 9.571c–572c Plato, once again starting from his doctrine of the tripartite soul, has the various parts of the soul trigger corresponding dream images. While the ἐπιθυμητικόν, especially when stimulated by means of excessive eating and drinking, is prone to generate all kinds of ‘unlawful’ and monstrous images, the dreamer has a good chance to receive illuminating dreams, if he arouses his λογιστικόν before going to sleep. When he has reached a state of clear self-consciousness, with his mind focussed on the unknown, he might be granted moments of clairvoyance, which is a way of touching upon the truth – τῆς ἀληθείας ... ἄπτεται – completely different from the mantic frenzy referred to in the *Timaeus*.<sup>15</sup> Plato describes what might be revealed through such a veridical dream in terms of the typical seer’s knowledge as “a fragment of what happened, or of what is or of what will be.”<sup>16</sup> Thus, the power of prophetic insight is granted both to the dreams of the λογιστικόν and the irrational oracular visions of the liver. We find a similar kind of ambivalence in Plato’s evaluation of the dreams themselves: while in the *Sophistes* 266b–c εἰδῶλα of various kinds including dream images are provided with a reality of their own, since they are made by a superhuman skill – δαίμονιᾳ μηχανῇ – just like the things they corre-

<sup>13</sup> Cf. Plat. *Ti.* 71d–e: οἱ ξυστήσαντες ἡμᾶς, ..., κατορθοῦντες καὶ τὸ φαῦλον ἡμῶν, ἵνα ἀληθείας πη προσάπτοιτο, κατέστησαν ἐν τούτῳ τὸ μαντεῖον. (“Those who framed us, ..., rectified the vile part in us and established the oracle in this very part so that it might in some degree touch upon the truth.”) The notion is taken up by Philostr. *VA* 8.7.15, where skillful seers are said to envisage the liver as containing “the tripod of their divination” (τῆς αὐτῶν μαντικῆς ... τρίποδα).

<sup>14</sup> Cf. Plat. *Ti.* 71e: ἰκανὸν δὲ σημεῖον, ὡς μαντικὴν ἀφροσύνη θεὸς ἀνθρωπίνην δέδωκεν· οὐδεὶς γὰρ ἔννοος ἐφάπτεται μαντικῆς ἐνθέου καὶ ἀληθοῦς, ἀλλ’ ἢ καθ’ ὕπνον τὴν τῆς φρονήσεως πεδηθεὶς δύναμιν ἢ διὰ νόσον ἢ διὰ τινα ἐνθουσιασμόν παραλλάξας. (“A sufficient sign of this is that God granted divination to human folly; for no one attains to divinely inspired and true divination while in the power of his senses, but rather when during sleep the power of his reasoning is fettered or altered by disease or some sort of divine frenzy.”)

<sup>15</sup> Cf. Plat. *Resp.* 9.572a7–8. For veridical dreams in Plato, see further *Criton* 44a–b and *Phaedo* 60c–61c.

<sup>16</sup> Cf. Plat. *Resp.* 9.572a: ἢ τι τῶν γεγονότων ἢ τῶν ὄντων ἢ τῶν μελλόντων. Compare Hom. *Il.* 1.70 on Calchas’ insight into the past, the present and the future.

spond to,<sup>17</sup> the *Theaetetus* places a strong emphasis on the perfect illusion and deceptiveness of dreams. From a sceptical perspective which we will notice also in Aristotle the constituents of dreams are here called ψευδεῖς αἰσθήσεις in pointed opposition to the true perceptions of waking life.<sup>18</sup> The perfect illusion of dream images, which are perceived by dreamers as if they were the very things they represent, is described by Plato as an experience similar to that of those in the cave who perceive the shadows on the wall as if they were the objects themselves, the dreaming mind being so bewitched by the images that it mistakes for reality what it actually perceives only by way of δόξα.<sup>19</sup>

#### 4. Aristotle

While Plato's handling of the phenomenon of dreams is characterized by its great variety, which ranges from reverence for their veridical and divine potential to a full awareness of their power to deceive a dreamer's mind and stir his primitive instincts, Aristotle has, in certain respects, a much more coherent outlook: Although he offers various explanations as to the origin of dreams in different works, he almost never deviates from his basic conviction that they are something essentially irrational. In the *Eudemian Ethics* 8.2.1248a1–40 he introduces a concept of ecstasy which seems to be very much indebted to the above mentioned passage on divination as ἀφροσύνη in Plato's *Timaeus*. Starting from some observations about the truly εὐτυχής, in whom the power of ἐνθουσιασμός is far stronger than mind and reasoning, he characterizes the phenomenon of spontaneous divination by dreams as a divine frenzy without any involvement of the λόγος. Direct precognition is attributed especially to the atrabillious, who are prone to let themselves be guided by an internal divine

<sup>17</sup> Cf. Plat. *Soph.* 266c5–6: ΘΕΑΙ. Δύο γὰρ οὖν ἐστί ταῦτα θείας ἔργα ποιήσεως, αὐτό τε καὶ τὸ παρακολουθοῦν εἰδῶλον ἐκάστω. ("For indeed, these are the two results of divine creation, the thing itself and the image that follows it in every case.")

<sup>18</sup> Cf. Plat. *Tht.* 158a. For a closer analysis of Plato's outlook on dreams in the *Theaetetus*, see E. VEGLÉRIIS, "Platon et le rêve de la nuit", *Ktema* 7 (1982) [53–65] 55.

<sup>19</sup> For the notion of taking the copy (the sensorial world) not as copy, but as reality itself, see *Resp.* 5.476c–d; for a similar occurrence in dreams, see *Resp.* 476c: τὸ ὄνειρώπτειν ἄρα οὐ τὸδε ἐστίν, ἐάντε ἐν ὕπνῳ τις ἐάντ' ἐγρηγορώς τὸ ὁμοίον τῷ μὴ ὁμοίον ἀλλ' αὐτὸ ἡγήται εἶναι ᾧ ἕοικεν; ("Is the phenomenon of dreaming not this that someone, whether sleeping or awake, thinks that what is similar to something is not that which is similar, but the very thing that it is similar to?") R. DESCARTES, *Discours de la méthode. Œuvre et lettres* (Paris 2004; Leiden <sup>1</sup>1637) 145, carries the idea even further, when he compares the world of his thoughts to that of his dreams: "... et enfin, considérant que toutes les mêmes pensées que nous avons étant éveillés nous peuvent aussi venir quand nous dormons, sans qu'il y en ait aucune pour lors qui soit vraie, je me résolus de feindre que toutes les choses qui m'étaient jamais entrées en l'esprit n'étaient non plus vraies que les illusions de mes songes."

force, with their reason disengaged.<sup>20</sup> However, this dualistic approach is abandoned in a testimony provided by Sextus Empiricus.<sup>21</sup> Sextus tells us that Aristotle, in a passage that undoubtedly belonged to the dialogue *De philosophia*, referred to sleep and death as stages in which the soul is isolated from the body in two successive degrees.<sup>22</sup> “He (i.e. Aristotle) says that the soul, when she becomes isolated during sleep, acquires her very own nature and foresees as well as foretells the future.”<sup>23</sup> This is a foretaste of the hour of death, when the soul is actually separated from the body in a way that brings about even clearer insights, as we see in the prophecies of Patroclus and Hector in the *Iliad*, who, as they are passing away, announce the future deaths of their killers.<sup>24</sup> I take it that Aristotle is here not just referring a *communis opinio* on divination, which he himself did not share, given that he was seriously pondering the possibility of an at least temporary separation of the soul from the body, as is shown by his interest in the legendary figure of Hermetimus, commonly held to be a pre-incarnation of Pythagoras.<sup>25</sup> The Clazomenian, who was famous for the extracorporeal journeys of his soul, is mentioned by Aristotle in his *Metaphysics*, 984b20, as an illustration of the separability of the *voûc*. In his three treatises on sleep and dream in the *Parva Naturalia*, Aristotle again lays a heavy stress on the irrationality of dreams. Though the treatises are not necessarily among the latest of Aristotle’s surviving works, they certainly represent an advanced phase of his thinking on psychobiological questions.<sup>26</sup> In *De insomniis* 459a21–2, he defines dreaming as an

<sup>20</sup> Cf. Arist. *Eth. Eud.* 8.2.1248a40–b1: διὸ οἱ μελαγχολικοὶ καὶ εὐθυόνηροι. ἔουκε γὰρ ἡ ἀρχὴ [sc. τὸ ἐν ἡμῖν θεῖον] ἀπολυομένου τοῦ λόγου ἰσχυεῖν μᾶλλον. (“Wherefore the melancholics also have straight dreams. For it seems that the principle [sc. what is divine in us] is stronger, when reason is disengaged.”)

<sup>21</sup> Cf. Sext. Emp. *Math.* 9.20–1 = Arist. fr. 12 a (Ross).

<sup>22</sup> For fr. 12 a as part of the dialogue of *De philosophia*, see EFFE 1970, 73.

<sup>23</sup> Cf. Arist. fr. 12a (Ross): ὅταν γὰρ, φησιν, ἐν τῷ ὑπνοῦν καθ’ αὐτὴν γέννηται ἡ ψυχὴ, τότε τὴν ἰδίον ἀπολαβοῦσα φύσιν προμαντεύεται τε καὶ προαγορεύει τὰ μέλλοντα.

<sup>24</sup> Cf. Arist. fr. 12a: Τοιαύτη δὲ ἐστὶ καὶ ἐν τῷ κατὰ τὸν θάνατον χωρίζεσθαι τῶν σωμάτων. (“Just so she [sc. the soul] is also when in death she is separated from the bodies.”) For the prophecies of Hector and Patroclus referred to by Aristotle as evidence of his assumption that the hour of death brings about clear insights, compare Hom. *Il.* 16.851–4; 22.355–60. For the ancients’ belief that dying brings precognition, see also R. JANKO (ed.), *The Iliad. A Commentary*. General Editor G. S. KIRK, vol. 4: books 13–16 (Cambridge 1992) 420.

<sup>25</sup> For the view that Aristotle is just referring to an old superstition, see EFFE 1970, 88: “Die Erörterung der einschlägigen Stellen hat ergeben, daß Aristoteles die in fr. 12a referierte ‘schamanistische’ Konzeption der Traumantik nicht selbst vertreten hat; er trug nur einen Bericht über die Auffassungen der Alten vor, die er an Hand einiger Beispiele, welche Sextus zum Teil übergeht, erläuterte.” For Hermetimus of Clazomenae as a pre-incarnation of Pythagoras, see Diog. Laert. 8.4–5.

<sup>26</sup> Cf. D. GALLOP, *Aristotle on Sleep and Dreams. A Text and Translation with Introduction, Notes and Glossary* (Warminster 1996) 5. On Aristotle’s three treatises on sleep and dream, see further the commentaries by D. ROSS (ed.), *Aristotle. Parva Naturalia. A revised text with*

activity of the perceiving faculty of the soul inasmuch as it is imaginative,<sup>27</sup> while at the same time he excludes it from reason. Accordingly, he characterizes dreams as demonic, given that they belong to the realm of nature, which is equally demonic.<sup>28</sup> As Plato did in his *Theaetetus*, he stresses the deceptive potential of nocturnal φαντασία, the cognitive value of which he places below that of both αἴσθησις and δόξα.<sup>29</sup> Occasional correspondences between dreams and events in waking life are, for the most part, put down to mere 'coincidence' (σύμπτωμα).<sup>30</sup> However, Aristotle does allow for some, albeit rare, occurrences of directly precognitive visions. Yet, instead of tracing them back to divine influence, as he did in his *Eudemian Ethics*,<sup>31</sup> he now accounts for them as something stipulated by movements sent out by external objects in a way very much indebted to Democritus, but with κίνησις replacing the latter's εἶδωλα and ἀπόρροιαί.<sup>32</sup> A predisposition to receive this kind of vision is attributed especially to ordinary people, οἱ τυχόντες, with their minds completely vacant, and to those of a melancholic temperament who, due to their vehemence (σφοδρότης), are prone to pursue external impulses in chains of associative thinking without letting themselves be distracted by any rival movements.<sup>33</sup> It is

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introduction and commentary (Oxford 1955), P. SIWEK (ed.), *Aristotelis Parva Naturalia Graece et Latine* (Rome 1963), and P. J. VAN DER EIJK (ed.), *Aristoteles. De insomniis. De divinatione per somnum, übers. u. erl.* Aristoteles Werke in deutscher Übersetzung, vol. 14/3: *Parva Naturalia* (Berlin 1994); for a paraphrasing approach with occasional hints to other Aristotelian writings, see ENDERS 1924, 17–67; see further WIJSENBECK-WIJLER 1976, with ACKRILL's criticism (1979, 321): "But I doubt whether anyone reasonably familiar with *De Anima* and *Parva Naturalia*, and with some of the recent work on them, will find his understanding of the problems much advanced by this publication."

<sup>27</sup> Cf. Arist. *De ins.* 459a21–2: ... τοῦ αἰσθητικοῦ μὲν ἔστι τὸ ἐνυπνιαῖζειν, τούτου δ' ἡ φανταστικόν.

<sup>28</sup> Cf. Arist. *Div. somn.* 463b12–15.

<sup>29</sup> For Aristotle's focus on the deceptiveness of φαντασία in dreams, see SCHOFIELD 1978.

<sup>30</sup> Cf. Arist. *Div. somn.* 463b8–9.

<sup>31</sup> See above, p. 76, n. 20.

<sup>32</sup> Cf. Arist. *Div. somn.* 464a9–12: οὕτως οὐδὲν κωλύει κίνησιν τινα καὶ αἰσθησιν ἀφικνεῖσθαι πρὸς τὰς ψυχὰς τὰς ἐνυπνιαζούσας (ἀφ' ὧν ἐκεῖνος τὰ εἶδωλα ποιῆει καὶ τὰς ἀπορροίας), ... ("So there is nothing to hinder that some sort of movement and perception comes to the dreaming souls [from the very objects from which he (sc. Democritus) has the images and the effluences (sc. detach themselves)], ...".)

<sup>33</sup> For the τυχόντες, see Arist. *Div. somn.* 464a22–5: οὕτω δ' εἰκὸς τοὺς τυχόντας προορᾶν· ἡ γὰρ διάνοια τῶν τοιούτων οὐ φροντιστικὴ, ἀλλ' ὥσπερ ἔρημος καὶ κενὴ πάντων, καὶ κινήθεισα κατὰ τὸ κινεῖν ἄγεται. ("So it is likely for ordinary people to have prevision, for the mind of those people is not characterized by reason, but, as it were, abandoned and void of everything, and whenever it is moved it is led on in accordance with the mover.") For the intensity of the atrabilious, see Arist. *Div. somn.* 464b4–5: ἔτι δὲ διὰ τὴν σφοδρότητα οὐκ ἐκκρούεται αὐτῶν ἡ κίνησις ὑφ' ἑτέρας κινήσεως. ("Moreover, due to their intensity, when they are moved, this movement is not driven back by another movement.") For their associative thinking, see Arist. *Div. somn.* 464b1–4: ὥσπερ γὰρ τὰ Φιλαίνιδος ποιήματα καὶ οἱ ἐμμανεῖς ἐχόμενα τοῦ ὁμοίου λέγουσι καὶ διανοοῦνται, οἷον Ἀφροδίτην φροδίτην, καὶ οὕτω συνείρουσιν εἰς τὸ πρόσω. ("For just like the po-



a remarkable and at the same time rather isolating characteristic of Aristotle that he does not at all conceive of precognitive dreaming as something which requires moral excellence. By contrast, the κίνησις that arises from continuous thinking renders especially the φρόνιμος rather insensible for the movements reaching him from without.<sup>34</sup> The less intensive internal movements of others might contribute to a distortion of their dream images, which is described by Aristotle by means of a water simile: pictures of varied clarity yielded by water in motion are compared to increasing degrees of enigmatic alienation in dream images. These, when they reach a peak, call for a skillful interpreter who, in a way similar to a poet capable of contriving striking metaphors, has to be well versed in observing resemblances.<sup>35</sup>

## 5. The Stoics

Aristotle's sceptical and at the same time highly reflective approach towards dreams is somewhat counterbalanced by the unanimously positive attitude of the Stoics. Whereas both Plato and Aristotle deny any active involvement of the gods in dream divination, the Stoics, due to their belief in divine πρόνοια, consider prophetic visions a divine gift – a means through which the gods themselves send their forewarnings.<sup>36</sup> The basic principle of this belief is the definition of divination as “the foreknowledge and foretelling of things that happen by chance” (*divinationem esse earum rerum*

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ems of Philainis and the frantic say and ponder things that are associated by the similar, as e.g. ‘Aphrodite phrodite’, so do these people connect their thoughts in a series that moves forward.”)

<sup>34</sup> Cf. Arist. *Div. somn.* 464a19–20: ... καὶ διὰ ταῦτα συμβαίνει τὸ πάθος τοῦτο τοῖς τυχοῦσι καὶ οὐ τοῖς φρονιμωτάτοις. (“... and that is why random subjects, and not the most sensible ones, are affected in this way.”)

<sup>35</sup> Cf. Arist. *Div. somn.* 464b5–16; compare *Div. somn.* 464b5: τεχνικώτατος δ’ ἐστὶ κριτῆς ἐνυπνίων ὅστις δύναται τὰς ὁμοιότητας θεωρεῖν (“Yet, the most skillful interpreter of dreams is he who is able to contemplate the similarities”), with *Poet.* 1459a8: τὸ γὰρ εὖ μεταφέρειν τὸ ὅμοιον θεωρεῖν ἐστίν. (“For the creation of good metaphors is the contemplation of the similar.”)

<sup>36</sup> For the Stoic assumption of the gods’ benevolence towards humankind, see Cic. *Div.* 2.104: *Si sunt di, benefici in homines sunt* – “If there are gods, they are kindly disposed towards men.” (For the translation, see FALCONER 1923, 487). For the notion that dreams are divine forewarnings, see Cic. *Div.* 2.130: *Chrysippus quidem divinationem definit his verbis: ‘vim cognoscendam et videntem et explicantem signa, quae a dis hominibus portendantur; officium autem esse eius praenoscerere, dei erga homines mente qua sint quidque significant, quem ad modumque ea procurentur atque expientur.’* (“The power to see, understand, and explain premonitory signs given to men by the gods. Its duty is to know in advance the disposition of the gods towards men, the manner in which that disposition is shown and by what means the gods may be propitiated and their threatened ills averted.” - For the translation, see FALCONER 1923, 517). See further the syllogism of Chrysippus, Diogenes, and Antipater in Cic. *Div.* 2.101–2.

*praesensionem, quae essent fortuitae*, Cic. *Div.* 2.13). On logical grounds, this was challenged by the Epicureans, the most fervent opponents of divination, who argued that if it could be known in advance that an event is going to happen, then that event would be certain and not subject to chance, and, therefore, it could by no means be averted, not even by divination.<sup>37</sup> However, this kind of logic cannot have any great impact on someone who assumes that one of the gods' main characteristics is their love for mankind, which not only the Stoics did, but also those who were actively involved in divination by dreams as practised in ritual. Judging *inter alia* from the Epidaurian miracle inscriptions, a friendly and propitious attitude towards humankind was widely considered a predominant feature of Asclepius.<sup>38</sup> Accordingly, divination by dreams was held to be a public domain, open to everyone regardless of his personal background. The assumption of divine benevolence towards mankind is part of the larger concept of an 'affinity of all things' (συμπάθεια τῶν ὄλων), in which the world is conceived of as a unified organism with mutually interrelated parts, including the gods themselves. This notion, which might have its roots in sympathetic magic, must have been common enough in Hellenic thought and culture for Cicero to label it rather vaguely as 'Greek' in his *De divinatione* 2.34.<sup>39</sup> It was adopted by the Stoics, especially by Posidonius, who probably used it as a foundation for his five books on divination, and it does also play an important role in the philosophical speculation of Neoplatonists such as Plotinus and Proclus.<sup>40</sup> In the history of divination by dreams, the Stoic Posidonius can be considered as a mediator also in various other significant respects. Judging from the few fragments of his *De divinatione*, which have been preserved mainly through Cicero, he shared the idea of the soul's isolation

<sup>37</sup> Cf. Cic. *Div.* 2.15.

<sup>38</sup> See, e.g., the votive inscription of Diophantus Sphettius (E. EDELSTEIN / L. EDELSTEIN, *Asclepius. Collection and Interpretation of the Testimonies* [Baltimore / London 1945] 241, test. 428, 18–20): σὲ γὰρ θεοὶ οἱ πανυπεύροχοι / δῶρον μέγα, τὸν φιλελήμονα, / θνητοῖς ἔπορον, λύσιν ἄλγεων. ("For the supreme gods gave as a great gift you, the compassionate one, to mortal men, as a deliverance from their pains.") See further Ael. *NA* 9.33: καὶ οὐ τι πού, ὦ βασιλεῦ καὶ θεῶν φιλανθρωπότατε Ἀσκληπιέ, ἀβρότονον ἔγωγε ἀντικρίνω τῇ σοφίᾳ τῇ σῇ. ("And in no degree do I compare, o king and of all deities the greatest lover of mankind, some wormwood to your wisdom.") On φιλανθρωπία as a distinguishing mark of Asclepius see further C. A. MEIER, *Der Traum als Medizin. Antike Inkubation und moderne Psychotherapie* (Zürich 1985) 122.

<sup>39</sup> Cf. RODIER 1976, 307: "The early history of the doctrine of sympathia is obscure. The idea may have derived from primitive ideas of sympathetic magic."

<sup>40</sup> On these five books on divination, of which unfortunately only some fragments remain, see Cic. *Div.* 1.6. For the notion of συμπάθεια τῶν ὄλων as crucial for this work, see K. REINHARDT, *Poseidonios* (München 1921) 423–70, and EDELSTEIN / KIDD 1988, 423, on EDELSTEIN / KIDD 1989, I (Testimonium) 106; for its significance in Plotinus, see R. T. WAL-LIS, *Neoplatonism* (London 1972) 70–1, 122; RODIER 1976, 307–9; see further R. M. VAN DER BERG, *Proclus' Hymns. Essays, Translations, Commentary* (Leiden et al. 2001) 79–81, on how Proclus uses the notion of συμπάθεια as a basic principle in his theory of symbols.

during sleep depicted in Aristotle's fr. 12a and supported the belief that dying brings precognition.<sup>41</sup>

## 6. Philo of Alexandria

According to some scholars, the oneirological system of Posidonius was the main source of inspiration for Philo's *De somniis*, an extensive treatise on dreams from the Pentateuch and their interpretation.<sup>42</sup> Out of the five books it originally comprised, only the second and third have survived.<sup>43</sup> As for the origin of dreams, Philo introduces a mode of classification which aptly illustrates his indebtedness to Posidonius: in the introduction to the second book of the *De somniis* he distinguishes dreams which are 1) god-sent, 2) of both divine and human origin, and 3) mere products of the human soul.<sup>44</sup> Following on the lines of the moral approach that we have traced in Plato's *Republic*, he establishes a connection between the dreamer's character and the quality of his dream visions. When in the second book of *De somniis* he turns to Joseph, who in his allegorical system is a personification of vainglory, he characterizes his visions as obscure and blurred, while the first book of the *De Somniis* contained a series of "plain oracles" (χρησμοὶ σαφεῖς), god-sent visions of an immediate clarity, which Philo probably conceived of as a prerequisite of the morally excellent.<sup>45</sup> As shown by a passage in *De migratione* 190, Philo

<sup>41</sup> For the soul's isolation during sleep, see Cic. *Div.* 1.129 (= EDELSTEIN / KIDD 1989, T 110): *A natura autem alia quaedam ratio est quae docet quanta sit animi vis seiuncta a corporis sensibus, quod maxime contingit aut dormientibus aut mente permotis.* ("Moreover, divination finds another and a positive support in nature, which teaches us how great is the power of the soul when it is divorced from the bodily senses, as it is especially in sleep, and in times of frenzy or inspiration." - For the translation, see FALCONER 1923, 365). For the belief that dying brings precognition see Cic. *Div.* 1.64: *Divinare autem morientes illo etiam exemplo confirmat Posidonius, quod adfert, Rhodium quendam morientem sex aequales nominasse et dixisse qui primus eorum qui secundus qui deinde deinceps moriturus esset.* ("Moreover, proof of the power of dying men to prophesy is also given by Posidonius in his well-known account of a certain Rhodian, who, when on his death-bed, named six men of equal age and foretold which of them would die first, which second, and so on." - For the translation, see FALCONER 1923, 295).

<sup>42</sup> For Philo's indebtedness to Posidonius, see WENDLAND 1898, XX, and his note on p. 204, 2.

<sup>43</sup> For the fact that this treatise originally comprised five volumes, see P. WENDLAND, "Eine doxographische Quelle Philo's", in: *Sitzungsberichte der Berliner Akademie der Wissenschaften* 49 (1897) [1074-9] 1074.

<sup>44</sup> For a similar concept in Posidonius, see Cic. *Div.* 1.64.

<sup>45</sup> Cf. Ph. *Somm.* 2.3: διὸ ὁ ἱεροφάντης [i.e. Moses] τὰς μὲν κατὰ τὸ πρῶτον σημαινόμενον φαντασίας τρανῶς πάνυ καὶ ἀριδιήλως ἐμήνησεν, ἅτε τοῦ θεοῦ χρησμοῖς σαφεῖσιν εὐκότα διὰ τῶν ὄνειρων ὑποβάλλοντος, ... ("And therefore the hierophant made public the appearances which come under the first description in a perfectly clear and lucid manner, since what the god intimated through these dreams was similar to

approved of the notion of a temporary isolation of the soul during sleep, which in his view is confined to the νοῦς: in a way that prefigures its final μετανάστασις to the heavenly abode from which it originally came, the νοῦς might raise itself during sleep above its bodily entombment so as to gain clear insights into the future, unhampered by the senses.<sup>46</sup>

## 7. Artemidorus

A much less speculative outlook on dreams is characteristic of the 2nd century *Oneirocritica* of Artemidorus, one of the rare cases of a fully transmitted dreambook in the history of oneirocritic literature.<sup>47</sup> Given that his outlook on dreams is mainly that of a practitioner and empiricist, Artemidorus explicitly dissociates himself from Aristotle's inquiry as to whether dreams arise from external or internal sources, while at the same time he clings to the traditional label of god-sent, θεόπεμπτα, which he applies to all unexpected dreams.<sup>48</sup> Otherwise, Artemidorus shows a marked tendency to place the origin of dreams in the dreamer's soul, as he does, e.g., in the definition at the beginning of the first book of his *Oneirocritica* (1.2): Ὀνειρός ἐστι κίνησις ἢ πλάσις ψυχῆς πολυσχήμεων σημαντικῆ τῶν ἐσομένων ἀγαθῶν ἢ κακῶν – "A dream is a movement or a fiction

plain oracles, ..."). For Abimelech and Laban as possible addressees of these perfectly lucid dreams, see WENDLAND 1898, XIX, n. 2: *videntur esse somnia quae Abimelech Gen. 20.3–7 et Laban Gen. 31.24, vidisse narrantur*. Judging from the usage in *Somm.* 2.221 and 297 one could, of course, also think of Moses.

<sup>46</sup> Cf. Ph. *Migr.* 190: ἀναχωρήσας γὰρ ὁ νοῦς καὶ τῶν αἰσθησέων καὶ τῶν ἄλλων ὅσα κατὰ τὸ σῶμα ὑπέξελθὼν ἑαυτῷ προσομιλεῖν ἀρχεται ὡς πρὸς κάτοπτρον ἀφορῶν ἀληθειαν, καὶ ... τὰς περὶ τῶν μελλόντων ἀψευδεστάτας διὰ τῶν ὄνειρων μαντείας ἐνθουσιᾷ. ("For the mind withdraws and after it has escaped from the senses and all other bodily concerns it starts to hold intercourse with itself, while it looks at the truth as if in a mirror, and ... through dreams it inspires the most truthful prophecies about the future.")

<sup>47</sup> From the commentaries which have been published on the *Oneirocritica* of Artemidorus, I single out A.-J. FESTUGIÈRE (ed.), *Artémidore. La clef des songes. Onirocriticon* (Paris 1975), R. J. WHITE (ed.), *The Interpretation of Dreams. Oneirocritica by Artemidorus* (Park Ridge, New Jersey 1975), and D. DEL CORNO (ed.), *Artemidoro. Il libro dei sogni* (Milano 1975).

<sup>48</sup> Cf. Artem. *Oniocr.* 1.6: οὐχ ὁμοίως δὲ νῦν ἐγὼ ὡς Ἀριστοτέλης διαπορῶ πότερον ἔξωθεν ἡμῖν ἐστὶ τοῦ ὄνειρώσσειν ἢ αἰτία ὑπὸ θεοῦ γινομένη ἢ ἔνδον αἰτιόν τι, ὃ ἡμῖν διατίθησι τὴν ψυχὴν καὶ ποιεῖ φύσει συμβεβηκὸς αὐτῇ, ἀλλὰ θεόπεμπτα ἤδη καὶ ἐν τῇ συνηθείᾳ πάντα τὰ ἀπροσδόκητα καλοῦμεν. ("I do not, like Aristotle, start a discussion about whether the origin of dreaming is from God and external or if there is some internal origin that puts the soul in a certain disposition and brings about what is by nature characteristic of it, yet already in our customary usage of language we call god-sent everything unexpected.") See further Artem. *Oniocr.* 4.3: θεοπέμπτους δὲ ὄνειρούς ἡγοῦ τοὺς αἰφνίδιον ἐφισταμένους, ὡς καὶ πάντα τὰ ἀπροσδόκητα θεόπεμπτα καλοῦμεν. ("Think of those dreams as god-sent that spring upon the dreamer all of a sudden, as we also call god-sent everything unexpected.") For Artemidorus as an empiricist and his "Abneigung gegen das αιτιολογεῖσθαι", see S. LURIA, "Studien zur Geschichte der antiken Traumdeutung", in: *Bull. Acad. des Sciences de l'U.R.S.S.* (1927) [441–66] 459.

of the soul in many shapes which hints to the good and bad things that are going to happen in the future.” Accordingly, Artemidorus assumes that, for the most part, a dreamer would not see visions about anything that has not been on his mind already during the day-time (1.2): τὰ μὲν ὑπὲρ ὧν τις οὐ πεφρόντικεν, ὑπὲρ τούτων οὐδὲν ὄψεται – “No one will have visions about what he did not reflect upon.” One has to infer that insights into future events, which in Artemidorus’ system are typically connected with ὄνειροι as opposed to the completely meaningless ἐνύπνια, are actually supplied by the memories of the past. The professional interpreter, who finds himself confronted with the dream narratives of his clients, has to handle a multitude of various personal modes of putting memories into dreams, which requires a heightened awareness of their highly individualizing potential. If we take a closer look at the structure of Artemidorus’ Dreambook, we will notice that it aptly illustrates the fact that everyone seriously involved in the interpretation of dreams necessarily ends up with his focus narrowed down to the individual dreamer and his unique personal background: After he has started off with the group-orientated τίσις-principle in the first three books of his *Oneirocritica*, he turns to a more personal approach in the fourth book (which is dedicated to his son), while the fifth book consists of a collection of individual dream narratives and their final outcomes. While in the first three books he includes members of all social ranks, even workmen, slaves, and sailors, into his interpretative system,<sup>49</sup> in the fourth book he confines the ability to receive ‘the more philological dreams’, – τῶν ὄνειρων τοὺς φιλολογωτέρους – to the educated, who have acquired a copious knowledge of traditional metaphors by way of extensive reading.<sup>50</sup> The marked focus on linguistics, which emerges from his high esteem for dreams that are especially rich in symbolical shifts, is characteristic also of the role assigned to the gods in Artemidorus’ oneirocritical system. If he introduces enigmatic speech as the mode of communication most appropriate to the divine, he is obviously doing

<sup>49</sup> While G. W. BOWERSOCK, *Fiction as History. Nero to Julian*. Sather Classical Lectures 58 (Berkeley / Los Angeles 1994) 97–8 argues that Artemidorus has dedicated his *Oneirocr.* predominantly to members of a cultural élite, this assumption, on the grounds of textual evidence, has been correctly challenged by G. WEBER “Artemidor von Daldis und sein ‘Publikum’”, *Gymnasium* 106 (1999) [209–29] 228. For a strong emphasis on the sociological implications of the *Oneirocritica* and their special focus on the class of the μέτριοι, see I. HAHN, *Traumdeutung und gesellschaftliche Wirklichkeit. Artemidorus Daldianus als sozial-geschichtliche Quelle*. Konstanzer Althistorische Vorträge und Forschungen 27 (Konstanz 1992) 18–22.

<sup>50</sup> Cf. Artem. *Oneirocr.* 4.59: ἔτι τῶν ὄνειρων τοὺς φιλολογωτέρους οὐδαμῶς οἱ ἰδιῶται τῶν ἀνθρώπων ὀρώσι (λέγω δὲ τοὺς ἀπαιδεύτους), ἀλλ’ ὅσοι φιλολογοῦσι καὶ ὅσοι μὴ ἀπαιδεύτοί εἰσιν. (“Moreover, laymen [I mean the uneducated] never receive the more philological dreams, but all those who love literature and are not of the uneducated kind.”)

so under the influence of oracular practice.<sup>51</sup> One might feel reminded of Plato's passage about the highly metaphorical character of the dreams of the liver, the body's own *μαντεῖον*, in the *Timaeus*. The gods' preference for enigmatic speech in conversations with the wise is also implied in a fragment of Sophocles about the two different levels of divine language (fr. 704 Radt): σοφοῖς μὲν αἰνικτῆρα θεσφάτων ἀεὶ, / σκαίοις δὲ φαῦλον κὰν βραχεῖ διδάσκαλον – "For the wise, always a riddling interpreter of the gods' commands; for the stupid, an ordinary teacher of few words."<sup>52</sup> These verses, which are quoted both by Plutarch in his *De Pythiae oraculis* 406F and by Clement of Alexandria (*Stromateis* 5.24.1), are designed to show that divine utterances may vary depending on the intellectual capacity of the addressee, but will reach the peak of their potential only when they are clad in riddles. The aspect of an enigmatic encoding is of prime importance in divination by dreams.<sup>53</sup> Even the prescriptions of healing deities in the context of ritual incubation were sometimes conveyed in a highly metaphorical language. Authors like Aelius Aristides and Lucian have described the way Asclepius communicated with his supplicants as a giving of oracles.<sup>54</sup> There is, therefore, some good reason to assume that the dreams received during ritual incubation were a special variant of the so-called *χρηματισμός*, the 'oracular dream', which Artemidorus includes within the more general class of allegorical dreams.<sup>55</sup> A telling example of enigmatic language used by Asclepius is a prescription related by Artemidorus in *Oneirocritica* 5.89: someone who was suffering from a stomach ache dreamt Asclepius held out the five fingers of his right hand to him, offering them to him as a meal. He ate five dates and was cured, for good quality dates were called *δάκτυλοι*. While in the *Ἰάματα* of Epidaurus from the 4th c. BC Asclepius is for the most part depicted as a directly intervening divine surgeon,<sup>56</sup> this is a typical case where he displays his

<sup>51</sup> Cf. Artem. *Oneirocr.* 4.71: ... καὶ γὰρ εἰκὸς τοὺς θεοὺς τὰ πολλὰ δι' αἰνιγμάτων λέγειν, ἐπειδὴ καὶ σοφώτεροι ὄντες ἡμῶν αὐτῶν οὐδὲν ἡμᾶς ἀβασανίστως βούλονται λαμβάνειν. ("... and it is reasonable that the gods speak of the most things in riddles, since, as they are also wiser than us, they do not want us to accept anything unexamined.")

<sup>52</sup> Compare Pind. *Ol.* 2.84–5 on the *συνετοί* as those who are able to understand his language without hermeneutics: πολλά μοι ὑπ' ἀγκῶνος ὠκέα βέλη ἔνδον ἐντι φαρέτρας φωνᾶντα συνετοῖσιν· ἐς δὲ τὸ πᾶν ἐρμηνέων χατίζει. ("Under my elbow in my quiver I have many swift arrows that speak to the intelligent. Yet in regard to the crowd there is a need for interpreters.")

<sup>53</sup> On this aspect and its prominence especially in late antiquity, see P. COX MILLER, *Dreams in Late Antiquity. Studies in the Imagination of a Culture* (Princeton 1994) 74–6.

<sup>54</sup> Cf. Aristid. *Or.* 48.7 KEIL: ἐνταῦθα πρῶτον ὁ σωτὴρ χρηματίζειν ἤρξατο. ("There for the first time the saviour started to give oracles.") See further Lucian, *Deorum Concilium* 16: *χρησμοφδεῖν*.

<sup>55</sup> Cf. Artem. *Oneirocr.* 1.2.

<sup>56</sup> For the *Ἰάματα* in Epidaurus, see L. R. LIDONNICI, *The Epidaurian miracle inscriptions* (Atlanta, Georgia 1995) and GIRONI 1998.

healing power by way of a complicated oracle. The explanation starts from the phenomenon of homonymy, which leads to the association of fingers with dates. The episode is not only a vivid illustration of the important role played by ἐπίκουρις in divination by dreams, but also a special tribute to the tradition of ritual incubation which in general is neglected and even heavily criticised by Artemidorus: In *Oneirocritica* 4.22, he launches an attack against the ‘strange nonsense’, – ἀλλοτρίους λήρους – of those who display their own skill in creating complicated dream narratives rather than trying to understand the philanthropic grace of the gods.<sup>57</sup>

## 8. Aelius Aristides

While it is not entirely clear, whether Artemidorus is alluding here to the *Hieroi Logoi* of Aelius Aristides, there is indeed no doubt about the fact that these texts are some of the most remarkable documents in the field of divination by dreams in ritual incubation. The rhetorician from Hadri-anotherai in Mysia was deeply involved in this practice not only for the sake of his poor bodily health, but also to improve his skills as an orator.<sup>58</sup> Large parts of the fourth Λόγος are dedicated to Asclepius in his function as a divine teacher of rhetoric, who not only encouraged his protégé to keep practising, even in the worst bodily conditions, but also revealed his inspiring force by way of direct intervention. Thus, Aristides has him convey countless literary ideas to him in his dreams, which in their quality significantly exceed the examples given in ordinary schools of rhetoric, while once he even relates a vision in which the god appeared to him in person to correct a votive epigramme written by him in memory of a victory in a choral competition.<sup>59</sup>

<sup>57</sup> Cf. Artem. *Oneirocr.* 4.22: ὅταν οὖν τὰ τοιαῦτα ἅττα ἀναγράφωσι, δοκοῦσί μοι τὴν ἑαυτῶν ἕξι ἐπίδεικνύειν, ὅτι δύνανται πλάσσειν ὄνειρους μᾶλλον ἢ τὸ τῶν θεῶν φιλόανθρωπον συνιέναι. (“So when they write down all those things, it seems to me that they display their general disposition, viz. that they are able to invent dreams rather than to understand the gods’ love for mankind.”)

<sup>58</sup> For this double aspect of Aristides’ relation to Asclepius, see esp. G. SFAMENI GASPARRO, “Elio Aristide e Asclepio, un retore e il suo dio: salute del corpo e direzione spirituale”, in: E. DAL COVOLO / I. GIANNETTO (eds.), *Cultura e promozione umana. La cura del corpo e dello spirito nell’ antichità classica e nei primi secoli cristiani*. Atti del Convegno internazionale di Studi Oasi Maria Santissima di Troina, 29 ott. – 1 nov. 1997. Collana di cultura e lingue classiche 5 (Troina 1998) 123–43.

<sup>59</sup> Cf. Aristid. *Or.* 50.25 KEIL: καὶ μὴν τό γε πλείστον καὶ πλείστου ἄξιον τῆς ἀσκήσεως ἢ τῶν ἐνυπνίων ἦν ἐφοδος καὶ ὁμιλία. πολλὰ μὲν γὰρ ἤκουσα νικῶντα καθαρότητι καὶ λαμπρῶς ἐπέκεινα τῶν παραδειγμάτων, πολλὰ δ’ αὐτὸς λέγειν ἐδόκουν κρείττω τῆς συνηθείας καὶ ἃ οὐδεπώποτε ἐνεθυμήθην. (“And indeed the largest and most precious part of my exercise was the arrival and company of the dreams. For I heard a lot that was victorious in purity [sc. of style] and in its glamour was beyond the paradigms [sc. of conventional rhetorics], and it seemed to me that I myself said things

## 9. Synesius of Cyrene and the Neoplatonists

Aristides' lifelong commitment to divination by dreams and the rich literary fruits he reaped from this involvement certainly fascinated Synesius of Cyrene, who in 404 AD, six years before he was anointed a bishop, wrote his *De insomniis*, one could almost say, *in memoriam Aristidis*.<sup>60</sup> His recommendation to write down one's dreams in so-called 'night-journals', ἐπινυκτίδες, a neologism introduced by Synesius as a pendant to the better-known term ἐφημερίδες, is certainly an allusion to the Mysian rhetorician's *Hieroi Logoi*, which in a passage in Philostratus, explicitly mentioned by Synesius, are referred to as an ideal example of the high value of such ἐφημερίδες for an improvement of one's writing skills.<sup>61</sup> Synesius' tendency to regard the night on equal terms with the day as a 'sort of life in itself' is in stark contrast with Aristotle's refusal to concede any other value to sleep apart from being an opportunity to take due rest for the sake of waking activities.<sup>62</sup> As a consequence of his esteem for nocturnal φαντασία, Synesius' expectations concerning a faithful rendering of dreams are extraordinarily high, and he considers it a literary challenge of its own kind to convey in words their complicated train of images. At the same time, he assigns to them an editorial function, and it is probably another tribute to Aristides that he refers to the art of dream divination as useful assistants that helped him to compose his writings, even to the point

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that were stronger than what I usually say and that I had never thought about before.") For the correction of the votive epigramme in a dream epiphany see Aristid. *Or.* 50.45 KEIL.

<sup>60</sup> Quotations from the *De insomniis* in this article are based on Donald Russell's text and translation. As to other editions and commentaries, I single out LAMOUREUX / AJOULAT 2004, TERZAGHI 1944, GARZYA 1989, and SUSANETTI 1992.

<sup>61</sup> Compare Syn. *De ins.* 153B with Philostr. *VS* 581: τὴν μὲν οὖν ἰδέαν τῆς νόσου καὶ ὅτι τὰ νεῦρα αὐτῷ ἐπεφρίκει, ἐν Ἱεροῖς βιβλίοις αὐτὸς φράζει, τὰ δὲ βιβλία ταῦτα ἐφημερίδων ἐπέχει τινὰ αὐτῶ λόγον, αἱ δὲ ἐφημερίδες ἀγαθαὶ διδάσκαλοι τοῦ περὶ παντὸς διαλέγεσθαι. ("In fact, in his *Hieroi Logoi* he [viz. Aelius Aristides] describes the nature of his illness and that it roughed up his nerves, and those discourses had for him in a way the meaning of a diary, and diaries are good teachers of how to talk about everything.")

<sup>62</sup> Cf. Syn. *De ins.* 153A: Ἐπεὶ ἡμεῖς ἀξιώσομεν ταῖς καλουμέναις ἐφημερίσι τὰς ὑφ' ἡμῶν ὀνομαζομένας ἐπινυκτίδας συνάπτοντας ἔχειν τῆς ἐν ἑκατέρῃ ζωῇ διεξαγωγῆς ὑπομνήματα. ("We, for our part, by combining what we call by the invented name 'nocturnals' with what are commonly called 'journals', will aim to have a record of what passes in both our lives.") Compare, by contrast, the Aristotelian notion of sleep as a 'deprivation of waking' (στέρησις τῆς ἐγρηγόρσεως) in *De Somno et vigilia* 453b27; see further *Somn. vig.* 455b21–4: τῷ δὲ ὑπνω αὐτῇ τῇ ἀληθείᾳ προσάπτουσι τὴν μεταφορὰν ταύτην ὡς ἀναπαύσει ὄντι – ὥστε σωτηρίας ἕνεκα τῶν ζῶων ὑπάρχει. ἢ δ' ἐγρηγόροις τέλος· τὸ γὰρ αἰσθάνεσθαι καὶ τὸ φρονεῖν πᾶσι τέλος οἷς ὑπάρχει θάτερον αὐτῶν. ("In truth, they applied this metaphor to sleep, since it is a relaxation, – so that it exists to preserve the living beings. Yet the scope is the wakefulness. For sensation and reasonable thinking are the scope of all those in whom one of those two things resides.")



of direct correction.<sup>63</sup> From a more general perspective, this is applied to all who aspire to acquire the art of rhetoric and who might consider exploring the inspiring potential of dreams so as to break through the limits of standardized rhetorical exercises.<sup>64</sup>

While in his handling of dreams this interest in their literary value is only one, albeit important, aspect, Synesius approaches them also from a religious and philosophical standpoint.<sup>65</sup> In *De insomniis* 132B–C, he refers to the concept of συμπάθεια as an important basis of his oneirological observations.<sup>66</sup> The way Synesius describes the mutual influence of various parts of the body in a sympathetic system where one part is affected by another's pain, is reminiscent not only of Posidonius, but also of Plotinus and especially Proclus, who conceived of the interconnection of all things as a basic principle of theurgy.<sup>67</sup> The one who knows how the various parts of the universe are interrelated, as Synesius puts it, "can attract one by means of another" – ἔλκει γὰρ ἄλλο δι' ἄλλου.<sup>68</sup> Long before this notion was officially incorporated into Neoplatonic theurgical speculation, it was widely used in rituals of sympathetic magic, as e.g. in Theocritus' *idyll* 2, where we see Sимаetha trying to charm her former lover back into her arms with the help of various items which she believes to be endowed with a beguiling force. A rich collection of actually practicable rituals of sympathetic magic that can be performed to exercise force over the gods themselves is offered in the texts of the *Papyri Graecae Magicae*. Whilst the aims of these rituals are, for the most part, rather earthly, a much more refined form of magic was introduced by the *Chaldaean Oracles*, viz. the

<sup>63</sup> Cf. Syn. *De ins.* 148A–B: Ἐμοὶ δὴ θαμὰ καὶ συγγραμματα συνεξείργασται. αἰ γὰρ νοῦν ἠῤῥόπευσεν, καὶ λέξιν ἐνήρμοσεν, καὶ τὸ μὲν διέγραψε, τὸ δὲ ἀντεισηγάγεν. ("Certainly it has often collaborated with me in writing books. It has shaped my thought, fitted my words to it, deleted one <phrase> and substituted another.")

<sup>64</sup> Cf. Syn. *De ins.* 155A–D.

<sup>65</sup> For Synesius' emphasis on dreams as a source of literary inspiration, see D. DEL CORNO, "I sogni e la loro interpretazione nell'età dell'impero", in: ANRW II.16.2 (Berlin 1978) [1605–18] 1613: "I sogni e la divinazione onirica sono per lui soprattutto lo spunto di un' elegante esercitazione retorica."

<sup>66</sup> Cf. Syn. *De ins.* 132B–C: Ἐδει γάρ, οἶμαι, τοῦ παντός τούτου συμπαθοῦς τε ὄντος καὶ σύμπνου τὰ μέλη προσήκειν ἀλλήλοις, ἅτε ἐνὸς ὅλου μέρη τυγχάνοντα. ("It was necessary, I believe, that the limbs of this universe, which feels and breathes as one, should belong to one another as parts of a single whole.")

<sup>67</sup> Cf. Syn. *De ins.* 132C: ὥσπερ γὰρ ἐν ἡμῖν σπλάγχνου παθόντος ἄλλο συμπέπονθε καὶ τὸ τοῦ δακτύλου κακὸν εἰς τὸν βουβῶνα ἀπερξίδεται. ("For, just as in us, when our bowels are affected, other organs are affected too, and a pain in the finger extends to the groin.") Compare with Sext. Emp. *Math.* 9.80 (= Posidon. fr. 354 THEILER): ἐπι δὲ τῶν ἠνωμένων συμπάθειά τις ἔστιν, εἴγε δακτύλου τεμνομένου τὸ ὅλον συνδιατίθεται σώμα. ("There is some sort of affinity between things united, if when somebody cuts his finger the whole body is sympathetically affected together with it.") On the role of συμπάθεια in Plotinus and Proclus, see above, pp. on page 79, n. 40.

<sup>68</sup> Cf. Syn. *De ins.* 132C.

art of theurgy as a means to bring about the elevation of the human soul to the gods. The *Oracles*, which had a considerable impact on Neoplatonic philosophy, were of prime importance also to Synesius, who in a manner very much related to their outlook on theurgy regarded the close contact with the intelligible – συνάψαι τῷ νοητῷ – as the supreme scope of divination by dreams.<sup>69</sup> We have seen that in the Stoic world view the notion of a unified cosmos with mutually interrelated parts is combined with a firm belief in the gods' love for mankind, out of which they would send out forewarnings to dreamers so as to alert them of imminent evil. While Synesius takes up this assumption, he gives it an effective individual twist by referring to numerous incidents, where he himself greatly profited from dreams, whether they helped him to render useless the plots of certain magicians or to better tackle his administrative tasks.<sup>70</sup> At the same time, he adopts the notion of the essentially philanthropic character of divination by dreams, which opens itself up to everyone regardless of one's personal background.<sup>71</sup>

This does not, however, keep him from adopting the Artemidorean notion of enigmatic, and therefore not always easily accessible, speech as the mode of communication most appropriate to the divine. In the Προθεωρία to the *De insomniis* he mentions the Platonic method of hiding the great things in philosophy – τὰ ἐν φιλοσοφίᾳ σπουδαῖα – under a vile surface. Given that in *ep.* 154 Synesius compares the way he has inserted philosophical concepts into the overall design of his *Dion* to statues of gods hidden

<sup>69</sup> For the impact of the *Chaldaean Oracles* on Neoplatonism in general, see A. C. LLOYD, "The Later Neoplatonists", in: A. H. ARMSTRONG (ed.), *The Cambridge History of Later Greek and Early Medieval Philosophy* (Cambridge 1967) [272–325] 277; for its impact on Synesius, see C. VAN LIEFFERINGE, *La théurgie des Oracles chaldaïques à Proclus* (Liège 1999) 127–50; for συνάψαι τῷ νοητῷ as the supreme scope of divination by dreams in Synesius, see *De ins.* 135A and the remarks of SHEPPARD, pp. 102–103 in this volume.

<sup>70</sup> Cf. Syn. *De ins.* 146A: ... ὥστε ... καταμηνύσαι δὲ τὸ χεῖρον, ὥστε φυλάξασθαι καὶ προαποκρούσασθαι. ("... it [sc. dream-divination] is able ... to give notice of trouble, so that we can guard against it and take precautions to fend it off.") See further 148C–D: Καὶ μέντοι τότε πλείστα δὴ καὶ μέγιστα ὠνάμην αὐτῆς. Ἐπιβουλὰς τε γὰρ ἐπ' ἐμὲ ψυχοπομπῶν γοήτων ἀκύρους ἐποίησε, καὶ φήνασα καὶ ἐξ ἀπασῶν περισώσασα, καὶ κοινὰ συνδιώκησεν ὥστε ἀριστα ἔχειν ταῖς πόλεσι ... ("Yet even then I enjoyed very many great benefits from dream-divination. It nullified the plots of necromantic magicians against me, revealed them and brought me safely through them all. It helped me to manage the public business in the way best for the cities.")

<sup>71</sup> Cf. Syn. *De ins.* 145D–146A: Ἰτητέον οὖν ἐπ' αὐτὴν [viz. τὴν δι' ὀνειρώων μαντικὴν] καὶ γυναικὶ καὶ ἀνδρὶ, καὶ πρεσβύτῃ καὶ νέῳ, καὶ πένητι καὶ πλουσίῳ, καὶ ἰδιώτῃ καὶ ἄρχοντι, καὶ ἀστικῷ καὶ ἀγροδιαίτῳ, καὶ βαναύσῳ καὶ ἡγήτορι. Οὐ γένος, οὐχ ἡλικίαν, οὐ τύχην, οὐ τέχνην ἀποκηρύττει. Πᾶσι πανταχοῦ πάρεστι, προφήτης ἔτοιμος, ἀγαθὴ σύμβουλος, ἐχέμυθος. ("So we must all apply ourselves to dream divination – woman and man, old and young, poor and rich, private citizen and ruler, townsman and country-dweller, tradesman and orator. There is no gender, age, fortune or skill that it excludes. It is available to everyone everywhere, a prophetess always at hand, a good counsellor, and discreet.")

in the vile cases of sileni and satyrs, which is well known from Plato's *Symposium*, some scholars have tried to trace a similar method also in the *De insomniis*.<sup>72</sup> They might have felt encouraged by the fact that Synesius was well aware of the encryptic potential of dreams, as is shown in the first sentence of his actual treatise (130C–131A): “If the experiences of sleep have prophetic power, and dream visions offer humans enigmatic hints of what is to come in their waking lives, they may indeed be wise, but they would not be clear; or perhaps their obscurity is itself wisdom; ‘for the gods have hidden life from men.’”<sup>73</sup> Instead of quoting Hesiod,<sup>74</sup> Synesius could have recurred also to a famous dictum of Heraclitus, according to which “nature loves to hide”.<sup>75</sup> Obviously he preferred to place the emphasis on the gods in a manner very much reminiscent of the above mentioned fragment of Sophocles, which refers to enigmatic language as the highest level of divine speech reserved for their communication with the wise.

The fact that Synesius indeed used the veiling potential of dreams as a vehicle to transport some important doctrines may now be illustrated by an examination of his philosophical outlook. In the section on Plato we saw that in his *Republic* he has the three parts of the soul trigger corresponding dream images. Synesius in his turn shifts the emphasis from the soul herself to the soul's astral body or πνεῦμα. This aerial substance, which according to Neoplatonic doctrine is acquired by the soul while she descends to matter, has a key function in Synesius' onirological speculation.<sup>76</sup> Since it holds a position between the rational and the irrational, the corporeal and the incorporeal, it changes its quality depending on the moral dispositions of the individual soul.<sup>77</sup> The idea is firmly rooted in Neoplatonism: Plotinus adopted the Aristotelian doctrine of various psychological faculties in a way that made him assume that each person may choose to live according to one of a whole set of possible levels ranging from nous to

<sup>72</sup> See, e.g., LACOMBRADÉ 1951, 161, who assumes that Synesius has composed his writing around the following ‘idée maitresse’: “dans quelle mesure la conscience individuelle, constituée par une conglomérat d’images, propres à une âme donnée, survit-elle à l’anéantissement de l’être physique?”

<sup>73</sup> Cf. Syn. *De ins.* 130C–131A: Εἰ δὲ εἰσιν ὕπνοι προφήται, καὶ τὰ ὄναρ θεάματα τοῖς ἀνθρώποις ὀρέγουσι τῶν ὑπαρ ἐσομένων αἰνίγματα, σοφοὶ μὲν ἂν εἶεν, σαφεῖς δὲ οὐκ ἂν εἶεν, ἢ σοφὸν αὐτῶν καὶ τὸ μὴ σαφές· κρύψαντες γὰρ ἔχουσι θεοὶ βίον ἀνθρώποισιν.

<sup>74</sup> Cf. Hes. *Op.* 42.

<sup>75</sup> Cf. Heraclit. *DK* 22 B 123: φύσις δὲ καθ’ Ἡράκλειτον κρύπτεσθαι φιλεῖ.

<sup>76</sup> On the acquisition of the πνεῦμα during the soul's descent into matter in Neoplatonic tradition, see SMITH 1974, 152–8; cp. Syn. *De ins.* 138B: ἦν [viz. τὴν πνευματικὴν ψυχὴν] δανείζεται μὲν ἀπὸ τῶν σφαιρῶν ἢ πρώτη ψυχὴ κατιούσα ... (“... the first soul, in her descent, borrows this <soul> from the spheres, ...”.)

<sup>77</sup> For the ambiguous quality of the ψυχικὸν πνεῦμα, see Syn. *De ins.* 137A: Ὅλως γὰρ τοῦτο μεταίχμιόν ἐστιν ἀλογίας καὶ λόγου, καὶ ἀσωμάτου καὶ σώματος, καὶ κοινὸς ὄρος ἀμφοῖν· (“In a word, the *pneuma* is a no man's land between the irrational and the rational, between the incorporeal and corporeal, and the common boundary of both.”)

mere vegetable life.<sup>78</sup> Porphyry seems to be the first to suggest that the extent to which a person has achieved moral purity affects her ψυχικὸν πνεῦμα. In his *Sententiae ad intelligibilia ducentes*, ch. 29, he takes it that the soul according to her disposition attracts various σώματα comprising all the qualities from ethereal to vaporuous and moist.<sup>79</sup> It is probably on these grounds that Synesius conceived of the soul's πνεῦμα as a changeable body which can become either dry and light, thus helping the soul to elevate herself to a higher level, or is transformed into a thick and moist burden that drags the soul down to the earth.<sup>80</sup> Accordingly, the πνεῦμα can become a god, demon, or εἶδωλον and thus is of decisive influence as to how far someone will be able to elevate himself above earthly concerns.<sup>81</sup> In the narrower context of dreams, the ψυχικὸν πνεῦμα's moral disposition is held responsible for the quality of dream images received by it. In a way reminiscent of the passage on the liver as the human body's own μαντεῖον in Plato's *Timaeus*, Synesius compares the ψυχικὸν πνεῦμα to a mirror that reflects the images, εἶδωλα, which reach the dreamer's soul, after they have been sent out by things past, present, and future.<sup>82</sup> Following along the lines of Democritus, Synesius conceives of the εἶδωλα

<sup>78</sup> Cf. Plot. *Enn.* 3.4.2.

<sup>79</sup> Cf. Porph. *Sent.* 29.19 LAMBERZ: ὡς γὰρ ἂν διατεθῆ [sc. ἡ ψυχῆ], εὐρίσκει σῶμα τάξει καὶ τόποις οικειοῖς διωρισμένον· διὸ καθαρώτερον μὲν διακειμένη σύμφυτον τὸ ἐγγὺς τοῦ ἀύλου σῶμα, ὅπερ ἐστὶ τὸ αἰθέριον, προελθούσης δὲ ἐκ λόγου εἰς φαντασίας προβολὴν σύμφυτον τὸ ἡλιοειδές, θηλυθυεῖσθαι δὲ καὶ παθαινομένη πρὸς τὸ εἶδος παράκειται τὸ σεληνοειδές, πεσοῦση δὲ εἰς σώματα, ὅταν κατὰ τὸ αὐτῶν ἄμορφον στή εἶδος, ἐξ ὑγρῶν ἀναθυμιάσεων συνεστηκότα, ἀγνοία ἐπεται τοῦ ὄντος τελεία καὶ σκότωσις καὶ νηπιότης. Καὶ μὴν καὶ ἐν τῇ ἐξόδῳ ἔτι κατὰ τὴν δίυγρον ἀναθυμίασιν τὸ πνεῦμα ἐχουσα τεθολωμένον, σκιὰν ἐφέλκεται ... ("For depending on how the soul is inclined, she finds a body defined by her rank and the locations belonging to it. Therefore the body that is close to the immaterial, viz. the ethereal body, is cognate with the soul that has pure inclinations, the sun-like body is cognate to the soul that has turned from the rational to the projection of imagination, the moon-like body is closely connected with the soul that is effeminate and passionately inclined towards that which is seen, yet the soul that has fallen into bodies composed of moist vapours, that soul, when she halts facing their unsightly form, is followed by a complete ignorance of being, by a darkening [sc. of reason] and by childishness. And what is more, since when she is moving out [sc. of the body], her pneuma, due to the moist vapour, is still turbid, she drags behind herself a shadow ...")

<sup>80</sup> Cf. Syn. *De ins.* 138A. On Synesius' indebtedness to Porphyry throughout the *De insomniis*, see especially LANG 1926, *passim*.

<sup>81</sup> Cf. Syn. *De ins.* 137D: τὸ γέ τοι πνεῦμα τοῦτο τὸ ψυχικόν, ὃ καὶ πνευματικὴν ψυχὴν προσηγόρευσαν οἱ εὐδαίμονες, καὶ θεὸς καὶ δαίμων παντοδαπὸς καὶ εἰδωλον γίνεται, καὶ τὰς ποινάς ἐν τούτῳ τίνει ψυχῆ. ("The psychic *pneuma*, which the happy people also call the 'pneumatic soul', may become a god, a *daimon* (of any kind) and a phantom. It is in this that the soul pays its penalties.")

<sup>82</sup> For the ψυχικὸν πνεῦμα as mirror, cf. Syn. *De ins.* 149C: Τοῦτων ἀπάντων τῶν ἀπορρέοντων εἰδώλων τὸ φανταστικὸν πνεῦμα κάτοπτρόν ἐστιν ἐμφανέστατον ("The imaginative *pneuma* is the clearest mirror of all these outflowing images.") For the εἶδη sent out by things past, present, and future, see Syn. *De ins.* 149D–150A.

as something that can be detached from matter in the form of free floating fugitive images which eventually reach the ψυχικὸν πνεῦμα of living beings.<sup>83</sup> To account for the highly personal character of dreams, Synesius compares the wide range of ψυχικὰ πνεύματα to mirrors of various shapes which, depending on whether they are plain, convex or otherwise formed, would yield completely different pictures.<sup>84</sup> His individualizing approach, which accounts for his scepticism towards standardized dream manuals,<sup>85</sup> can be traced back to Heraclitus, who held that “those awake have one universe in common, while amongst those who are asleep everyone retreats into his own.”<sup>86</sup> However, the Democritean model is used by Synesius as only one way to account for the origin of dream images. In his view, there is also a higher class of dreams confined to the virtuous, where the soul, during sleep, is isolated to such an extent that both the εἶδη it contains by nature and whatsoever it receives from the intellect are rendered visible to the dreamer’s mind upon introspection.<sup>87</sup>

Synesius’ strong focus on the dreamer’s soul goes hand in hand with an extraordinarily high esteem for the dreams themselves. Thus, he does not place the potential of ambiguity in them, as Aristotle and even Plato did,<sup>88</sup> but rather in the character of their recipients.<sup>89</sup> In *De insomniis* 141D he distinguishes three different states of the soul which have a decisive influence on how a dreamer perceives his own nocturnal visions: On the first and ‘divine’ level the soul returns back to the nobility which is proper to her by birth, in a way clearly reminiscent of Aristotle’s conception of sleep as a state where the soul acquires her ἰδίᾳ φύσιν in fr. 12a. In both cases, the fact that the soul reaches the height of her own potential renders her capable of foreseeing the future. In contrast, if due to passion and haughtiness the soul has fallen down to the deepest level, she becomes so nebulous that she errs without cease. In between these two extremes, there

<sup>83</sup> Cf. Syn. *De ins.* 149C.

<sup>84</sup> Cf. Syn. *De ins.* 152B, where the author challenges those who try to categorize divinatory phenomena: ... πυθώμεθα αὐτῶν, εἰ φύσιν ἔχει καὶ τὸ ὀρθὸν καὶ τὸ διάστροφον κάτοπτρον, τὸ τε ἐξ ἀνομοίων ὑλῶν ὁμοιον ἀποδιδόναι τοῦ δεκνυμένου τὸ εἶδωλον. (“... let us ask them whether it is natural for a true mirror, a distorting mirror, and a mirror made of unlike materials all to reflect an image resembling the object.”)

<sup>85</sup> Cf. Syn. *De ins.* 152C: Διὰ ταῦτα μὲν ἀπογνωστέον τοῦ κοινούσ ἀπασι νόμους γενέσθαι. (“These are reasons for despairing of universally applicable rules.”)

<sup>86</sup> Cf. Heraclit. *DK* 12 B 89: φησι τοῖς ἐγρηγορόσιν ἓνα καὶ κοινὸν κόσμον εἶναι, τῶν δὲ κοιμωμένων ἕκαστον εἰς ἴδιον ἀποστρέφεισθαι.

<sup>87</sup> Cf. Syn. *De ins.* 149A. On the two classes of dreams in Synesius, see also GERTZ, pp. 119–121 in this volume.

<sup>88</sup> Compare Arist. *Div. somn.* 463b12–15: θεόπεμπτα μὲν οὐκ ἂν εἴη τὰ ἐνύπνια, οὐδὲ γέγονε τούτου χάριν. δαιμόνια μέντοι (“Dreams are probably not god-sent, nor do they occur for this sake. Nevertheless, they are demonic.”) See also my observations on the ψευδεῖς αἰσθήσεις as characteristic of dreams in Plato’s *Theaetetus* (above, p. 75).

<sup>89</sup> See the example of Penelope’s dream in *Od.* 19.536–50, which is used as an example for a misunderstanding of a veridical dream due to the dreamer’s ἀμαθία in *De ins.* 147B.

is a semi-divine state, typical of everything that may be labelled demonic, in which the soul oscillates between error and true insights.<sup>90</sup>

Beyond his concessions to human weakness Synesius holds the firmly established stance that divination by dreams, if handled skillfully, is just as powerful as immediate prophecy.<sup>91</sup> At the same time, he considers it a means to communicate with the divine, very much in accordance with the above mentioned locus classicus on divination from Plato's *Symposium*. A prerequisite for such an encounter is a ψυχικὸν πνεῦμα which is dry and light to such a degree that it lets itself be carried up into the sky.<sup>92</sup> In *De insomniis* 154C, this is depicted as an actual dream experience: While encounters with the divine in waking life are barely possible, or, if achieved by titanic human endeavour, would arouse divine φθόνος, there will be not the slightest grudge against the soul that during sleep raises herself even beyond the highest spheres, where she will be able to speak with the stars and enjoy the close company of gods, and after a short time she does not return to the earth, but is already there.<sup>93</sup> The soul's flight, which is, as it were, a reversal of the journey she undertook when passing the spheres on her way down to the depths of coming-to-be, prefigures the soul's re-ascend after death.<sup>94</sup>

<sup>90</sup> Compare also Syn. *De ins.* 137D on the three different stages of the ψυχικὸν πνεῦμα (see above, p. 89, n. 81).

<sup>91</sup> Cf. Syn. *De ins.* 147A–B: Ἡ περὶ τοὺς ὄνειρους οὖν μαντική, σὺν τέχνῃ μετιούσα τὸ πεφηνός, βεβαιοτέραν τὴν ἐλπίδα παρέχεται, ὥστε μὴ τοῦ φαυλοτέρου γένους δοκεῖν (“Divination by dreams, therefore, by studying the appearances scientifically, gives a more secure hope, and should not be thought to come under the inferior category.”)

<sup>92</sup> Cf. Syn. *De ins.* 138A: Ὀλκαῖς οὖν φυσικαῖς ... μετέρων αἰρεται διὰ θερμότητα καὶ ξηρότητα· καὶ τοῦτο ἄρα ἢ ψυχῆς πτέρωσις. (“The *pneuma* therefore is *either* raised up on high by a natural attraction because of its heat and dryness [this is what is meant by the soul's 'acquiring wings'].”) Compare also a passage in Aristid. 1.97 Jebb, where the expression μετέωρος ... γίγνεται is used to describe the elevating experience of the tourist's arrival in Athens in terms of an initiation into the mysteries.

<sup>93</sup> For a similar experience, see Apul. *Met.* 9.23: *Igitur audi, sed crede, quae vera sunt. Accessi confinium mortis et, calcato Proserpinae limine, per omnia vectus elementa remeavi; nocte media vidi solem candido coruscantem lumine; deos inferos et deos superos accessi coram et adoravi de proximo.* (“So hear, but believe, what is true! I approached the border of death and, after I trod the threshold of Proserpina, I took my way back, passing through all the elements; at midnight I saw the sun shimmering with white light; I approached the lower and the higher deities face to face and worshipped them from nearby.”)

<sup>94</sup> Cf. Syn. *De ins.* 138B: ἦν [sc. τὴν πνευματικὴν ψυχὴν] δανεῖζεται μὲν ἀπὸ τῶν σφαιρῶν ἢ πρώτῃ ψυχῇ κατιούσα, κάκεινης ὥσπερ σκάφους ἐπιβάσα, τῷ σωματικῷ κόσμῳ συγγίνεται. (“The first soul, in her descent, borrows this <soul> from the spheres, embarks on it [as on a boat] and thus makes contact with the corporeal kosmos.”) On the soul's ecstasy as an anticipation of her final return to its heavenly abode after death, see also W. Bousset, “Die Himmelsreise der Seele”, *Archiv für Religionswissenschaft* 4 (1901) [136–69] 136: “Die Ekstase, vermöge deren man sich durch den Himmel zum höchsten Gott erhebt, ist ja nichts anderes als eine Anticipation der Himmelsreise der Seele nach dem Tode des Menschen.”

In his letter to Hypatia, Synesius announces that the *De insomniis* contains some entirely new philosophical thoughts (*ep.* 154): “In this treatise there are some observations about the entire phantasmal soul. Moreover, all sorts of other doctrines which have never yet been an object of philosophical speculation in Greek language, are here discussed.”<sup>95</sup>

We have already tried to demonstrate that the soul’s astral body holds a key function in Synesius’ onirological speculation inasmuch as it serves as a mirror that yields dream images of varying clarity depending on the moral purity of the individual soul. Let us now have a look at how he envisages the fate of the phantasmal soul after death. His point of departure is a couplet from the *Chaldaean Oracles* which must have struck the contemporary reader as completely at odds with Platonic dualism: “You will not leave behind in the abyss the refuse of matter (σκύβαλον), but there is a portion in the place filled with light also for the phantasmal soul (εἶδωλον).”<sup>96</sup> We have seen above that in Synesius’ psychological theory, the εἶδωλον is the lowest of the three shapes the ψυχικὸν πνεῦμα can acquire.<sup>97</sup> So it is probably in this sense and not, as some scholars take it, in the sense of a very general label for the corporeal,<sup>98</sup> that Synesius conceives of the εἶδωλον as an annex of the ‘primary soul’, (πρώτη ψυχή). Thus, he interprets the verses of the *Chaldaean Oracles* as meaning that after death the soul will not return to the heavenly abode in her original state, but rather carry with it the aerial and fiery particles she borrowed from the spheres and accumulated in the phantasmal soul, while she descended into matter.<sup>99</sup> As for the lowest, the terrestrial element, which was accepted by the higher ones into their union, Synesius does not rule out the possibility of an ennobling of even this most material annex of the soul: if it displays a compliant and docile attitude towards the πρώτη ψυχή, there is a chance that it might be changed into air and lifted up together with the nobler elements – συνεξαίθεροῖτο ἂν καὶ συναναπέμποιτο.<sup>100</sup> In the question of what happens to the lower soul during ascent, Synesius is certainly not the first Greek-speaking author who turns to Chaldaean tradition. As can be inferred from some scattered remarks in St. Augustine’s *De civitate Dei*, Porphyry wrote a treatise *De regressu animae* in which he discussed the soul’s elevation by means of theurgical rites. According to St. Augustine it is on the grounds of a Chaldaean doctrine that Porphyry carried “the human vices” – *vitia humana* – up to “the ethereal and fiery heights of the universe”

<sup>95</sup> Cf. Syn. *Ep.* 154: Ἐσκεπται δὲ ἐν αὐτῷ περὶ τῆς εἰδωλικῆς ἀπάσης ψυχῆς καὶ ἕτεροῦ ἄττα προκεχειρίσται δόγματα τῶν οὐπω φιλοσοφηθέντων Ἑλλήσι.

<sup>96</sup> Cf. *Chaldaean Oracles*, fr. 158 (p. 104 KROLL): οὐδὲ τὸ τῆς ὕλης κρημνῶ σκύβαλον καταλείψει, ἀλλὰ καὶ εἰδῶλον μερὶς εἰς τόπον ἀμφιφάοντα.

<sup>97</sup> See above, p. 89, n. 81.

<sup>98</sup> Cf. LANG 1926, 74.

<sup>99</sup> Cf. Syn. *De ins.* 140D.

<sup>100</sup> Cf. Syn. *De ins.* 141B.

– *in aetherias vel empyrias mundi sublimitates*.<sup>101</sup> From *Sententiae* 29 we can infer that the lower soul may be raised to the ethereal level also in the case of those who led a life according to the intellect and tried to stay aloof from the material world as far as possible.<sup>102</sup> While there can be no doubt about the fact that Porphyry gave the palm to this latter more troublesome way of preparing for the soul's ascent,<sup>103</sup> it is not entirely clear how he envisaged the process of elevation of her irrational powers. In his commentary on Plato's *Timaeus* 3.234.19–25, Proclus states that according to Porphyry and his school both the soul's vehicle and the irrational soul during ascent 'are fragmented into their elements and somehow resolved into the spheres.'<sup>104</sup> At the same time, they lose their specific quality, *ιδιότητα*, which has been interpreted in such a way that the traveling soul, after the loss of her irrational powers, takes on a more cosmic orientation and thus undergoes an 'ontological change'.<sup>105</sup>

If we now turn back again to Synesius, it will emerge that the stance he takes concerning the fate of the *ειδωλική ψυχή* and its lower particles is very much indebted to Porphyrian doctrine. In the above mentioned passage he stresses that they might take part in the process of 'etherialization', as it were, if they have managed to put their 'middle nature', *μέση φύσις*, firmly under the command of the 'first soul', *πρώτη ψυχή*. Yet, like Porphyry, Synesius obviously does not conceive of the soul as an integral whole that completely retains her irrational elements while traveling through the sky. In 138B he characterizes the *πρώτη ψυχή*'s most

<sup>101</sup> Cf. fr. 294bF SMITH (= fr. 6 BIDEZ) ll. 21–4: *Tu autem hoc didicisti non a Platone, sed a Chaldaeis magistris, ut in aetherias vel empyrias mundi sublimitates et firmamenta caelestia extolleris vitia humana, ...* ("Yet that thing you did not learn from Plato, but from your Chaldaean masters: to raise the human vices into the ethereal and fiery heights of the universe and into the heavenly firmaments.")

<sup>102</sup> Cf. SMITH 1974, 60.

<sup>103</sup> Cf. the famous remark of Damascius in his *In Phd.* 127.1–3 WESTERINK: – 'Ὅτι οἱ μὲν τὴν φιλοσοφίαν προτιμῶσιν, ὡς Πορφύριος καὶ Πλωτῖνος καὶ ἄλλοι πολλοὶ φιλόσοφοι, οἱ δὲ τὴν ἱερατικὴν, ὡς Ἰάμβλιχος καὶ Συριανὸς καὶ Πρόκλος καὶ οἱ ἱερατικοὶ πάντες. ('– That some prefer philosophy, like Porphyry and Plotinus and many other philosophers, yet others priestly art, like Iamblichus, Syrianus, and Proclus, and all the priests.')

<sup>104</sup> Cf. Proclus, *In Ti.* 3.234.19–20: οἱ δὲ τούτων μετριώτεροι, ὥσπερ <οἱ περὶ Πορφύριον>, καὶ παρότεροι παραιτοῦνται μὲν τὴν καλουμένην φθορὰν κατασκεδαννῆναι τοῦ τε ὀχήματος καὶ τῆς ἀλόγου ψυχῆς, ἀναστοιχειοῦσθαι δὲ αὐτὰ φασὶ καὶ ἀναλύεσθαι τινὰ τρόπον εἰς τὰς σφαίρας, ... ("The ones that are more moderate than those, like Porphyry's entourage, since they are milder, they refuse the notion that the so-called 'destruction' scatters the soul's vehicle and the irrational soul, yet they hold that they are fragmented into their elements and somehow resolved into the spheres.")

<sup>105</sup> Cf. Proclus, *In Ti.* 3.234.24–5: ... ὥστε καὶ εἶναι ταῦτα [viz. τὸ ὄχημα καὶ ἡ ἀλογος ψυχή] καὶ μὴ εἶναι, αὐτὰ δὲ ἕκαστα μηκέτ' εἶναι μηδὲ διαμένειν τὴν ιδιότητα αὐτῶν. ("... so that they [viz. the soul's vehicle and the irrational soul] exist and, at the same time, do not exist, yet they exist no longer as separate entities, nor do they maintain their specific quality.") On the interpretation of the Proclus passage in terms of an 'ontological change', see SMITH 1974, 66–7.



important activity as the struggle to make her pneumatic annex rise up together with her and takes it to be something shameful, if ascent happens to souls that do not return their foreign elements (μη ἀποδιδούσας τὸ ἀλλότριον), but leave behind on the earth what they have borrowed from on high.<sup>106</sup> What Synesius labels as ἀποδιδόναι τὸ ἀλλότριον might well be compared to the resolution of the lower soul's particles into the spheres in Porphyry's view of the soul's ascent. As we have seen, both Porphyry and Synesius take their ideas from the Chaldaean tradition, so if the author of *De insomniis* announces in *ep.* 154 that his treatise contains some doctrines 'not yet placed under philosophical scrutiny by the Greeks' (οὐπω φιλοσοφηθέντων Ἑλλήσιν), it seems obvious that he is alluding to his remarks about the fate of the lower soul during ascent, given that he himself traces them back directly to the *Chaldaean Oracles*, while at the same time he withholds his indebtedness to Porphyry. For additional evidence, one might turn to the Byzantine polyhistor Michael Psellus, who in his commentary on the *De insomniis* offers an explanation of the very couplet from the *Chaldaean Oracles* that we have mentioned above as a point of departure for Synesius: "You will not leave behind in the abyss the refuse of matter (σκύβαλον), but there is a portion in the place filled with light also for the phantasmal soul (εἶδωλον)."<sup>107</sup> According to Psellus, in the 'Hellenic', viz. the pagan, tradition the irrational soul never exceeds the sublunar area, whereas the Oracle's 'place filled with light', τόπος ἀμφιφῶν, in his view refers to the ethereal region beyond the moon.<sup>108</sup> He goes on to explain that in Chaldaean doctrine the possibility to raise up the lower soul to such a high level is confined to those who keep her in harmony with their λογικὴ ψυχὴ so that, upon death, she leaves the body 'shining and pure' (διαυγῆς καὶ καθαρὰ).<sup>109</sup>

Given the great impact the *Chaldaean Oracles* had on Synesius in matters of the soul's ascent one can readily assume that he considered it one of the highest goals of anyone seriously involved in dream divination to ennoble the soul's lower annexes so as to render them apt for 'etherialization'.

<sup>106</sup> Cf. Syn. *De ins.* 138B: ἀγῶνα δὲ ἀγωνίζεται τοῦτον ἢ συναναγαγεῖν ἢ μὴ τοι συγκαταμεῖναι· μόλις μὲν γάρ, ἀλλὰ γένοιτ' ἂν ἀφείναι μὴ συνεπόμενον (οὐ γὰρ θέμις ἀπιστεῖν ἐγνωσμένων τῶν τελετῶν), αἰσχροῦ δ' ἂν ἐπάνοδος γένοιτο μὴ ἀποδιδούσας τὸ ἀλλότριον, ἀλλὰ περὶ γῆν ἀπολιπούσας ὅπερ ἄνωθεν ἤρανίσαντο. ("The battle she [viz. the first soul] fights is either to pull <the *pneuma*> up with her or, at any rate, not to linger down below with it. She can, though with difficulty, let it go if it will not follow (if we know the mysteries, we must not disbelieve this), but it would be a shameful homecoming if <souls> did not restore something that is not their own, but left behind in the neighbourhood of earth the thing they had borrowed from above.")

<sup>107</sup> See above, p. 92, n. 96.

<sup>108</sup> Cf. Psellus, *philos. min.* 2.126.14–127.19 O'MEARA. On the testimony of Psellus, see also GERTZ, p. 114, n. 13 in this volume.

<sup>109</sup> Cf. Psellus, *philos. min.* 2.126.14–127.17 O'MEARA.

## 10. Conclusion

Let us sum up the main points once again: in Greek tradition, theoretical speculation about dreams is split between the two main groups of oneirocritics and oneirological thinkers. While the oneirocritics, starting from Antiphon in the 5th century BC and including Artemidorus, have taken a more linguistic stance with a special focus on the personal variety of dreams which they tried to account for by the *τίσιν*-principle, oneirological thinkers have been thrilled by psychological, religious, and philosophical aspects connected with divination by dreams.

Democritus' model of dreams as consisting of external *εἶδωλα* of a semi-divine quality that enter through pores into the bodies of dreamers has, in a slightly modified way, been taken up by Aristotle (who replaces the *εἶδωλα* by *κινήσεις*), and by Synesius (who takes the model as starting point for his speculations about the various quality of dream images depending on the disposition of the *ψυχικὸν πνεῦμα*). The moral outlook on dreams, which is so much stressed by Synesius, follows not only the example set by Plato and Philo, but is also in accordance with the focus on moral purity in ritual dream divination as practiced in the sanctuaries of healing deities. A conspicuous feature of these deities is their essentially philanthropic character, a notion that can be found also in the philosophy of the Stoics, who conceived of dreams as forewarnings sent to mankind by beneficial gods. Synesius, who shares the radically positive attitude of the Stoics, is convinced of the infallibility of dreams to such an extent that he places the potential of deception in a faulty dream interpretation rather than in the dreams themselves. By contrast, Plato and Aristotle unanimously hold that the origin of dreams should be considered demonic, which in their eyes renders them highly ambiguous. Nonetheless, they allow for the possibility of prophetic dreams. Plato distinguishes the irrational 'dreams of the liver' and those of the *λογιστικόν*, both of which might attain to the truth, though the former would do so in a symbolically encoded form. In Aristotle's oneirological thought, precognitive visions appear to be an irrational phenomenon, which he imputes to divine intervention in the *Eudemian Ethics*, while in his late treatises on sleep and dream he accounts for them as stipulated by *κινήσεις* entering the souls of dreamers from without. In both cases, the ideal recipients of these dreams are the *ατράβητοι*, who in his later writings are supplied by the *τυχόντες*, ordinary people with their minds completely vacant. The somewhat contradictory psychological concept of fr. 12a, where sleep is considered to be a state, in which the soul – prefiguring her re-ascent after death – is, to a certain degree, isolated from the body, has been adopted by various philosophers, including Posidonius, Philo, and Synesius, who takes it as a

point of departure for his almost poetic description of the soul's journey through the elements.

While Plato and Aristotle already are well aware of the metaphorical potential in dreams, this aspect has been particularly stressed by Artemidorus. In a way that recalls the Sophoclean fragment on riddling speech as the mode of communication most appropriate to the divine, Artemidorus considers enigmatic encoding to be characteristic of divine utterances in dreams. Following along these lines, Synesius introduces 'concealment' (*ἐπίκρυψις*) as a predominant feature of dreams that he also applies to his whole treatise: clad in the veiling garment of dreams, he expounds to the reader a doctrine about the lower soul's fate in stages of ecstasy and after death which turns out to be not only profoundly influenced by the *Chaldaean Oracles*, as he himself explicitly states, but also very much indebted to Porphyry's philosophy of ascent.

# *Phantasia in De insomniis*

Anne Sheppard

## 1. Introduction

Synesius studied philosophy under Hypatia and when he sent her *De insomniis* he drew particular attention in the accompanying letter to the discussion of “our Imaginative Nature” and the “phantom soul” (εἰδωλική ψυχή) which it contains.<sup>1</sup> Behind that discussion lies a complex tradition of earlier ideas about *phantasia*, a word which can be used both of something that appears, particularly the ‘appearance’ or ‘impression’ we receive when we perceive something, and of that part of the mind that deals with appearances. As Synesius’ letter to Hypatia suggests, *phantasia* in *De insomniis* is mainly used in the second sense, to mean something like ‘imagination’, playing a key role in Synesius’ version of Neoplatonic psychology. Despite the importance of *phantasia* for Synesius, and his enthusiasm for its power, many of the details of his concept remain unclear. The phrase εἰδωλική ψυχή itself could suggest either a part of the soul which deals with images or a part of the soul which is only an εἶδωλον or ‘image’ of the soul proper. In the course of *De insomniis* Synesius speaks sometimes of *phantasia*, sometimes of φανταστικὸν πνεῦμα (“imaginative *pneuma*”), sometimes of φανταστική φύσις (“imaginative substance”). As the essay proceeds, he associates *phantasia* ever more closely with the *pneuma* which he regards as its organ, while praising its power to connect us with the divine through prophetic dreams.

The Neoplatonism which Synesius learned from Hypatia was essentially that of Porphyry.<sup>2</sup> Like his teacher, Plotinus, and later Neoplatonists, Porphyry based his philosophical psychology on Aristotle’s *De anima*, regarding Aristotle’s account of nutrition and growth, sense-perception, imagination and thinking as a hierarchy of faculties, and sought to combine Aristotle’s systematic discussion with passages on aspects of psychology dispersed across Plato’s dialogues. Plato has little to say about *phan-*

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<sup>1</sup> See RUSSELL in the introduction to this volume, pp. 4–5.

<sup>2</sup> LANG 1926 points out many of the parallels between *De insomniis* and Porphyrian material. DEUSE 1983, 227–9, suggests connections between some points in *De insomniis* and ideas found in Iamblichus, Plutarch of Athens and Hierocles but fails, in my view, to distinguish sufficiently between views peculiar to these thinkers and standard Neoplatonic views. Cf. also LACOMBRADÉ 1951 and VOLLENWEIDER 1985, 14–17.

*tasia* in the sense of ‘imagination’, although we shall see that one passage, *Timaeus* 70d–72d, was particularly influential. Aristotle’s compressed and sometimes puzzling discussion of *phantasia* in *De anima* 3.3 lies behind some of what we find in *De insomniis*, but Synesius also uses ideas from Plotinus and Porphyry.

*Phantasia* in the sense of ‘appearance’ was a very important term in both Stoicism and Epicureanism where it was used of the ‘impressions’ which we perceive through our senses.<sup>3</sup> It appears in this sense once in *De insomniis*, at 137D, but at 142B and 152C the word Synesius uses for ‘what appears to us’ is φάντασμα.

In the rhetorical tradition *phantasia* came to have yet another meaning, that of imagination in the sense of ‘visualisation’, referring specifically to the ability of a poet, an orator or an artist to imagine or visualise his subject-matter and to represent it vividly in his work.<sup>4</sup> This sense too makes an appearance in *De insomniis*, in the praise of the power of dreams in ch. 19 (153C–155A).

In the first part of this essay I shall examine the philosophical and rhetorical background to Synesius’ use of *phantasia*, picking out aspects of particular importance for *De insomniis*, before attempting in the latter part to unravel the different strands which are woven together in his distinctive and striking presentation of the power of ‘the phantom soul’.<sup>5</sup>

## 2. The philosophical and rhetorical background

Plato makes little use of the word *phantasia* but four passages in his work which use related terms are particularly important for subsequent ideas about the imagination. At *Sophist* 235c–236c the Eleatic Stranger contrasts two kinds of image-making, the ‘eikastic’ (εἰκαστική), which produces accurate likenesses, and the ‘phantastic’ (φανταστική), which produces an appearance rather than a likeness (φάντασμα ἀλλ’ οὐκ εἰκόνα).<sup>6</sup> The latter is the kind of image-making used by sculptors or painters producing images to be seen from a distance, where accurate reproduction of proportions would produce a distorted perception by the viewer. Both kinds

<sup>3</sup> See WATSON 1988, 38–58.

<sup>4</sup> See BUNDY 1927, Chs. 4 and 5; RISPOLI 1985, Ch. 8; R. MEIJERING, *Literary and Rhetorical Theories in Greek Scholia* (Groningen 1987), Ch. 1; WATSON 1988, Ch. 4 (ANRW II.36.7 [Berlin 1994] 4765–92); R. WEBB, “Imagination and the arousal of the emotions in Greco-Roman rhetoric”, in: S. M. BRAUND / C. GILL (eds.), *The Passions in Roman Thought and Literature* (Cambridge 1997) 112–27; MANIERI 1998; A. SHEPPARD, *The Poetics of Phantasia. Imagination in Ancient Aesthetics* (London 2014) 19–46.

<sup>5</sup> Synesius’ view of *phantasia* has been discussed not only in LANG 1926 and LACOMBRADÉ 1951 but also in BUNDY 1927, 147–53; WATSON 1988, 110–15; COCKING 1991, 62–4; AUJOULAT 1983/84; SHEPPARD 1997, 204–06 and AUJOULAT 2004, 199–222, 249–63.

<sup>6</sup> *Soph.* 236c3.

of image-making are of low value, but the deceptive ‘phantastic’ kind is clearly regarded as worse than the ‘eikastic’ one. Later in the *Sophist*, at 264b, the Stranger remarks that when we say φαίνεται (‘it appears’) there is a combination of ‘perception’ (αἴσθησις) and ‘opinion’ or ‘belief’ (δόξα). At *Philebus* 38b–39c the relationship between ‘opinion’ (δόξα), ‘memory’ (μνήμη) and ‘perception’ (αἴσθησις) is discussed and mention is again made of the way in which appearances at a distance can be deceptive<sup>7</sup> while a little later, at 40a, in a striking but notoriously puzzling passage, false pleasures are described as ‘appearances’ (φαντάσματα) painted in our souls, associated with false hopes for the future. Finally at *Timaeus* 70d–72d, in a physiological account of the three parts of the soul, the ἐπιθυμητικόν, or ‘appetitive part’, is located between the midriff and the navel and both the liver and the spleen are given a psychological role. The liver is described as a mirror which reflects appearances (εἶδωλα καὶ φαντάσματα) from the mind and so is capable of divination, both in sleep and at other times when it is inspired by the gods. The spleen has the function of removing impurities from the liver “like a duster kept handy to clean a mirror”.<sup>8</sup> This passage from the *Timaeus* is of particular importance for Synesius’ view that *phantasia* has a prophetic power manifested in dreams, as we shall see.<sup>9</sup>

Aristotle’s chapter on *phantasia* in the *De anima* comes between his account of perception and his account of thinking. He argues against the suggestion in the *Sophist* that *phantasia* is a combination of perception and belief, and offers an account which relates it very closely to perception, defining *phantasia* at the end of the chapter as “a movement taking place as a result of actual sense-perception”.<sup>10</sup> At the same time he several times makes the debatable point that there is no thinking without an image.<sup>11</sup> Aristotle mentions the role of *phantasia* in dreams at 428a8 and 16, a point to which he returns in his own *De insomniis* at 459a8–22. He holds that

<sup>7</sup> Note the use of the verb φαντάζομαι in 38d.

<sup>8</sup> Desmond Lee’s translation of οἶον κατόπτρῳ παρεσκευασμένον καὶ ἔτοιμον ἄει παρακείμενον ἐκμαγείον, *Ti.* 72c4–5.

<sup>9</sup> The significance of the *Timaeus* passage is stressed by BUNDY 1927, 51–4 and WATSON 1988, 11–13. A selection of later passages influenced by it are discussed in SHEPPARD 2003, 203–12. Cf. BITTRICH in this volume, pp. 73–74.

<sup>10</sup> 429a1–2, as translated by D. W. Hamlyn. Aristotle’s account of *phantasia* is discussed by, among others, SCHOFIELD 1978; M. C. NUSSBAUM, *Aristotle’s De motu animalium. Text with translation, commentary and interpretive essays* (Princeton 1978) 221–69; D. MODRAK, “Φαντασία Reconsidered”, *Archiv für Geschichte der Philosophie* 68 (1986) 47–69 and Aristotle. *The Power of Perception* (Chicago u.a. 1987), Ch. 4; WATSON 1988, 14–33; M. V. WEDIN, *Mind and Imagination in Aristotle* (New Haven u.a. 1989), Chs. 2, 3 and 4.

<sup>11</sup> Aristotle, *De anima* 3.7.431a16–17 and 431b2, *De memoria* 1.449b31–450a1. Cf. also *De anima* 3.8.432a8–14.

most, or nearly all, animals have *phantasia*<sup>12</sup> and also, at 427b18–21, makes the point that imagining something is ‘up to us’ – we can imagine whatever we like – whereas belief is not, since belief must be either true or false.

Plotinus in *Enn.* 4.3.29–32 discusses *phantasia* immediately after giving an account of memory. Like Plato and Aristotle he sees both memory and *phantasia* as operating with images derived from sense-perception but at the beginning of 4.3.30 he asks “What is it that remembers thoughts?” and proceeds to make a striking distinction between a lower ‘image-making power’ (φανταστικόν) which retains images from sense-perception and a higher one which reflects the realm of ‘intellect’ (νοῦς).<sup>13</sup> He goes so far as to talk in terms of ‘two souls’ which normally function together while the soul is in the body. In the course of his discussion Plotinus tries to make sense of Aristotle’s claim that there is no thinking without an image and compares the way in which the higher image-making power receives an articulated ‘verbal expression’ (λόγος) of an ‘intellectual act’ (νόημα) with reflection in a mirror. He seems more clearly to have the liver-mirror of the *Timaeus* in mind in another passage, *Enn.* 1.4.10, where he suggests that in normal circumstances *phantasia* receives images from νοῦς and thinking operates with images “as happens with a mirror-reflection when there is a smooth, bright, untroubled surface” but “when the harmony of the body is upset” there is no mirroring and thinking takes place without an image.<sup>14</sup>

Plotinus’ distinction between two image-making powers does not appear in Porphyry. In *Sententiae* 43.54.18–56.15 Lamberz Porphyry simply offers a Neoplatonic version of Aristotle’s account of *phantasia* while at *Sent.* 16.8.2–3 Lamberz he reiterates Aristotle’s claim that there is no thinking without an image. The same account reappears in fragment 255 Smith, which comes from his work *On the faculties of the soul*.<sup>15</sup> There are also echoes in Porphyry of some of the passages of Plato referred to above: fragment 378.10–15 draws attention to the close connection between *phantasia* and memory and refers explicitly to the *Philebus* while *In Ptolemaei harmonica* 13.27–31 uses the images of the scribe and the painter found at *Phlb.* 38b–39c and introduces a Platonic-sounding “faculty of opinion”

<sup>12</sup> See *De anima* 415a10–11, 428a8–11 and 21–2, with the notes on these passages in R. D. Hicks (ed.), *Aristotle. De anima* (Cambridge 1907).

<sup>13</sup> For discussion of Plotinus on *phantasia* see BUNDY 1927, 117–30; BLUMENTHAL 1971, 88–95; J. DILLON, “Plotinus and the Transcendental Imagination” in: J. P. MACKEY (ed.), *Religious Imagination* (Edinburgh 1986) 55–65, reprinted in J. DILLON, *The Golden Chain. Studies in the development of Platonism and Christianity*. Collected studies series CS 333 (Aldershot 1990) essay XXIV; WATSON 1988, 97–103.

<sup>14</sup> The English in quotation marks is taken from A. H. Armstrong’s translation. On Plotinus’ comparison of imagination to a mirror, cf. SHEPPARD 2003, 208–9.

<sup>15</sup> Cf. also fragment 253 SMITH.

(δοξαστικὴ ὑπόληψις) between perception and *phantasia*.<sup>16</sup> Where Porphyry diverges from the preceding philosophical tradition is in associating *phantasia* with the 'astral body' or 'vehicle' of the soul. In *Sent.* 29.18.8–14 Lamberz and *Ad Gaurum* 6.1 Porphyry makes use of a belief that demons take shape by representing the imprints, or reflections, of their *phantasia* on their soul-vehicles.<sup>17</sup>

It is not surprising, given the period at which Synesius was writing and his Neoplatonic philosophical education, that the Stoic and Epicurean epistemological sense of *phantasia* as 'appearance' or 'impression', hardly appears in *De insomniis*, as I have noted above. The remarks in 149B–150A to the effect that 'images' (εἰδωλα) flow out from all things, suggesting that these images, even when they are images of the future, are physical objects which attach themselves to the *pneuma* of the soul, appear reminiscent of atomist epistemology in which dreams and hallucinations are explained as clusters of material images.<sup>18</sup> However this kind of explanation of such phenomena was very common in antiquity and Synesius is probably adopting it without much awareness of its philosophical origins.

*Phantasia* in the sense of 'visualisation' appears in 'Longinus', *On the Sublime* 15.1 where the author, probably writing in the first century AD, notes that this usage of the term is recent. Although the concept has older roots, the usage becomes particularly widespread in writing about literature and art in the early centuries of the Roman empire and is closely linked to the concept of ἐνάργεια or 'vividness'. The author of *On the Sublime* is interested in the way in which orators can use *phantasia* and its effects on the emotions of the audience. Quintilian, in a passage often cited as a parallel to *On the Sublime* (*Inst.* 6.2.29), uses the term *phantasia* not of the ability to visualise but of the images called up by such an ability, declaring that the orator who is most effective in moving his audience will be the one who has a good stock of what the Greeks call φαντασῖαι and the Romans call *visiones*, by means of which we can see in our minds things which are not actually present. He goes on to draw attention to the potential of day-dreaming for developing the ability for successful visualisation.<sup>19</sup> Be-

<sup>16</sup> See A. SHEPPARD, "Porphyry's views on *phantasia*", in: KARAMANOLIS / SHEPPARD 2007 [71–6] 73–4. As I point out there, the phrase δοξαστικὴ ὑπόληψις combines Platonic and Aristotelian vocabulary.

<sup>17</sup> Cf. also *De antro nympharum* 11.65.19–21 NAUCK; BRISSEN 2005, 594; SORABJI 2004, 75–6.

<sup>18</sup> The theory goes back to Democritus DK 68 A 77 and DK 68 B 166, as noted by BITTRICH in this volume, pp. 72–73 and n. 9. It reappears in Epicureanism (see esp. Lucretius 4.722–822, with the discussion of this and related sources in A. A. LONG / D. N. SEDLEY, *The Hellenistic Philosophers I. Translations of the principal sources with philosophical commentary* [Cambridge 1987] 76–8) and in a number of later authors down into the Byzantine period, as noted by GERTZ in this volume, p. 121 and n. 37, and by BYDÉN in this volume, pp. 182–183 and n. 74. Cf. LANG 1926, 88–9; AUJOULAT 2004, 253 and 298; STEEL 2008, 82–7.

<sup>19</sup> Cf. also Quintilian, *Institutio oratoria* 8.3.63–5.



tween the time of Quintilian and the time of Synesius talk of visualisation and vividness (φαντασία and ἐνάργεια) can be found in a wide variety of writers discussing poetry, oratory, historiography and painting.<sup>20</sup> A particularly striking example occurs in the essay *On the life and poetry of Homer* attributed to Plutarch; although not by him, this work is usually dated to the second century AD. The author claims that Homer is the source of knowledge and skills of all kinds and so in 216–17 describes the poet as “a teacher of painting”, praising his ability to depict all kinds of things “for visualisation in thought” (φαντασία τῶν νοημάτων). The example given is the description in *Odyssey* 19.467–77 of Odysseus’ old nurse, Eurycleia, washing his feet on his return to Ithaca and recognising him by a scar on his foot. The author praises Homer for doing better than a painter, revealing things which only the mind can grasp, such as the nurse’s reactions of surprise, joy and anguish.<sup>21</sup> By the time of Synesius this sense of *phantasia* was well-established, although it is perhaps characteristic of Synesius’ own way of writing that at the end of *De insomniis* he slides so easily from a way of talking about *phantasia* which is largely derived from philosophical tradition to a usage more common in non-philosophical contexts.

### 3. Prophetic dreams and mirror-images

Synesius makes clear right from the beginning of his treatise that he is interested in the prophetic power of dreams. After an initial encomium of prophecy and some remarks specifically about dreams he turns at 134A to *phantasia*. I shall say more about his general account of *phantasia* as a special, ‘holier’ form of perception (ιερώτερον ... γένος αἰσθήσεως 134C) below. Immediately after using that phrase Synesius remarks, somewhat abruptly, that it is by means of *phantasia* that we have contact with gods and mentions prophecy as one of the examples of such contact. After a rather miscellaneous list of benefits which dreams can bring us – finding treasure, becoming a poet after an encounter with the Muses, being informed of conspiracies, being cured of illness – he comes to his main point, that dreams can open the way to the most perfect visions of reality (τὰς τελεώτατας τῶν ὄντων ἐποψίας) and conjunction with the intelligible (συνάψαι τῷ νοητῷ). He emphasizes that it is *phantasia* which offers the

<sup>20</sup> See, for example Ovid, *Tristia* 3.4.55–60; *Ex Ponto* 1.8.33–8; Josephus, *Jewish War* 7.321–2; Plutarch, *Life of Aratus* 32.3; *Life of Artaxerxes* 8.1; *On the Fame of the Athenians* 346E–347C; Aelian, *Varia Historia* 2.44. Much of this material is discussed in the works referred to in n. 4 above and in G. ZANKER, “*Enargeia* in the Ancient Criticism of Poetry”, *Rheinisches Museum für Philologie*, N.F. 124 (1981) 297–311. I am grateful to Jeremy Antrich for drawing my attention to the passage from Ovid, *Ex Ponto*.

<sup>21</sup> Cf. the notes on this passage in M. HILLGRUBER, *Die pseudo-Plutarchische Schrift De Homero II. Kommentar zu den Kapitel 74 – 218. Beiträge zur Altertumskunde* 58 (Stuttgart et al. 1999) 435–8. See also RISPOLI 1985, 99–100 and MANIERI 1998, 184–5.

means to such a vision, quoting the Platonizing *Chaldaean Oracles* in support.<sup>22</sup> The idea that dreams have prophetic power is widespread in Greek culture<sup>23</sup> but the specific connection of *phantasia* with prophetic dreams in the Platonic tradition can be traced to the account of the divinatory liver in *Timaeus* 70d–72d.<sup>24</sup> Some evidence that the connection between *phantasia*, prophecy and dreams persisted in Middle Platonism can be found in Plutarch's *De defectu oraculorum* 431B–438D, where dreams are mentioned as a source of prophecy at 432C while at 438A Lamprias declares that prophetic inspiration occurs only when the 'imaginative and prophetic faculty' (φανταστική καὶ μαντική δύναμις) is in the right state.<sup>25</sup>

The idea that *phantasia* acts as a mirror, also derived ultimately from *Timaeus* 70d–72d, is picked up by Synesius' use of the verb ἐνοπτρίζει, 'produces a reflection', at 134B and again at 149C where he describes the imaginative *pneuma* as a mirror which receives the images flowing out from all things.<sup>26</sup> The comparison with a mirror makes a final appearance at 152B where Synesius compares the differences between "a true mirror, a distorting mirror, and a mirror made of unlike materials" with the differences between the *pneumata* of different souls.<sup>27</sup> Synesius' particular version of the idea that *phantasia* acts as a mirror finds parallels in Plotinus, in Porphyry and in the later Neoplatonist Proclus, but differs from all of them.

We have seen that Plotinus compares the imagination to a mirror which receives images from *nous* both in *Enn.* 4.3.30.2–11 and in *Enn.* 1.4.10. In both *Sent.* 29 and *Ad Gaurum* 6.1 Porphyry seems to be treating the astral body or soul-vehicle as distinct from the *phantasia* and regarding *phantasia* itself as capable of projecting reflections into a 'mirror' below it. Since the Neoplatonists regard each metaphysical and psychological level as reflecting the one above it, the idea that *phantasia* can use something on a lower level as a kind of mirror is quite consistent with Plotinus' picture of *phantasia* as itself a mirror which reflects the activity of intellect.

<sup>22</sup> On Synesius' use of the *Chaldaean Oracles* here, cf. GERTZ in this volume, section 1, pp. 112–114.

<sup>23</sup> See BITTRICH in this volume.

<sup>24</sup> See esp. *Ti.* 71d3–4 and n. 9 above.

<sup>25</sup> See SHEPPARD 1997, 203–4 and BUNDY 1927, 96–8. At *De Is. et Os.* 383F–384A Plutarch compares the use of aromatic herbs in Egyptian rites to purify "the part of the soul which is imaginative and receptive to dreams" (τὸ φανταστικὸν καὶ δεκτικὸν ὀνειρώτων μόριον) with polishing a mirror. Cf. also Philo, *Migr.* 190, cited by BITTRICH, in this volume, p. 81, n. 46, where there is talk of inspired true prophecies which come in dreams and the mind is said to gaze at truth as at a mirror, although there is no mention of *phantasia*.

<sup>26</sup> Synesius, like Proclus and Olympiodorus, seems to assume that images seen in mirrors are the result of effluences from real objects. See Proclus, *In Remp.* 1.289.21–290.27 and Olympiodorus, *In Alc.* 217.23–218.3, with the discussion in STEEL 2008, 82–7.

<sup>27</sup> Cf. Plutarch, *Pyth. or.* 404C, as noted by RUSSELL above, p. 67, n. 127.

In Proclus we again find *phantasia* itself functioning as a mirror. Like Synesius Proclus uses the verb *προβάλλει*, 'projects', but he appeals to the idea in connection with mathematics rather than prophetic inspiration. In his commentary on Euclid Proclus expounds the idea that when we are doing geometry the figures about which we are thinking are projections in *phantasia* of innate intelligible principles<sup>28</sup> and in two passages of that commentary he compares the figures projected in *phantasia* to images reflected in a mirror, using the verb *προβάλλειν*.<sup>29</sup> Proclus' metaphysics, epistemology and psychology are both complex and precise, and his account of the role of *phantasia* in mathematics develops the way in which mathematics is treated in the Divided Line of Plato's *Republic*.<sup>30</sup> Synesius is much less systematic. He speaks rather generally of *nous*, or Mind, containing the (Platonic) forms of things that are while Soul contains the forms of things that come to be (*τὰ γιγνόμενα*). It contains all of these, but projects only those that are relevant. I take it that by 'Soul' and 'the First Soul' here (134B) Synesius means Soul in general, the Neoplatonic hypostasis of Soul,<sup>31</sup> and that he is explaining the prophetic power of the *phantasia* attached to our individual souls by using the idea that *phantasia* is like a mirror which reflects images of Platonic forms that are projected upon it.

In the later passage comparing *phantasia* to a mirror, 149C, the images received by *phantasia* come from things in nature, past, present and future.<sup>32</sup> In Plotinian terms, this would be the activity of the lower *phantasia* which retains images of perceptible things, not the higher one which reflects images from the intelligible world. Synesius' view that even future things give off images which are received by *phantasia* goes beyond Plotinus and is hardly justified by his rather casual remark at 149B that "the future too is a mode of existence". Since he wants to argue that *phantasia* is the faculty involved in divinatory dreams he needs to give some account of how we can form veridical images of the future but his attempt to combine Plotinus' essentially Aristotelian view of the relationship between *phantasia* and sense-perception with the belief that images are material effluences from real objects appears not fully thought through. Unlike Plotinus, Synesius does not divide *phantasia* into two but thinks in terms of one faculty

<sup>28</sup> See Proclus, *In Eucl.* 51.9–56.22 and 78.20–79.2, with the comments of WATSON 1988, 119–21 and D. J. O'MEARA, *Pythagoras Revived. Mathematics and philosophy in late antiquity* (Oxford 1989) 132–4.

<sup>29</sup> See Proclus, *In Eucl.* 121.2–7 and 141.2–19, discussed by A. CHARLES, "L'imagination, miroir de l'âme selon Proclus", in: *Le Néoplatonisme* (Paris 1971) 241–51 and by COCKING 1991, 67.

<sup>30</sup> See A. SHEPPARD, "Phantasia and mathematical projection in Iamblichus", *Syllecta Classica* 8 (1997) 113–20.

<sup>31</sup> On the distinction between *phantasia* in the individual soul and 'the First Soul' in this passage, cf. LANG 1926, 46.

<sup>32</sup> Cf. AUJOUAT 2004, 254–6.

which can face either way, both up towards the intelligible and down towards nature. The mirror can be turned in either direction. At 152B the comparison of different *pneumata* to different mirrors is presumably intended to explain variations between people's dreams and their interpretation of them. It reflects the notion already found in *Timaeus* 70d–72d, that variations in the physical state of the liver will lead to variations in our emotional reactions and in our ability to “spend the night quietly in divination and dreams”.<sup>33</sup> These ideas also appear in Plotinus, *Enn.* 1.4.10 where it is suggested that when *phantasia* reflects images coming from the intelligible world it operates like a mirror “with a smooth, bright, untroubled surface” but that this activity breaks down “when the harmony of the body is upset”.<sup>34</sup> The view that variations in human capacity explain variations in the ability of human beings to understand the unchanging divine and to receive messages from the gods is common in both Middle and Neoplatonism.<sup>35</sup> Synesius here is once again thinking of *phantasia* as receiving or ‘reflecting’ images from a higher world, not from nature, and gives the image a neat twist by allowing for the possibility of distorting mirrors and mirrors made of unlike materials.

The idea that some *pneumata* are purer than others and more likely to receive true impressions (ἐκμαγεία) had already appeared at 142B, though without any explicit use of the image of the mirror. Synesius there uses Plato's word φάντασμα of the ‘appearances’ which the *pneuma* projects, just as at 152C he uses φάντασμα to refer to what appears in the soul. I take it that the projection of 142B is projection from the *phantasia* onto something else, such as the astral body, as in Porphyry, but that what Synesius is talking about here, as at 152B, is the fact that some souls are more successful at divination than others. In 141D he contrasts the purity of the soul which has ascended from its fallen state with the cloudiness of the fallen soul's *pneuma*, in language not unlike that used at 151C–152C.

The connection between *phantasia* and dreams goes back to the *Timaeus*, as we have seen, and reappears in Aristotle. Before turning to closer examination of that connection, it is worth pausing to consider the way in which Synesius connects hope and dreams at 146B–C. Praise of hope, the gift of Prometheus, at 146B is followed by the epigrammatic statement, “All this is the dreamer's waking vision and the wakeful man's dream”. Aelian in the *Varia historia* claims that Plato described hopes as the dreams of men

<sup>33</sup> Desmond Lee's translation of *Ti.* 71d3–4.

<sup>34</sup> A. H. Armstrong's translation of Plotinus, *Enn.* 1.4.10.9–10 and 17–18. Cf. p. 100 above.

<sup>35</sup> See, for example, Philo, *Opif.* 6.23; *Abr.* 119–25; Plut. *De gen.* 589D; Plotinus, *Enn.* 6.5.11.26–31; Porph. *Sent.* 29.21–2; Proclus, *In Remp.* 1.40.5–41.2, 116.24–117.21; *Theol. Plat.* 1.21.97–9 SAFFREY / WESTERINK. Further references, and discussion, can be found in E. R. DODDS (ed.), *Proclus. The Elements of Theology* (Oxford <sup>2</sup>1963) 273–4 and in BRISSON 2005, 599–600.

who are awake.<sup>36</sup> Those words do not actually appear in Plato's corpus as a description of hope, but, given the context of a discussion of *phantasia*, it is worth considering whether Synesius and Aelian, or their sources, have *Philebus* 38b–40a in mind. Socrates there gets Protarchus to agree that we are all full of hopes throughout our lives and characterizes these hopes as λόγοι and 'painted appearances' (φαντάσματα ἐζωγραφημένα). The example of the man who 'sees himself' in possession of a plentiful quantity of gold and thoroughly enjoying such possession follows. Although the word *phantasia* is not used here, Plato is surely talking about someone whose hope to possess so much gold leads him to imagine himself in the situation he longs for – but the hope is false, and so is the associated pleasure.<sup>37</sup> It is tempting to see Plato's account of the role of hope in leading us to imagine 'painted appearances' of the future as lying behind the passage which follows, 146C–147A, where Synesius distinguishes between deluded hopes which flatter the soul, when we actively choose to imagine things, and the hopes which come to us as a result of inspired dreams, in which the *phantasia* receives visions that come from God. At the same time the reference in 146C to times when we actively wish *phantasia* to make images (εἰδωλοποιεῖν) recalls Aristotle's contrast in *De anima* 427b18–21 between *phantasia* which is 'up to us' and belief which is not.<sup>38</sup> In a parenthesis there Aristotle notes that "it is possible to produce something before our eyes, as those do who set things out in mnemonic systems and form images of them",<sup>39</sup> using the participle εἰδωλοποιούντες. Here as elsewhere Synesius is blending together different elements from earlier philosophical tradition in a way characteristic of his time and particularly of the Porphyrian Neoplatonism which he learned from Hypatia.<sup>40</sup>

#### 4. *Phantasia* and sense-perception

Aristotle, like Plato, associates dreams with *phantasia*. In *De anima* 428a8 he regards the fact that things can appear to us in dreams, when our sense-organs are not operating, as indicating that *phantasia* is not the same as sense-perception while in his *De insomniis* he describes a dream as 'a kind

<sup>36</sup> See RUSSELL'S note above, p. 66, n. 107.

<sup>37</sup> This passage of the *Phlb.* has been much discussed. See, for example, D. FREDE, "Rumpelstiltskin's pleasures. True and false pleasures in Plato's *Philebus*", *Phronesis* 30 (1985) 151–80, reprinted in: G. FINE (ed.), *Plato 2. Ethics, politics, religion and soul*. Oxford readings in philosophy (Oxford et al. 1999) 345–72; C. HAMPTON, "Pleasure, truth and being in Plato's *Philebus* – a reply to Prof. Frede", *Phronesis* 32 (1987) 253–62.

<sup>38</sup> Cf. pp. 99–100 above.

<sup>39</sup> *De anima* 427b18–20, trans. D. W. Hamlyn.

<sup>40</sup> On Porphyry's view that Plato and Aristotle were in agreement, see G. KARAMANOLIS, *Plato and Aristotle in Agreement? Platonists on Aristotle from Antiochus to Porphyry*. Oxford philosophical monographs (Oxford 2006), Ch. 7.

of appearance' (φάντασμα τι) and dreaming as belonging to the capacity for sense-perception, *qua* imaginative (τοῦ αἰσθητικοῦ μὲν ἔστι τὸ ἐνυπνιαῖζειν, τούτου δ' ἢ τὸ φανταστικόν 459a21–2). Although in the *De anima* he draws attention to a number of ways in which *phantasia* differs from sense-perception,<sup>41</sup> the overall trend of Aristotle's account is to bring *phantasia* close to sense-perception. That closeness is reflected in Plotinus' readiness to acknowledge that *phantasia* deals with images coming from sense-perception. Plotinus' distinction between a higher and a lower *phantasia* is a way of trying to widen the scope of *phantasia*, starting from a position in which its connection with sense-perception seems obvious whilst its connection with higher levels of metaphysics and psychology needs to be explained and accounted for.<sup>42</sup> Despite Synesius' enthusiasm for the ability of *phantasia* to put us in touch, through dreams, with higher powers, he follows philosophical tradition in associating *phantasia* closely with sense-perception. His description of *phantasia* as 'the sense of senses' (αἰσθησις αἰσθησέων) at 135D is particularly striking. He goes on to call the φανταστικὸν πνεῦμα "the most general organ of sense and the first body of the soul". For Aristotle, one of the differences between *phantasia* and sense-perception is precisely that *phantasia* does not require the use of the normal sense-organs: at *De anima* 428a16 he points out that sights, or visions, appear to us even when our eyes are closed (φαίνεται καὶ μύουσιν ὄράματα) while in *De insomniis* 459a8–22 he connects dreams with *phantasia* because in dreams we do not see or hear in the normal sense of those terms (ἀπλῶς). Synesius is perhaps responding to these Aristotelian points, but in a rather unexpected way, when he claims at 134C that there are special sense-organs corresponding to *phantasia*, which we use when we 'perceive' our dreams. It is just at this point in his text that Synesius moves from talking of *phantasia* as a faculty in the soul to using the phrase φανταστικὸν πνεῦμα, apparently regarding the relationship between *phantasia*, 'the sense of senses', and *pneuma* as comparable to that between a sense such as sight and its sense-organ, the eye. The only passage in Plato which suggests that *phantasia* has any kind of bodily location or existence is *Timaeus* 70d–72d, a passage largely avoided in modern discussions of Plato's psychology and epistemology, while for Aristotle, although the sense-organs play a key role in sense-perception, neither *phantasia* nor thinking is described in the *De anima* as having a bodily organ. We have seen that it was Porphyry who associated *phantasia* with the astral

<sup>41</sup> See *De anima* 428a5–15.

<sup>42</sup> Cf. BLUMENTHAL 1971, 88–94 and id., "Plotinus' adaptation of Aristotle's psychology: sensation, imagination and memory", in: R. BAINE HARRIS (ed.), *The Significance of Neoplatonism*. Studies in Neoplatonism 1 (Norfolk, VA 1976) 51–5, reprinted in id., *Soul and Intellect*. Studies in Plotinus and Later Neoplatonism. Collected Studies Series CS 426 (Aldershot 1993) essay VII.

body, although to the best of my knowledge the connection between *phantasia* and *pneuma* is not developed in the surviving remains of Porphyry's own work in the way in which it is elaborated by Synesius.<sup>43</sup>

Synesius locates the *pneuma* which is the organ of *phantasia* not in the liver but in the brain (see 142D) and describes it at 136A as "ruling the living being, as it were, from a citadel". The passage which follows calls it 'the common sense' (κοινή αἴσθησις) but describes its activity as rather like that of the Stoic 'ruling part', the ἡγεμονικόν. The term 'common sense' recalls Aristotle for whom the 'common sense' is that by which we perceive the 'common objects', namely movement, rest, figure, magnitude, number and unity.<sup>44</sup> By contrast the Stoics, being materialists, thought of the soul as *pneuma* and held that there were eight faculties of the soul: the five senses, the power of reproduction, the power of speech and the 'ruling part', located in the chest. Aetius compares the other faculties, extending through the body from the ruling part, and reporting back to it, to the tentacles of an octopus.<sup>45</sup> For a Stoic the common objects would be perceived by the ruling part and that part could therefore be described as the 'common sense' although I am not aware of any Stoic texts which make this identification explicitly. In locating the *pneuma* of *phantasia* in the brain, Synesius is putting it where Plato in the *Timaeus* put the rational part of the soul;<sup>46</sup> at the same time he is giving it some of the functions of the Stoic ἡγεμονικόν, the part of the soul which received φαντασίαι in the sense of 'appearances' or 'impressions' and describing those functions in Aristotelian language.

In 137B Synesius ascribes *phantasia* to both animals and demons. In saying that animals which lack intellect (νοῦς) have *phantasia* to function as a kind of substitute form of thinking, he follows Aristotle who, as we have seen, holds that most, or nearly all, animals have *phantasia*<sup>47</sup> while his claim that there are classes of demons whose being is entirely "of the phantom kind" recalls the beliefs of Porphyry as they appear in *Sent.* 29 and *Ad Gaurum* 6.1.<sup>48</sup> The remarks on the *phantasia* of demons lead straight in to the claim in 137C that we do not form thoughts without conceiving an image (τὰς ... νοήσεις οὐκ ἀφαντάστους ποιούμεθα) except in exceptional circumstances. This is another Aristotelian point which was

<sup>43</sup> On the relationship between *phantasia* and *pneuma* in Synesius, see LANG 1926, 46–7. Cf. also DEUSE 1983, 222–4 and 227–9.

<sup>44</sup> See Aristotle, *De anima* 3.1 and cf. *De sensu* 7, *De memoria* 450a10, *De partibus animalium* 686a27–31. On the 'common sense' in Aristotle see P. GRIGORIC, *Aristotle on the Common Sense*. Oxford Aristotle Studies (Oxford 2007).

<sup>45</sup> See Aetius 4.21.1–4 (= part of SVF 2.836).

<sup>46</sup> See RUSSELL'S note above, p. 62, n. 48.

<sup>47</sup> See n. 12 above.

<sup>48</sup> See p. 101 above with n. 17.

taken up by both Plotinus and Porphyry.<sup>49</sup> We have seen that Porphyry at *Sent.* 16.8.2–3 Lamberz simply reiterates Aristotle’s view. Plotinus however presents a more complex position. In *Enn.* 4.3.30 he asks “But what is it that remembers thoughts?” and goes on to consider the implications of the Aristotelian position: “But if an image accompanies every intellectual act, perhaps if this image remains, being a kind of picture of the thought, in this way there would be memory of what was known; but if not, we must look for some other explanation.” He goes on to use the idea that there can be “a kind of picture of the thought” to develop his suggestion that there is a higher image-making power which reflects images that come from the realm of intellect. Plotinus believed that a part of our soul was always in the intelligible world and so does not fully accept Aristotle’s view, holding instead that “we are always intellectually active but do not always apprehend our activity”, i.e. we are capable of thinking without images, but such thinking is outside our normal consciousness.<sup>50</sup> Synesius appears to be picking up this aspect of Plotinus’ thought with the words “unless indeed some individual chances to make contact with an immaterial form” at 137C.

In the final pages of *De insomniis* Synesius returns to the idea that when we dream we are using *phantasia*. At 153D he notes that in dreams we believe whatever *phantasia* wants us to believe, echoing his earlier mention, at 146C, of our power to call up images at will in day-dreams.<sup>51</sup> When he says at 154A that in dreams “hatred and love rub off on our souls and persist into our waking life”, he uses the verb *ἐναπομόργνυσθαι* used by Porphyry in *Sent.* 29 of the souls in Hades whose astral bodies are imprinted with an image from *phantasia* which has ‘rubbed off’ onto them.<sup>52</sup> Despite the persistence of some philosophical ideas and vocabulary in this last part of the work, much of what Synesius has to say in praise of *phantasia* from 153C onwards is more reminiscent of the way in which writers and critics in the rhetorical tradition discuss *phantasia* in the sense of ‘visualisation’. Just as the author of *On the Sublime*, Quintilian and the author of the essay *On the life and poetry of Homer* drew attention to the emotional effects of successful visualisation, so Synesius at 154A stresses the strength of our emotional reactions to what we see in our dreams and the need to use the right words to convey such reactions. His characterization of “the goal of the study of eloquence” as “to put the hearer into the same emotional state and the same ways of thinking as the speaker” (*ἐν ταύτῳ πάθει καὶ ταῖς αὐταῖς ὑπολήψεσι καθιστάναι τὸν ἀκουστήν*) would fit

<sup>49</sup> See p. 100 above.

<sup>50</sup> Plotinus is quoted in the translation of A. H. Armstrong. Cf. also Plotinus, *Enn.* 4.8.8 and 1.4.9–10.

<sup>51</sup> Cf. p. 106 above.

<sup>52</sup> Cf. also the use of *ἐναπομόργνυσθαι* in Porphyry, *Ad Gaurum* 6.1.



very comfortably into a treatment of imaginative visualisation in rhetoric. He goes on to describe vividly the range of imaginative experiences possible in dreams. By 154D he is starting to make some explicit connections between dream experiences and rhetorical education, suggesting that the fable or μῦθος, in which animals can talk, derives from the experience of dreams,<sup>53</sup> and urging his readers to record their dreams not only in order to develop their power of prophecy but also to improve their writing style.

## 5. Conclusion

*Phantasia* plays a key role in *De insomniis* and it is not surprising that those who have studied the history of the concept have paid considerable attention to Synesius.<sup>54</sup> Yet his treatment is, as I have tried to show, both eclectic and syncretistic. If we look to Synesius for a clearly thought out philosophical account of the imagination we are going to be disappointed. In this essay I have related much of what Synesius has to say to earlier philosophical and rhetorical tradition, not so much in a spirit of *Quellenforschung* but rather in the belief that in order to understand the way in which Synesius talks about *phantasia* and the role it plays in *De insomniis*, we need to be aware of the different uses of the concept which he would have encountered in his reading or in his instruction by Hypatia. In philosophical tradition, from the time of Aristotle onwards, *phantasia* is the psychological boundary at which the rational and the irrational meet. It seems to have been the fascination, and the difficulty, of exploring that boundary which led Synesius to compose *De insomniis* and to devote so much attention to *phantasia*.

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<sup>53</sup> See RUSSELL'S note above, p. 68, n. 137.

<sup>54</sup> Cf. n. 5 above.

# Dream Divination and the Neoplatonic Search for Salvation

Sebastian Gertz

## 1. Synesius' *De insomniis* and the ascent of the soul

At the very beginning of his defense of the imagination and the 'imaginative faculty', Synesius introduces the theme of the soul's 'ascent' in a striking passage:

4.134D–135A: "It is rather when a dream opens the way to the most perfect vision of reality (εις τὰς τελεωτάτας τῶν ὄντων ἐποψίας) to a soul which has never thought this or contemplated the ascent (ἀναγωγή), that there occurs what must be the supreme experience of our world—that one who has gone so far astray as not to know whence he came should rise above Nature and be joined with the intelligible".

This remark and the context in which it occurs are of considerable importance for understanding the purpose of the *De insomniis* and the philosophical and religious commitments of its author. The following contribution will in large part be a commentary on the notion that dream divination can aid the soul's 'ascent', and aims to place it in relation to other Neoplatonic writers and the wider argument of Synesius' dream treatise.

The language of the above passage echoes that of the Greek mystery religions, but resembles more closely that of Plato and his later followers who freely use images of 'initiation' and 'rites' to express the idea of a vision of the highest reality.<sup>1</sup> Suggested here is that such a vision may exceptionally bless people who have "gone far astray", presumably in the sense that they have become oblivious of their soul's origin and become 'enchanted' by the material world.<sup>2</sup> This emphasis on the power of dreams to offer "the supreme experience" not only to the wise or initiated is, to the best of my knowledge, original to Synesius, and has been interpreted by some scholars as suggestive of an interest in the salvation of the many.<sup>3</sup> Rather

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<sup>1</sup> See, e.g., *Symp.* 209e and *Phdr.* 250b–e. The use of mystery language in Neoplatonic authors to express the contemplation of true being is common; cf. e.g. Hierocles, *In carm. aur.* 26.21.2–3 KÖHLER, who talks about "the dialectic vision of reality" (ἡ διαλεκτικὴ τῶν ὄντων ἐποπτεία).

<sup>2</sup> See also *De ins.* 8.139C–D (cf. γοητευθεῖσα [sc. ἡ ψυχή] δὲ ὑπὸ τῶν δόρων τῆς ὕλης) for this sense of going astray.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. VOLLENWEIDER 1985, 201–2: "Im Unterschied zu Porphyrios will Iamblich gerade auch in der Theurgie nicht einen Weg für die Vielen, sondern eine esoterische Disziplin

than focussing on the spiritual advancement of a small intellectual elite, the dream treatise emphasises the power of dreams to transform the lives of those who have not far advanced on the path of philosophy and virtue.<sup>4</sup>

In order to fully assess this claim, however, more needs to be said about the mechanism by which dreams become prophetic (see section 3 below), and Synesius' attitude towards other kinds of divination (section 4 below). For now, it is worth taking a closer look at how our author defends his views on the extraordinary power of dreams:

4.135A: "And if anyone believes that the ascent (*ἀναγωγὴ*) is indeed a great thing, but has no faith in the imagination, that this too is a means by which the blessed contact may sometimes be achieved, let him hear what the holy oracles say about the different roads".

After the whole list of resources for the ascent which we have in our possession, which makes it possible to develop the seed within us (*τὸ ἔνδοθεν σπέρμα*),<sup>5</sup> the oracle continues:

"To some he gave by teaching a token to grasp the light, others he impregnated with his strength even as they slept".<sup>6</sup>

It is at first sight surprising that the *Chaldean Oracles*, "the holy oracles" in the passage above, should be used to support the view that dreams can offer visions of reality to those who have wandered astray. Elsewhere, the Oracles sharply distinguish the practitioners of the Chaldean rites (the 'theurgists') from the herd that is bound to the realm of necessity and matter, which renders problematic Synesius' interpretation that the gods will inspire those in sleep who are neither philosophers nor initiated.<sup>7</sup> In his view, the oracle contrasts learning, which is taught by man, with the 'good fortune' (*εὐμοιρία*) that comes directly from God. Learning does not lead directly to its 'attainment' (*τὸ τυγχάνειν*), whereas both coincide in

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für eine Elite eröffnen. Davon hebt sich das christliche Interesse an einer möglichst all umgreifenden Heilsmittlung [...] deutlich ab. In dieses Suchen nach einem Weg für die Vielen dürften auch Synesios' *Dion* und Traumbuch, sein politisches und kirchliches Wirken einzuordnen sein".

<sup>4</sup> Contrast this with e.g. the Stoic view that only the wise man can be a true diviner; cf. *Cic. Div.* 1.121; 2.129.

<sup>5</sup> LEWY 1956, 203 n. 114 claims that the expression "developing the seed within us" corresponds to what Michael Psellus calls the 'strengthening' (*δυσάμωσις*) of the soul-vehicle through particular rites and sacrifices (*philos. min.* 2.1232.11–2). Either phrase seems to refer to the activity of preparing the pneumatic envelope for its celestial ascent. Note however that the oracle Synesius quotes makes no mention of ritual preparation. See also *Dion* 9.15–16 TERZAGHI / 1136C MIGNE, where the Chaldean language of "developing the internal seed" describes the exceptional contemplative achievements of the Egyptian Amos.

<sup>6</sup> FR. 118 DES PLACES: τοῖς δὲ (φησὶ) διδασκτὸν ἔδωκε φάους γνῶρισμα λαβέσθαι / τοῦς δὲ καὶ ὑπνῶντας ἔης ἐνεκάρπισεν ἀλκῆς.

<sup>7</sup> See e.g. frs. 153–4 DES PLACES.

God's act of 'impregnating'. Hence, this direct way of attaining knowledge through divine inspiration is more than teaching.<sup>8</sup>

The fact that there is no obvious opposition between the first and second sentence of the oracle quoted just above speaks against Synesius' reading: the two sentences are loosely joined together with *δέ και* in the second line, which need not signal anything more than a conjunction of two types of attaining knowledge. This latter way of reading the oracle is adopted by Hans Lewy, who argues that what is at stake is a tacit contrast between the theurgists, and the philosophers and visionaries taken together. Unlike the philosophers and visionaries, who receive their knowledge of God through either learning or an inspired vision in sleep, the theurgists can claim "to satisfy both the strivings of the thinkers and the aspirations of the believers".<sup>9</sup>

There is not enough context to decide whether Lewy's interpretation is correct or not: we cannot tell, for example, what else is included in "the whole list of resources for the ascent which we have in our possession" to which Synesius refers when he quotes the two verses. However, it is worth keeping in mind the possibility that Synesius is using the Oracles to suit his own argumentative purposes. As is clear from the way in which the quotation from the Oracles is introduced, Synesius responds to an imagined objector who thinks the 'ascent' is a worthy goal, but "has no faith in the imagination". The objector is presumably some Neoplatonic intellectualist hardliner who believes that the best way of ascending to the intelligible realm is via pure contemplation, which does not involve any kind of images.<sup>10</sup> A concern with the 'ascent' of the soul was shared by the au-

<sup>8</sup> Synesius' reading is followed e.g. by P. Thillet, who claims that the oracle "semble opposer le savoir acquis et la réaction intuitive, ou même instinctive, qu'inspire oniriquement une forme divine" (in: DES PLACES 1971, 142).

<sup>9</sup> LEWY 1956, 204. Other uses of the phrase 'with [or: by] his strength' in the Oracles suggest a form of inspiration given by a god that aids souls in separating themselves from matter (such 'strength' [*ἀλκίη*] is primarily a power to resist or defend oneself against danger, as in the German *Wehrkraft* or *Schutzwehr*; see LSJ A.II). See also LEWY 1956, 194 n. 67 for quotation of this phrase in Neoplatonic authors, and GEUDTNER 1971, 50–3 for *ἀλκίη* in the *Chaldean Oracles*. Synesius rightly points out that "impregnating with his strength" (cf. fr. 118.2 DES PLACES: *ἐῆς ἐνεκάρπισεν ἀλκίης*) has a stronger force than "learning", but his claim that during waking hours "the teacher is human" runs against the oracle's emphasis on god as the giver of the "token of the light", rather than the teacher.

<sup>10</sup> Such a view would contradict Aristotle's famous claim at *De anima* 3.8.432a that there are no thoughts without images (*φαντάσματα*). The superiority of thought (*νόησις*) over the imagination (*φαντασία*) was widely accepted by Neoplatonic authors, however: Plotinus discusses it at *Enn.* 4.4.13, Porphyry calls *phantasia* a 'veil' at *Sent.* 40.8, and Iamblichus treats the notion that "the imagination is never stirred up when the intellectual life is perfectly active" (tr. Clarke / Dillon / Hershbell; *Myst.* 10.2.8–9: *φαντασία δ' οὐδεμία ἐγείρεται τῆς νοεράς ζωῆς τελείως ἐνεργούσης*) as a matter of common agreement in his refutation of Porphyry's *Letter to Anebo*. See also A. SHEPPARD's discussion of *phantasia* in this volume, pp. 97–110.

thors of the *Chaldean Oracles* and Neoplatonists such as Plotinus, Porphyry and Iamblichus.<sup>11</sup> There is no evidence, however, that the *Chaldean Oracles* showed any particular interest in the role of *phantasia*. The thought behind Synesius' interpretation, that the two ways in which the divine can help human beings ascend (by teaching or by inspiration in sleep) would both require *phantasia* as a mediating faculty, is in any case natural, whether it was ever expressed in the Oracles themselves or not.

## 2. The ascent and the *pneuma*

For further confirmation that one of the key concerns in the dream treatise is the ascent of the soul, we can turn to a passage that concludes Synesius' defense of the 'imaginative substance'. In ch. 11 he states that his purpose in talking about dream divination was to encourage its practice because it is useful in life (143A). While he had earlier praised dreams for helping to reveal treasure, conspiracies or dormant talents (134D), it now transpires that the 'greater reward' of a healthy *pneuma*, i.e. one that is apt to receive clear images of the future, is nothing other than the 'ascent of the soul' (ἀναγωγὴ ψυχῆς). With the *pneuma*, Synesius is referring not to the rational soul, which is elsewhere in the dream treatise described as the 'first soul'.<sup>12</sup> It is rather the product of the material accretions that the rational soul gathers around herself during her descent into the material world via the heavenly spheres.<sup>13</sup> By a curious fusion of ideas, the kind of subtle body that is the *pneuma* becomes equivalent to a secondary kind of soul,

<sup>11</sup> The main evidence for the 'ascent' as the 'chief mystery' of the *Chaldean Oracles* has been collected in LEWY 1956, 487–9 (Excursus VIII). In Plato and Neoplatonic authors such as Plotinus, the 'ascent' is often used with reference to an intellectual process of purification (e.g. *Resp.* 7.533d; Plotinus, *Enn.* 1.3.1.5.18; 3.8.10.20; 4.9.4.2; 5.5.4.1; 5.7.1.2.) See also MAJERCİK 1989, 30–46 for detailed discussion.

<sup>12</sup> Cf. *De ins.* 4.134B; 7.138B.

<sup>13</sup> If the *pneuma* is acquired in when the rational soul descends, one might expect it to be 'shed' during the reverse process, the ascent. Yet the question of the *pneuma*'s immortality or otherwise was a controversial issue in Neoplatonism, and intimately tied up with the question whether the irrational soul, as the bearer of memories and individual personhood, has a share of immortality along with the rational soul. Synesius' position, which he presents as an interpretation of a *Chaldean Oracle* (fr. 158 DES PLACES) in ch. 9 of his dream treatise, is to give some form of immortality to the *pneuma*, provided that it is tied closely enough to the rational soul to be transformed and 'etherialized'. The circumspect language of the chapter (cf. 140D: καίτοι τι καὶ πλέον τις ἂν ἐν τούτοις ὀξυωπήσειεν and 141A: καὶ λόγον δ' ἂν ἔχοι) could be taken as evidence that Synesius knows he is treading new ground. However, there are strong reasons to believe that Synesius is not innovating here. Most importantly, Michael Psellus' exegesis of the Oracle supports Synesius' reading, and is likely to be reliable: instead of assimilating the Chaldean position to Christianity, Psellus opposes the two. He also distinguishes the Chaldean view, according to which the *eidolon* ascends εἰς τὸν ἐπέκεινα τῆς σελήνης τόπον, from the 'Hellenic [sc. pagan] doctrine' which has the irrational soul reach up to the sublunary elements only. See Psellus, *philos.*

which acts like a boat or a vehicle for the primary, rational soul when she descends into the world of generation, and which facilitates the rational soul's interaction with the material world.<sup>14</sup> As has been observed before, a whole range of vocabulary is used in the dream treatise to refer to the single reality that Synesius sometimes calls 'the imaginative *pneuma*' (τὸ φανταστικὸν πνεῦμα).<sup>15</sup>

Crucially, Synesius argues that the 'imaginative *pneuma*' can be rendered more or less capable of receiving prophecies in dreams through virtuous living. As he puts it, purifying the *pneuma*, is itself "a kind of exercise in piety" (μελέτη τις εὐσεβείας).<sup>16</sup> On the subject of how it is to be purified, the text offers two very different answers. In ch. 11, purification is described in terms of frugal living, choosing a "holy and unpretentious table" and a "pure and unpolluted bed" (143B). We find the same conception recurring in ch. 16, where philosophy and "a moderate, sober life-style" are said to purify the *pneuma*. Indulgence in bodily pleasures, on this account, creates a disturbance in the physical body, which can reach up to the *pneuma*.

Somewhat at odds with this ethical conception of purification stands ch. 6 (136D): here, we are told that the 'secret philosophy' (ἡ ἀπόρητος φιλοσοφία) together with purification by 'rites' (τελεταί) renders the *pneuma* 'filled with god' (ἔνθεος). Nothing more is said about what the 'secret philosophy' prescribes or which 'rites' are considered efficacious. Given the presence of Chaldean references throughout the work, however, it is reasonable to suppose that Synesius has some form of theurgic ritual in mind.<sup>17</sup> His reticence on this point may be influenced by legislation

*min.* 2.126.14–127.23 O'MEARA. For further discussion, see also BREGMAN 1982, 147–54. See also I. TANASEANU-DÖBLER's contribution in this volume, pp. 125–156.

<sup>14</sup> Cf. *De ins.* 6.137A: "In a word, the *pneuma* is a no man's land between the irrational and the rational" (ὄλως γὰρ τοῦτο μεταίχμιόν ἐστιν ἀλογίας καὶ λόγου, καὶ ἀσωμάτου καὶ σώματος, καὶ κοινὸς ὄρος ἀμφοῖν).

<sup>15</sup> *De ins.* 5.135D; 10.142A; 15.149C; 17.151C.

<sup>16</sup> *De ins.* 11.143A.

<sup>17</sup> The only other evidence internal to the *De insomniis* that could suggest a particular ritual can be found at 132B, where Synesius explains the Iynxes of the magi in the context of a larger discourse on cosmic *sympatheia*, without any apparent disapproval. An Iynx is a magical instrument (a rotating iron disk, most likely) used in love charms and probably also in Chaldean ritual (for a full discussion with references, see GEUDTNER 1971, 42–7, and D. RUSSELL'S n. 22 on 132B). Synesius' attitude to theurgy in the *De insomniis* is a matter of controversy. LANG 1926, 78, claims that "theurgische Machenschaften [...] dem Synesius im innersten Herzen zuwider [sind]"; similarly DI PASQUALE BARBANTI 1998, 181. For a different view, see AUJOULAT 2004, 228, who states that "il est hors de doute que Synésios, lorsqu'il parle des *teletai* de la philosophie, fait allusion à ces mystères néoplatoniciens où florissait la théurgie". The evidence from the text itself, particularly the reference to ἡ ἀπόρητος φιλοσοφία seems to go in favour of the latter view. The particular part of theurgy concerned with purifying the pneumatic vehicle is called 'telestic' by writers such as Hierocles of Alexandria (who calls the vehicle 'luminous body'; cf.

against theurgy and magic such as the edict of Theodosius, to which he refers at 133C.<sup>18</sup>

But whatever esoteric practices may be alluded to here, the main emphasis of the treatise is ethical. When elaborating on the ascent of the soul in ch. 11, it is virtuous living, not Chaldean rites, that set the dreamer on the path to union with god, such that “those who did not start out with this intention go on to love god and at some point to be united with Him” (143B). As a result of that union, the dreamer’s soul can rise above her earthly station and hand down images of what she sees to the living being:

11.143B–D: “The usefulness in this world of a soul united with God is not lessened by her having been judged worthy of contact with higher beings. For she does not thereby become inattentive to the living creature, and she sees the things below more clearly from her vantage point than if she were down among them and mingling with inferior things. Remaining herself at rest, she will give the living creature images of things that come to be (τὰ τῶν γινομένων ἰνδάλματα). That is what is meant by the saying ‘going down without going down’ (κατιόντα μὴ κατιέναι), when the superior takes care of the inferior while remaining independent of it”.

The underlying thought here is that in sleep, the soul can rise to having a god’s eye point of view of reality. The images that she hands over to the living creature are, presumably, images of the pure forms in Mind (*nous*). As Synesius explains elsewhere, Mind contains the forms of things that are, while Soul contains those of things that come to be.<sup>19</sup> When the soul rises to have contact with higher beings, who have knowledge of all that exists within themselves, she becomes herself able to view the principles of all things that come to be, and so gains knowledge of the future.<sup>20</sup> The paradoxical phrase “going down without going down”<sup>21</sup> in the above passage

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*In carm. aur.* 26.25.5: τελεστικὴν δὲ ἐνέργειαν λέγω τὴν τοῦ αὐγοειδοῦς καθαρκτικὴν δύναμιν). Relevant here is also Psellus’ comment that the Chaldeans believe we should strengthen the vehicle “through material rites” (*philos. min.* 2.132.12 Ο’ΜΕΑΡΑ: διὰ τῶν ὑλικῶν τελετῶν). For further discussion, see I. TANASEANU-DÖBLER’S contribution in this volume, pp. 150–155.

<sup>18</sup> See n. 33 ad loc.

<sup>19</sup> Cf. 134A: “Mind contains the forms of things that are, says ancient philosophy; we may add that Soul contains the forms of things that come to be” (νοῦς μὲν γὰρ ἔχει τὰ εἶδη τῶν ὄντων, ἀρχαία φιλοσοφία φησί. προσθειήμεν δ’ ἂν ἡμεῖς, ὅτι καὶ τῶν γινομένων ψυχῇ). For a similar distinction applied to dream divination, see also Iamblichus, *Myst.* 3.3.12–16: “Since Mind, then, contemplates reality, and the soul encompasses the principles of everything coming into existence, it is reasonable that it should know beforehand future things arranged according to their predominant principles and the first cause which encompasses them” (tr. Clarke / Dillon / Hershbell, slightly modified) (Ἐπειδὴ οὖν ὁ μὲν νοῦς τὰ ὄντα θεωρεῖ, λόγους δ’ ἡ ψυχὴ τῶν γινομένων ἐν αὐτῇ πάντων περιέχει, εἰκότως δὴ κατὰ τὴν περιέχουσαν αἰτίαν τασσόμενα ἐν τοῖς προηγουμένοις αὐτῶν λόγοις προγιγνώσκει τὰ μέλλοντα.)

<sup>20</sup> A view most clearly expressed by Iamblichus, *Myst.* 3.3.106–7.

<sup>21</sup> Cf. *Dion* 8.38–40: “Some part of us should indeed be concerned with things in this world; but this concern must not be excessive, so that it may not drag us down too far and take hold of us too much” (δεῖ γὰρ ἡμῶν εἶναι τι καὶ περὶ τὰ τηδε· μὴ μέντοι τοῦτο γε

encapsulates a principle of great importance in Plotinus' philosophy and that of subsequent Neoplatonists: the soul can care for the body without thereby becoming 'distracted' from her superior activity of contemplation. Conversely, the soul's ability to rise up to what is 'above' her does not come at the expense of her care for the living being.<sup>22</sup>

### 3. One or two theories of dreams?

But if, as we have seen, the beginning and end of Synesius' defense of 'the imaginative substance' are framed by references to the ascent of the soul, we are left with something of a puzzle. No great intellectual preparation seems to be required to encounter the divine in dreams, since some can make a spiritual ascent starting from little more than a moderate lifestyle, while others may be visited by the god in sleep even when they "have strayed far away". Is it possible, one may speculate, that Synesius saw in dream divination the promise of an alternative path to salvation, a kind of 'substitute theurgy', that would steer clear of the elitism of the philosophers and at the same time avoid the dubious practices of the magicians?

The search for a 'universal path to salvation' is a concern that we find formulated explicitly by Porphyry, and arguably one that was shared by the authors of the *Chaldean Oracles* and Iamblichus in his *De Mysteriis*. According to Augustine *De civ. D.* 10.32, Porphyry raised the issue of a *universalis via animae liberandae* at the end of the first book of his *De regressu animae*. Porphyry, according to Augustine's account, claimed that he was unable to find such a path in any system (*secta*) known to him, even in the truest philosophy (*verissima philosophia*). In all likelihood, there is much polemical, Christian colouring in this account of Porphyry's search for a *via universalis*, and one must take seriously the possibility that Augustine misrepresents Porphyry to suit his own rhetorical purposes.<sup>23</sup> Moreover, there is some uncertainty as to what exactly this path to salvation was meant to bring about. Was Porphyry searching for a way of salvation for both the higher and the lower part of the soul, or for a way of salvation for the whole

ἰσχυρόν, ἵνα μὴ πλέον καθέλκη, καὶ λῖαν ἀντιλαμβάνηται). See also the comments by SMITH 1974, 27.

<sup>22</sup> LANG 1926, 83 points out the possible relevance of Porphyry's doctrine that "it is not to be denied that a certain substance [...], while becoming one with another, can retain its own unity and moreover, while itself untransmuted, it can transmute those things into which it comes so that they gain its activity by its presence" (tr. R. Sharples / P. van der Eijk; *apud* Nemesius, *Nat. hom.* ch. 3 p. 43 MORANI: οὐκ ἀπογνωστότεον οὖν ἐνδέχεσθαι τινα οὐσίαν [...] ἐν τε οὖν ἄλλω γενομένην καὶ τὸ καθ' ἑαυτὴν ἐν διασφύζουσιν καὶ τὸ μείζον αὐτὴν μὲν μὴ τρεπομένην, τρέπουσαν δὲ ἐκεῖνα, ἐν οἷς ἂν γίγνηται, εἰς τὴν ἑαυτῆς ἐνέργειαν τῆ παρουσίᾳ). See also SUSANETTI 1992, 158–9 n. 104.

<sup>23</sup> For reasons to be skeptical about Augustine's report, see G. CLARK, "Augustine's Porphyry and the universal way of salvation", in: KARAMANOLIS / SHEPPARD 2007, 127–40.



of humanity, rather than a hieratic or philosophical elite? Both possibilities are compatible with each other, and it may well be, as Smith argues,<sup>24</sup> that Porphyry was dissatisfied with Chaldean theurgy because it only provided a universal way of liberating the lower part of the soul, while salvation for the higher part was the business of philosophy, and so of the few.<sup>25</sup>

Iamblichus, on the other hand, seems to have seen just such a universal path to salvation in theurgy, which for him encompassed not only the esoteric teachings of the Chaldeans, but also traditional Greek religious practices such as divination, sacrifice and ritual. Under the perspective of the theurgist, divination is compatible with an enlightened understanding of the gods as self-moving causes that cannot be manipulated at will.<sup>26</sup> Porphyry, in his *Letter to Anebo*, had contrasted the philosopher seeking to purify himself with the diviner, who relies on external, material things for his art. Iamblichus, on the other hand, in his *On the Mysteries*, offers a purified vision of the mantic arts whose prime objective is not foreknowledge as such but unification with the divine and participation in divine thought.<sup>27</sup> He explicitly denies that the efficacy of theurgical operations uniquely depends on any intellectual operation performed by the worshipper, since on such a view anyone philosophizing would be in a state of theurgic union with the gods, a conclusion he considers untenable.<sup>28</sup> Like the authors of the *Chaldean Oracles*, however, Iamblichus opines that "the great mass of men [...] is subject to the domination of nature, and is ruled by natural forces, and directs its gaze downwards towards the works of nature", while only a few individuals are capable of using "an intellectual power which is beyond the natural".<sup>29</sup> Yet theurgy can integrate the more mate-

<sup>24</sup> See SMITH 1974, 138.

<sup>25</sup> Note, however, that Eusebius preserves a passage from the beginning of Porphyry's *Philosophy from Oracles* where the Tyrian presents his collection of oracles as the only steadfast source for hopes of salvation (*Praep. evang.* 4.7). For an attempt to reconcile the reports of Augustine and Eusebius, see M. B. SIMMONS, "Porphyrian Universalism: A Tripartite Soteriology and Eusebius's Response", *Harvard Theological Review* 102 (2009) 169–92.

<sup>26</sup> Cf. e.g. *Myst.* 1.14 on 'the necessities of the gods' (θεῶν ἀνάγκαι).

<sup>27</sup> Cf. *Myst.* 10.4.1–4: "Only divine mantic prediction, therefore, conjoined with the gods, truly imparts to us a share in divine life, partaking as it does in the foreknowledge and the intellections of the gods, and render us, in truth, divine" (tr. Clarke / Dillon / Hershbell; Μόνη τοίνυν ἡ θεία μαντική συναπτομένη τοῖς θεοῖς ὡς ἀληθῶς ἡμῖν τῆς θείας ζωῆς μεταδίδωσι, τῆς τε προγνώσεως καὶ τῶν θεῶν νοήσεων μετέχουσα καὶ ἡμᾶς θεοῦς ὡς ἀληθῶς ἀπεργάζεται).

<sup>28</sup> Cf. *Myst.* 2.11.14–41, and the excellent discussion by A. SMITH, "Iamblichus, the first philosopher of religion?", *Habis* 31 (2000) 345–53.

<sup>29</sup> Cf. *Myst.* 5.18.1–4: ἡ πολλή μὲν ἀγέλη τῶν ἀνθρώπων ὑποτάσσεται ὑπὸ τὴν φύσιν, φυσικαῖς τε δυνάμεσι διοικεῖται, καὶ κάτω πρὸς τὰ τῆς φύσεως ἔργα βλέπει κτλ.; *ibid.*, 7–8: Ολίγοι δὲ τινες ὑπερφυεῖ δὴ τινι δυνάμει τοῦ νοῦ χρώμενοι, τῆς φύσεως μὲν ἀφιστάνονται κτλ. Iamblichus also identifies a middle group of men who in various modes follow both nature and Mind.

rial mode of worship of less enlightened men, and offer them some degree of conformity with higher powers.<sup>30</sup>

When we turn to look in more detail at the detailed theories of dreams in the *De insomniis* with this background in mind, there is much to suggest that Synesius shares a fundamentally elitist outlook with Porphyry and Iamblichus, which cannot easily be reconciled with his emphasis on the power of dreams to encourage moral and spiritual reform in the souls of ordinary dreamers. The basic division at work in the treatise is between two classes of dreams.<sup>31</sup> On the one hand, there are clear dreams that put us in touch with a divine reality: they are instrumental for the soul's purification and ascent, and generally preserved for the virtuous alone, although, as we have seen, they may exceptionally occur to others, too. Unclear and indistinct dream images, on the other hand, present themselves to the rest of mankind, who would consequently be excluded from divine company in sleep. Since the passage setting out this division is of some complexity, it is worth looking at it closely:

14.148D–15.149B: “For, when she [sc. the soul] is alone (μόνη γενομένη), she offers to those who have turned inwards both the forms (εἶδη) which she holds and everything that she receives from Mind; and she ferries over to them whatever comes to her from the divine (τὰ παρὰ τοῦ θεοῦ). For a cosmic god (θεὸς ἐγκόσμιος) associates with a soul in this condition, because that soul's nature comes from the same source.

These kinds of dreams are the more divine, and are, in all or almost all cases, plain and near, and not in need of art. But these will only occur to those who live according to virtue, whether this is acquired by wisdom or ingrained by habit (εἴτε φρονήσει περιορισμένην, εἴτ' ἔθεσιν ἐγγενομένην). They may occur to others, but hardly ever, and certainly a dream of the best type will never come to an ordinary individual for any trivial reason. The other type, numerous and most common is the enigmatic dream (τὸ ἠνιγμένον), to interpret which we need to acquire the art. For its origin, so to speak, was strange and weird, and coming from such beginnings it emerges as very obscure”.

The first theory presented here, which for brevity's sake one may call the ‘Platonic theory’, takes as its basic premise that the soul, when she is by herself and ignores the disturbing influence of the body, has a clear grasp of the unchangeable things that are akin to her. This doctrine, encapsulated in the succinct phrase (sc. ἡ ψυχὴ) μόνη γενομένη in the passage above, is famously elaborated by Socrates in Plato's *Phaedo*.<sup>32</sup> Synesius' more immediate source, however, may be Porphyry, who seems to have

<sup>30</sup> Cf. *Myst.* 5.23.1–9. See also G. SHAW, *Theurgy and the Soul. The Neoplatonism of Iamblichus* (University Park, PA 1971) 231–6, 240.

<sup>31</sup> Compared to other ancient classifications of dreams, Synesius' is remarkably simple. His clear and obscure dreams most closely correspond to Artemidorus' θεωρηματικοί and ἀλληγορικοί ὄνειροι. One is struck by Synesius' insistence that all dreams are predictive (cf. 13.147A: “all dreams pass through the gate of horn”); he consequently has no place for Artemidorus' non-predictive ἐνύπνια or φαντάσματα. A good overview of different dream classifications is provided by KESSELS 1969).

<sup>32</sup> *Phd.* 79c–d.

connected the notion of “the soul when she is by herself” (ἡ ψυχὴ καθ’ ἑαυτὴν γενέσθαι) both with dreams and the proper relation of soul to her superior hypostasis, Mind.<sup>33</sup> Clear dreams come about when the souls of those who live virtuously and have already shunned the unclear images of sense-perception turn to what is within themselves, i.e. the forms. The virtuous souls then ‘project’ (προβάλλει)<sup>34</sup> the most appropriate forms and reflect them in the imagination, to make them visible to the sleeper. Presumably, a clear vision of the forms will allow the sleeper to glimpse future events by apprehending the reason-principles in which the future is already contained as though in a seed.

When the soul is in such a state as to present the forms to the sleeper, she may, moreover, be joined by a cosmic god,<sup>35</sup> “whose nature has the same origin as the soul”. This cryptic remark requires some unpacking: it is not at all clear why the presence of a god over and above the presentation of forms to the sleeper will be required. The sentence introducing the cosmic god seems designed to explain further what preceded it (cf. συγγίνεται γὰρ), namely that the soul receives some sort of future knowledge from the divine (τὰ παρὰ τοῦ θεοῦ). Since both the soul and the cosmic god ‘have the same origin’, which can only mean that both come from the world soul, by a form of cosmic sympathy the two associate when the soul is in her pure state. Whether the kind of knowledge passed down by the god is similar to the knowledge the soul gains when she turns towards herself or different altogether is something Synesius does not tell us. One explanation for this obscure remark may simply be that the idea of dreams sent by the gods to special individuals was a traditional *topos* in ancient discussions of dreams, which is here rather unfortunately linked with the ‘Platonic’ theory, without apparently giving it any additional explanatory value.<sup>36</sup>

<sup>33</sup> Cf. Nemesius, *Nat. hom.* 3.40.15–16 MORANI: “in itself [the soul] is active in dreams, foretelling the future and associating with things intelligible” (tr. R. Sharples / P. van der Eijk) ([sc. τὴν ψυχὴν] καθ’ ἑαυτὴν ἐν τοῖς ὄνειροις ἐνεργεῖν θεσπιζουσαν τὸ μέλλον καὶ τοῖς νοητοῖς πλησιάζουσαν). Nemesius is probably giving Porphyry’s view here (cf. the reference to ἀσύγχυτος at 1.12, echoing an identifiably Porphyrian doctrine, quoted in n. 22 above). See also H. DÖRRIE, *Porphyrios’ Symmiktā Zetemata. Ihre Stellung in System und Geschichte des Neuplatonismus nebst einem Kommentar zu den Fragmenten*. Zetemata 20 (Munich 1959) 198–227 for a full commentary on this doctrine.

<sup>34</sup> Cf. *De ins.* 4.134B and note ad loc.

<sup>35</sup> See n. 25 ad loc.

<sup>36</sup> Iamblichus, on the other hand, carefully distinguishes (i) dreams that occur when the soul turns to the ideas within herself in sleep and recognizes the causes of things from (ii) dreams that arise as the result of the soul’s union with the world soul (τὰ ὅλα: lit. ‘wholes’ or ‘universals’, but it is likely that Iamblichus is referring to the world soul from which individual souls have become separated), and from (iii) dreams in which the soul is united to the divine itself. In the main, his threefold division of prophetic dreams is already present in Posidonius; cf. Cic. *Div.* 1.64 and Philo, *Somm.* 2.1. See also F. PFEFFER, *Studien zur Mantik in der Philosophie der Antike*. Beiträge zur klassischen Philologie 64 (Meisenheim am Glan

The clear dreams as described by this first, 'Platonic' theory, are ordinarily confined to virtuous dreamers, and will not come to any chance person nor for some insignificant purpose, as Synesius reminds us. By far the most common dreams, however, require a different explanation, which brings us to our second theory, which I shall call the 'Atomist' theory. According to this second theory, all things that exist send out material images (εἰδῶλα), which the 'imaginative soul' is apt to receive.<sup>37</sup> The images of the future are mere 'harbingers' (προκυλινδήματα) of things that are not present, and hence accordingly weak and obscure. Moreover, since the disturbances in the physical body caused by desires cloud the *pneuma*, the visions that it produces on encountering images from the future need hard work to be interpreted.<sup>38</sup>

So much, then, for the second, 'Atomist' theory of dreams in the *De insomniis*. There is no doubt that having dreams of the clear, 'Platonic' kind is preferable, and Synesius explicitly exhorts his readers to shun unclear dreams by becoming virtuous and wise. At 16.150A, for example, he contrasts receiving 'indistinct images' (ἀόριστα εἰδῶλα) with placing the *pneuma* under the supervision of God and Mind. Both theories rely on the activity of the imagination; but in the case of the Platonic theory, the initiative for clear dreams originates within the soul or an encosmic god, whereas in the case of the Atomist theory, material objects emit images received by the *pneuma*. Does it follow, then, that the clarity of dreams proceeds in degrees on a single scale, with the vision of forms at the highest point and the unclear images at the bottom, or does Synesius have different theories for clear and unclear dreams? The answer to this question has an immediate bearing on the question of how dreams can contribute to the soul's ascent: is it a gradual process, or is there some more profound gulf that separates the virtuous from the non-virtuous, philosophers from non-philosophers?

One might think of the *pneuma* as ascending and descending depending on its purity, and encountering clear images at the highest points of its ascent (those described by the Platonic theory), or descending to the phantom images of future events that seem to be described by the Atomist

1976) 139–141. Scholars have suspected the influence of Iamblichus behind Synesius' theory of dream divination in the present passage, but without conclusive philological proof. Cf. ATHANASSIADI 1993, 130; DI PASQUALE BARBANTI 1998, 180. See also n. 19 above.

<sup>37</sup> A version of this theory is discussed by Cic. *Div.* 2.137–9, who attributes it to Democritus; cf. 2.137: 'A corporibus' enim solidis et a certis figuris vult [sc. Democritus] fluere 'imagines'. That the pneumatic soul is receptive of material εἰδῶλα is also the view of Porphyry, *apud* Augustine *De civ. D.* 10.9: hanc artem [sc. theurgian] [...] utilem dicit esse mundandae parti animae [...] spiritali, qua corporalium rerum capiuntur imagines.

<sup>38</sup> Cf. *De ins.* 9.141D; 16.150B.

theory.<sup>39</sup> The images streamed off by the forms would, on this scenario, have a different origin from the images streamed off by material objects, but the account of how each type of dreams comes about would be the same.<sup>40</sup> A problem with this construal, however, is that very little in the text suggests that either the forms which the soul contains within herself or those that come from Mind somehow send forth clear images. In the central passage that distinguishes the two kinds of dreams (quoted above, p. 119), it is principally the soul's own activity of turning to the forms within herself that accounts for clear dreams of the future, with no mention of 'images': the enigmatic dream (τὸ ἠνιγμένον), i.e. the dream that comes about according to the 'Atomist' theory, "has a strange and weird origin, so to speak" (γένεσίν τε γὰρ ἔσχεν, ὡς οὕτως εἰπεῖν, ἄτοπον καὶ ἀλλόκοτον). Only on one occasion does Synesius suggest that the soul gives "images of things that come to be" (τὰ τῶν γινομένων ἰνδάματα) to the living creature (143B; quoted above, p. 116).

#### 4. A universal path to salvation?

What can be concluded from this brief examination of Synesius' distinction between the two kinds of dreams, then, is this: throughout the *De insomniis*, the distinction between the philosophers and non-philosophers, and between clear and unclear dreams, is sharply maintained. The belief that wise men have clearer dreams is, of course, widely present throughout the ancient philosophical writings, and it is not surprising to find it in Synesius.<sup>41</sup> The traditional elitism of his division of dreams, however, sits uncomfortably with passages that might be taken to suggest he is advocating dream divination because it provides a path towards moral and spiritual reform available not only to philosophers but also to the wider masses.

Key texts to consider with this problem in mind are chs. 5 and 12 of the *De insomniis*, where the contrast between oneiromancy and other kinds of divination is developed most fully. In ch. 5, Synesius defends the value of the imagination against professional diviners, who "despise dreams as too accessible a thing, in which the ignorant and wise have equal privileges" (135C–D). To strengthen his critique of professional diviners, he

<sup>39</sup> The view that the difference between clear and unclear dreams is one of degrees is taken by C. A. BEHR, *Aelius Aristides and the Sacred Tales* (Amsterdam 1968) 174 n. 10 and FITZGERALD 1930, 83.

<sup>40</sup> An interpretation favoured by M. HOLOWCHAK, *Ancient Science and Dreams. Oneirology in Greco-Roman Antiquity* (Lanham et al. 2002) 115–6.

<sup>41</sup> The principle that "the better men are, the better are their dreams" is expressed in the Aristotelian *Problemata* (30.957a), and may also underlie *Resp.* 9.571d–572b, where Plato writes that the man whose condition is "healthy and sober" (not just anyone) may gain future knowledge in sleep.

cites one line from the *Chaldean Oracles* (fr. 107 DES PLACES): “Not <truthful are> the dissections of sacrifices and entrails: they are all playthings”. In the oracle, which is preserved more fully in Michael Psellus, a number of mantic arts, including astrology, ornithomancy and haruspicy, are rejected because they presuppose an anthropocentric<sup>42</sup> view of the world and do not lead the soul beyond the realm of necessity and fate nor offer a path to the Chaldean “sacred paradise of piety”.<sup>43</sup> The fact that Synesius is quoting from the *Chaldean Oracles* here is by no means a coincidence: while the Oracles denigrate the arts of traditional, ‘technical’ mantics in order to propagate their own path to salvation, namely theurgy, Synesius, on his part, attacks the elaborate practices of diviners in order to give rhetorical force to his praise of dreams as a universally accessible path to the divine.<sup>44</sup> This observation is supported by much of what is said about dream divination in ch. 12 of the treatise. Dreams visit everyone, regardless of their wealth, and do not require the expensive and rare ritual tokens used in ‘external divination’, such as the Cretan plant, the Egyptian bird, or the Iberian bone (9–10). Not only is the equipment needed for ‘external divination’ hard to come by and difficult to put into place, the very methods it involves are also “hateful to god”. Since the lawgiver does not allow us to impose our will on others by force so much more is it disgraceful to employ “pressures and levers” to manipulate the divine.<sup>45</sup> Singled out for praise is the “democratic nature” of the dream, its “universal availability”, and its inclusivity which leaves out no “gender, age fortune or skill” (ch. 13.145D).

But while Synesius is emphatic that dream divination is universally available and, in its highest manifestation, capable of connecting the soul of the dreamer with the divine in sleep, the *De insomniis* leaves no doubt that the great mass of mankind will not be recipients of clear dreams. Dream divination, then, does not offer the promise of the soul’s ascent for everyone, and in that sense it does not offer the “universal path to salvation” that Porphyry was seeking. At best, engagement with one’s dreams may encourage a virtuous lifestyle; for higher visions of reality, however, ‘in-

<sup>42</sup> Cf. 1.4: οὐχ ἔνεκεν σοῦ and 1.6: σέθεν χάριν οὐκ.

<sup>43</sup> Cf. LEWY 1956, 255–7 and MAJERCIK 1989, 182 for further discussion of this oracle.

<sup>44</sup> See also *De ins.* 12.143D–144A: “And if you are receptive, the distant god is close at hand, even when people have taken no trouble, he is there every time, if they simply go to sleep” (κὰν ἐπιτήδειος ἦς, πάρεστιν ὁ πόρω θεός, ὅτε γε καὶ μὴδὲ ταῦτα πραγματευσαμένοις ἐκάστοτε παραγίνεται μόνον καταδαρθούσι). Note, however, that the rather vague condition κὰν ἐπιτήδειος ἦς could in principle be more restrictive than the context of the passage would otherwise suggest.

<sup>45</sup> See also *Ep.* 67, to Theophilus, lines 194–7, where Synesius argues that it does not belong to Christian belief to think “that the divine follows these material rites and invocations by necessity, as though drawn by natural forces” (ὡς ἐπάναγκες εἶναι ταῖς τελεστικαῖς ὕλαις τε καὶ φωναῖς ὡσπερ ὀλκαῖς τισὶ φυσικαῖς ἀκολουθῆσαι τὸ θεῖον). Cf. n. 17 above.

tellectual application' (νοερά ἐπιβολή) and philosophy are needed.<sup>46</sup> The moral and intellectual ideas of the dream treatise recur in much the same terms in Synesius' *Dion*, where different approaches to the soul's ascent are discussed more extensively. The Greek ideal, we are told in the *Dion*, is one of gradual progress towards the sacred goal of contemplation, with reason paving the way for ecstasy and receiving the visionary on his return.<sup>47</sup> In the *De insomniis* as in the *Dion*, Synesius is thus committed to what is in essence a Plotinian vision of the purification of the soul and her return to the divine:

"And indeed, one may benefit from the virtues in becoming freed from the inclination towards matter. But an upward inclination is also needed: for it is not enough not to be evil, one must even be a god. And it seems that in the first case this consists in turning away from the body and all that pertains to it; and in the second it consists in turning to god through intellect".<sup>48</sup>

As we have seen, the desire for prophecy in dreams may encourage a pure way of living and the cultivation of the intellect through philosophy. In virtue of their ability to contribute to the pursuit of a greater goal, dreams have a role to play in Synesius' Neoplatonic search for salvation. They do not provide a shortcut.

<sup>46</sup> Cf. 10.142C for 'intellectual application' and 16.150A–B for philosophy as the best 'nurture' for the *pneuma*.

<sup>47</sup> Cf. *Dion* 8.11–39 TERZAGHI.

<sup>48</sup> *Dion* 9.68–72 TERZAGHI: καὶ δῆτα τῶν ἀρετῶν ὄναιτο ἄν τις τὸ ἀπηλλάχθαι τῆς ὑλικῆς προσπαθείας· δεῖ δὲ καὶ ἀναγωγῆς· οὐ γὰρ ἀπόχρη μὴ κακὸν εἶναι, ἀλλὰ δεῖ καὶ θεὸν εἶναι. καὶ ἔοικεν εἶναι τὸ μὲν οἶον ἀπεστράφθαι τὸ σῶμα καὶ ὅσα τοῦ σώματος, τὸ δὲ οἶον ἐπεστράφθαι διὰ νοῦ πρὸς θεόν.

# Synesius and the Pneumatic Vehicle of the Soul in Early Neoplatonism\*

*Ilinca Tanaseanu-Döbler*

## 1. Introduction

For the modern reader, one of the striking *philosophoumena* of *De insomniis* is Synesius' discussion of the soul's pneumatic vehicle, an astral body enveloping the soul and playing an important role in its cosmic movements.<sup>1</sup> This paper will attempt to contextualise Synesius' conception in the world of late antique Platonism.

The motif of the soul's 'vehicle' can be traced back to Plato. In the *Timaeus*, the demiurge assigns stars to the souls as if they were 'vehicles'.<sup>2</sup> The powerful image of the chariot in the *Phaedrus* myth conveys a closely related idea. The *pneuma* as the substrate of the lower, irrational parts of the soul, comparable in its fine substance to the "element of the stars", is

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<sup>1</sup> Most modern readers associate this idea probably with its late reception in theosophy (see already the disdainful remark of DODDS 1963 ["Appendix II: The Astral Body in Neoplatonism"] 313) and, later, the New Age. For a modern analysis of its role in the power struggle of the theosophical movement see J. Crow, "Taming the Astral Body. The Theosophical Society's Ongoing Problem of Emotion and Control", *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 80 (2012) 691–717.

<sup>2</sup> *Ti.* 41d–e: συστήσας δὲ τὸ πᾶν διεΐλεν ψυχὰς ἰσαριθμούς τοῖς ἀστροῖς, ἐνεμῆεν ὅτι ἐκάστην πρὸς ἕκαστον, καὶ ἐμβιβάσας ὡς ἐς ὄχημα τὴν τοῦ παντός φύσιν ἐδειξεν... ("When he had assembled the universe, he divided up as many souls as there were stars and assigned each soul to each star, and embarking them upon [the stars] as if on a vehicle, he showed them the nature of the universe..."). In turn, the mortal body is also represented as the 'vehicle' of the soul, and the conjunction between the two is made possible by the lower, mortal part of the soul created by the young gods: *Ti.* 69c–d: τὸ μετὰ τοῦτο θνητὸν σῶμα αὐτῆ περιετόρνευσαν ὄχημά τε πᾶν τὸ σῶμα ἔδωσαν ἄλλο τε εἶδος ἐν αὐτῷ ψυχῆς προσφικοδόμουσαν τὸ θνητόν, δεινὰ καὶ ἀναγκαῖα ἐν ἑαυτῷ παθήματα ἔχον... ("And afterwards they fashioned a mortal body around it and gave it the whole body as a vehicle and constructed in addition another, the mortal, form of soul in it, bearing terrible and necessary passions in itself..."). *Phaedrus* 246a; the chariot is termed ὄχημα in 247b.



found in Aristotle.<sup>3</sup> According to Di Pasquale Barbanti, these two philosophical complexes were enriched by subsequent philosophical developments and eventually blended in the Imperial period to crystallise into the idea of a pneumatic vehicle of the soul, which forms a standard item of post-Plotinian Neoplatonism.<sup>4</sup> A key text in this process are the so-called *Chaldean Oracles*, a collection of theological oracles<sup>5</sup> dating from the later second century A.D., which also contain the image of the soul's vehicle. Elevating an essentially Middle Platonic worldview seasoned with Stoic elements to the status of divine revelation, they come to be regarded after Plotinus as the guarantor of the truth of Platonic philosophy.<sup>6</sup> With the reception of the *Oracles* and their terminology by Porphyry, the Neoplatonic theory of the soul's vehicle takes on a distinct profile which will set the framework for the subsequent philosophical discourse up to the last pagan Neoplatonists.

In this paper I will focus mostly on this Neoplatonic background which Synesius shares, without going into the details of earlier philosophy. I will

<sup>3</sup> Of special importance *De generatione animalium* 736b–737a: the *pneuma's* nature is ἀνάλογον (...) τῷ τῶν ἀστέρων στοιχείῳ (“analogous [...] to the element of the stars”). For the Platonic and Aristotelian elements of the theory see already KISSLING 1922, 318–20 as well as the general accounts of the doctrine in DI PASQUALE BARBANTI 1998 or TOULOUSE 2001.

<sup>4</sup> For accounts of the history and variants of this Neoplatonic doctrine see e.g. KISSLING 1922, DODDS 1963, from recent scholarship e.g. DI PASQUALE BARBANTI 1998, who traces also its pre-history (esp. 21–50); for the blending of vehicle and *pneuma* in Imperial times see 42–50, where Plutarch, Marcus Aurelius as well as Gnostic and Hermetic texts and the *Chaldean Oracles* are discussed. However, her overall thesis that the emergence and development of the doctrine of a pneumatic vehicle should be connected with the reception of theurgy as a non-philosophical cult into Neoplatonism and a heightened interest for religion, mysticism and magic, rests on a problematic perception of theurgy as fundamentally non-philosophical and extraneous to Neoplatonism. Her very useful collection and presentation of the material is now supplemented by the comprehensive study of the Neoplatonic idea and its pre-history by TOULOUSE 2001. In his article “Le véhicule de l'âme chez Galien et le pseudo-Plutarque. Les linéaments physiologiques et eschatologiques d'une doctrine d'un corps intermédiaire”, *Philosophie antique* 2 (2002) 145–68, S. TOULOUSE claims to find in Galen and Ps.-Plutarch the first philosophical articulations of a doctrine which is “encore en gestation dans le platonisme imperial” (145). See also AUJOUAT 1983/84 and 1988, who highlights especially the Stoic component of the picture. Recent scholarship has the merit to trace diachronic evolution of the theories of the pneumatic vehicle, refining the earlier overall descriptions e.g. of KISSLING 1922 or DODDS 1963. The attempt of Bos 2007 to argue that the doctrine of a luminous *pneuma* as the vehicle of the soul, mediating its relationship to the body might be early and have originated with Aristotle himself, is based on weak arguments and has not found echo in scholarship. A collection of source texts on the vehicle from Plato to late antique authors can be found in SORABJI 2004, 1.221–41.

<sup>5</sup> The term “theological oracles” was coined by A. D. Nock, “Oracles théologiques”, *Revue des études anciennes* 30 (1928) 280–90 to denote the Imperial and late antique phenomenon of oracles which address theological and cultic issues.

<sup>6</sup> For an overview of the *Oracles'* worldview see MAJERCIK 1989, 5–25. The present state of the art on the *Oracles* is reflected in SENG / TARDIEU 2010.

first sketch the main lines and metaphors of his conception of the soul's vehicle, and then in a second step compare them with key texts which have shaped the corresponding Neoplatonic discourse.<sup>7</sup>

## 2. The *pneuma* in Synesius: The no man's land between soul and body

*De insomniis* is the primary text in which Synesius develops his conception of the *pneuma*. Presented as an "offering of thanks to the phantastic nature" in the letter 154 to Hypatia, the treatise is endowed with the aura of divine inspiration: it has allegedly been written feverishly, almost automatically, in the brief remainder of a single night, without pausing to reflect.<sup>8</sup> In the *protheoria* of the treatise, Synesius styles himself as a true Platonic philosopher skilfully disguising his actual subject with pleasant trappings to protect the truth from the grasp of the uninitiated.<sup>9</sup> What he actually does is to encase the disquisition on the imaginative nature (his main theme according to the letter 154) in a praise of dream divination. The treatise may be read as a sort of *Ringkomposition*, in which the praise of divination leads gradually in chapters 4–6 to the *phantasia* and its ontological substrate, the *pneuma*, whose nature, origin and connection with the soul are discussed

<sup>7</sup> An early thorough discussion of *De ins.* and the *pneuma-ochema* can be found beside KISSLING 1922 in the still valuable commentary of LANG 1926, who emphasises the "maßgebende(n) Einfluß des Porphyri auf das philosophische Denken des Synesius" and downplays completely the possibility of Iamblican influence (81). Although Porphyry is certainly the most important author in Synesius' background, this exclusion of other influences runs the risk of over-emphasising supposed borders between 'Porphyrians' and 'Iamblicans' and of reading Synesius exclusively in terms of Porphyrian reception. An example for this is TOULOUSE 2001, who reads Synesius as a quarry of Porphyrian material and Hierocles as the corresponding Iamblican pendant. This perspective blinds us to the flexibility of Neoplatonism: even such minor figures combine various tenets to create their own synthesis. DI PASQUALE BARBANTI 1998, 157–86 rightly extends her perspective to consider also the possibility of Iamblican influence (e.g. 167). AUJOULAT (e.g. 2004), while noting the Porphyrian colouring, points out the Stoic elements and highlights Synesius' idiosyncratic literary play with his sources. At the other extreme of the spectrum is BERGEMANN 2006, 391–406, who includes passages from *De ins.* into his analysis of the Iamblican vehicle and reads them only in this light, without pausing to consider the Porphyrian influence.

<sup>8</sup> Another example for such feverish, inspired writing would be Julian, *In matrem deorum* 19.178d–179a ("short part of the night") or *In solem regem* 44.157c ("three nights"); for a contextualisation of Synesius' claim see AUJOULAT 2004, 195–6: Synesius wants to point out the special, esoteric character of his treatise.

<sup>9</sup> This is Synesius' philosophical ideal: an esoteric approach reserving philosophy proper for the select few who have undergone a long educational process of training and purification, while employing pleasant myths to please the common herd (see at length his *Dion* 5–6.43A–44D, written together with *De insomniis* to defend himself from the charge of being a mere rhetorician, his famous *ep.* 105 or *ep.* 137 and 142–3). Cf. SUSANETTI 1992, 91–2 for parallels. See also the Introduction to this volume, pp. 4–5.

in 7–10, before Synesius then begins his return to the topic of dreams in 11, devoting the remaining chapters of the treatise to it and scattering references to the pneumatic soul throughout them as well.<sup>10</sup> Apart from this showpiece of ‘Platonic’ philosophy in action, the *pneuma* is only mentioned en passant in two verses of his hymns and does not play any major role in his oeuvre.<sup>11</sup> Synesius, the cultured gentleman and lay philosopher, poses in *De insomniis* as an expert on specialised philosophical issues, against opponents endorsing another form of pagan Neoplatonism who seem to have accused him of not being a true philosopher, but simply a man of letters, as we learn from the letter 154 to Hypatia.<sup>12</sup> The *Dion* and *De insomniis* are intended as his double apology: while in the former Synesius justifies his literary pursuits and integrates them into a Hellenic philosophical ideal, in the latter he may have wanted to prove his superiority even to Dio of Prusa, who in his view had no grasp of specialised philosophy,<sup>13</sup> by showing his own ability to master this field as well.<sup>14</sup>

Synesius’ conception of the *pneuma* is essentially that of an intermediary substance between the soul and the material body: a “no man’s land between the irrational and the rational, between the incorporeal and corporeal”.<sup>15</sup> As the “first body of the soul”, it mediates also between the intellectual activity of the soul and the senses of the body as the κοινότατον

<sup>10</sup> For a close reading of the treatise with a focus on theurgy see TANASEANU-DÖBLER 2013a, 205–21. A more pointed view of the actual secret which Synesius strives to convey is seen by LACOMBRADÉ 1951, 160–9, esp. 161, in the tentative proposal that material elements acquired by the *pneuma* can be raised above their original sphere into the aetheral world – which in his view would amount to a survival of the individual personality comparable to Christian ideas of resurrection. Rightly criticised by VOLLENWEIDER 1985, 184–7, Lacombrade’s view of Synesius’ aim is accepted, with modifications, by BREGMAN 1982, 147–54 and also AUJOULAT 2004, 237–49, who, however, note Synesius’ ambiguity and lacunae: what is the use of a survival and aetherisation of material elements post-mortem if the actual soul detaches itself from them? (AUJOULAT 2004, 248–9). Vollenweider’s suggestion that Synesius saw his contribution in the idea that the soul contains in itself the forms of becoming as the intellect contains those of being (186–7) does not convince, because a similar idea can already be found in Iamblichus’ discussion of divination in *De mysteriis* 3.3 (see also n. 34 to the Translation). See also Julian, *In matrem deorum* 4.163–4, which contains a discussion of the forms existing in the soul that is close to Synesius’ remark.

<sup>11</sup> *Hymn* 1.548–9 and 2.278–9; see DI PASQUALE BARBANTI 1998, 159, who points out that the two instances are variations of *Ch.Or.* fr. 104. See also GRUBER / STROHM 1990, 142: “Die Junktur πνεύμα μολύνει entstammt der Sprache der chaldäischen Orakel (...)”.

<sup>12</sup> On this issue and the possible identifications of the opponents see the various proposals of LACOMBRADÉ 1951, 139–40, BREGMAN 1982, 130–2 of VOLLENWEIDER 1985, 19–20.

<sup>13</sup> *Dion* 37D.

<sup>14</sup> The *Dion* and the *De insomniis* are seen by AUJOULAT 2004, 196–9, as a carefully composed diptych; not implausibly, he claims that “(l)es révélations voilées du *De insomniis* viendraient ainsi couronner et sanctionner l’exhortation à l’étude des belles-lettres et de la philosophie du *Dion*” (199).

<sup>15</sup> *De ins.* 6.137A: μεταίχμιον (...) ἀλογίας και λόγου, και ἀσωμάτου και σώματος; transl. Russell.

αἰσθητήριον (“the most common organ of sense”), a basic and perfect organ of perception. In order to illustrate the relationship between the “imaginative *pneuma*” (φανταστικὸν πνεῦμα) and the single individual acts of sense perception Synesius uses the Plotinian metaphors of centre and radii, and of the root of a plant.<sup>16</sup> The *pneuma* itself employs the single senses but perceives as a whole, in a unitary manner. Its intermediarity is emphasised *inter alia* by the shifting terminology: with respect to the material body it can be designated either as the “first body” (135D) or “divine body” (140D); the material body being either the ἔσχατον σῶμα (“the last [i.e. external] body”) (150B or 151B) or, in Platonic terms the “envelope like an oyster-shell” (137A).<sup>17</sup> But the *pneuma* can also be seen as a kind of soul: it is called the πνευματικὴ ψυχὴ (“pneumatic soul”) (137D),<sup>18</sup> which accordingly makes the soul proper a “first soul” (138B).

This intermediary is a useful philosophical asset enabling Synesius to explain not only the workings of the *phantasia* (on which see the essay of Anne Sheppard in this volume)<sup>19</sup> or the varying degree of truth or clarity of predictions arising from dream divination (e.g. 6.136C–D or 10.141D–142B) but also how “the divine entities are conjoined with the last extremes” (6.137A). It is employed also to elucidate Platonic *philosophoumena* which seem to imply a materiality of the soul, e.g. spatial movement in the cosmos, or the experience of purification and punishment, both of which are key elements of the Platonic and Plutarchean myths. Just like in the *Timaeus* or the *Republic*, the soul’s first descent into matter is an obligation: it must perform a public duty (λειτουργία) to the cosmos. Using a Chaldean image, Synesius presents the soul on its first

<sup>16</sup> Metaphors which Plotinus had employed for describing the relationship between the One and the lower hypostases and forms of reality, and which Synesius otherwise also uses in a metaphysical, not psychological context (e.g. *Hymn* 1.153, 1.173, 1.184 or 5.69 for the root, and 1.151, 5.70 or 9.69–70 for the centre, with GRUBER / STROHM 1990, 151 and 152, who list the corresponding parallels). Synesius obviously feels free to employ these metaphors at will, not restricted to a specific aspect of philosophical discourse.

<sup>17</sup> *Phaedrus* 250c.

<sup>18</sup> Synesius takes this term from Porphyry, who employs the term in his *De regressu animae* (translated in Augustine’s *De civitate dei* as *anima spiritalis*): fr. 287F, 288aF, 289bF, 290F, 292aF, 293aF SMITH. In Augustine’s paraphrase, Porphyry is said to oppose to the *anima spiritalis* an *anima intellectualis* (290bF and 290cF SMITH). See SMITH 1974, 155–6, who draws the line from Porphyry’s “confusing theory” to Synesius. DEUSE 1983, 224–7 attempts to salvage Porphyry’s philosophical reputation and to keep *pneuma* and irrational soul in Porphyry apart, by locating Porphyry’s “pneumatic soul” within his discussion of theurgic purification: the two would there be blended because the purification of the *pneuma* directly affects the irrational soul. In his view, Synesius would go a step further in equating irrational soul, *pneuma* and *phantasia* under the influence of Iamblichus or Athenian Neoplatonism (227–9).

<sup>19</sup> SMITH 1974, 155–6 plausibly ascribed to Porphyry the connection and identification of the pneumatic soul with *phantasia*.

mission as a free hireling, sent to serve, but autonomous.<sup>20</sup> The soul's "first body", or its "first and proper vehicle" is borrowed from the astral spheres during the soul's first descent: the soul climbs into it as if it were a boat (σκάφος) to encounter the corporeal world. Synesius' wording, the 'borrowing' (δανείζειν) of a substance which eventually must be given back, echoes the creation of the human bodies by the younger gods in the *Timaeus*;<sup>21</sup> we shall examine below the sources of his doctrine.

Once in the world, the greatest peril awaiting the soul is the contact with matter, which beguiles it with its false pleasures, ensnaring it, so that it gives up its freedom willingly and becomes a slave. The soul must strive to remain aware of the true hierarchy of values and to reascend, returning the borrowed *pneuma* to the spheres as far as possible, raising it above the reach of nature, φύσις, which is presented as the concentration of vital force and thus as the main actor and driving force of the material world. The conjunction (*syndyasmos*) of soul and body by means of the *pneuma* proves extremely dangerous: taking up the image of the material world as a flood, Synesius retains that "even the intellect (νοῦς) might be submerged in pleasure" – which *stricto sensu* is a contradiction in terms, given the fact that the Neoplatonic intellect is above the reach of passions, which might affect the soul at the utmost (as he himself says in *De ins.* 3.133B). But this forceful image drastically expresses the precarious position of the soul in the material world. Here, Synesius appears not to subscribe to the theory championed by Plotinus and Porphyry that the highest part of the soul never descends but remains above the reach of matter and generation; rather, he is much closer to the Iamblichean emphasis on the complete de-

<sup>20</sup> Cf. *De ins.* 8.139C: θῆσσα γὰρ κατιούσα τὸν πρῶτον βίον ἐθελοντὴν ἀντὶ τοῦ θητεῦσαι δουλεύει ἀλλὰ ἐκεῖνο μὲν ἦν λειτουργίαν τιὰ ἐκπλήσαι τῇ φύσει τοῦ κόσμου, θεσμῶν Ἀδραστείας ἐπιταττόντων... ("Descending as a hireling for its first life, of its own accord it serves as a slave instead of working as a hireling; the first instance [sc. of these two], however, was to perform a public office for the nature of the cosmos, as ordained by the laws of Adrasteia..."). Synesius weaves together *Ch.Or.* fr. 99 and 110 with the world of the Platonic myths: the human souls which are produced and sown throughout the cosmos to contribute to its perfection (*Ti.* 41b–c), whose descent takes place according to νόμοι εἰμαρμένοι (*Ti.* 41e) as well as the "ordinance of Adrasteia" (Ἀδραστείας θεσμός) in *Phaedrus* 248c, which establishes the conditions of embodiment for the human souls depending on the extent of their supracelestial vision (see also SUSANETTI 1992, 143–4 and SENG 1996, 158). This last allusion is mostly a literary one, not endorsing the full actual outline of the 'ordinance' in the *Phaedrus*: there, incarnation is exclusively the consequence of the loss of feathers, while Synesius here emphasises that the first incarnation is a duty which every soul has to perform in the cosmos, along the lines of the *Timaeus*.

<sup>21</sup> *Timaeus* 42e–43a: μιμούμενοι τὸν σφέτερον δημιουργόν, πυρὸς καὶ γῆς ὕδατός τε καὶ ἀέρος ἀπὸ τοῦ κόσμου δανειζόμενοι μόρια ὡς ἀποδοθησόμενα πάλιν... ("imitating their own creator, they borrowed portions of fire and earth, water and air from the cosmos, that were meant to be returned..."). See also KISSLING 1922, 326 with n. 87.

scent of the soul<sup>22</sup> – which however does not prevent him from using the idea of the undescended soul in a later part of the treatise, declaring that if only the soul does not entertain a relationship with the lower realm, then “although it descends, it does not descend”.<sup>23</sup>

In this tripartite anthropology, the *pneuma* is assigned a key role, as it affects the soul’s position in the cosmos. As it is closely connected to the soul, it reflects the soul’s state and replicates it in a more material way, making the whole compound of soul and *pneuma* fall under the laws of physics. A good soul renders the *pneuma* “light and aetheric”, that is, warm and dry, while bad dispositions produce a heavy and earthlike, moist *pneuma*.<sup>24</sup> Although one may be tempted to think that the starry substance of the *pneuma*, deriving from a sphere above the four elements, should be aetheric and therefore unchanging and akin to the divine, Synesius does not pause to reflect on that but presents a more flexible view of a mutable nature of the *pneuma* which enables it to mirror the dispositions of the soul.<sup>25</sup> He needs this in order to explain how the soul can be said to move upwards or downwards and to be punished: namely by means of “physical traction forces” acting on the *pneuma*. A light and warm *pneuma* by necessity moves upwards – here he finds confirmation in Heraclitus’ dictum that “a dry soul is a wise one” (22 B 118 DK), and he reads this process as the Platonic re-feathering of the vehicle. Conversely, a humid and heavy *pneuma* is pulled downwards, into the recesses of the earth, where the soul is purified through punishment not in itself – as it is immutable and not existing in space – but in its *pneuma*;<sup>26</sup> here, he draws heavily on Porphyry’s *Sent.*

<sup>22</sup> On the debate about the complete or partial descent of the soul see the seminal work of C. G. STEEL, *The Changing Self. A Study on the Soul in later Neoplatonism: Iamblichus, Damascius and Priscianus* (Brussels 1978); see also FINAMORE 1985, 93–4. For Iamblichus’ position see *In Ti.* fr. 87 DILLON: as the charioteer in the *Phaedrus* can be submerged, so can the highest part of the soul be affected. FINAMORE / DILLON 2002, 15–6 point out that Iamblichus has a very dynamic view of the soul, oscillating between intellect and an animalic form of life.

<sup>23</sup> *De ins.* 11.143C.

<sup>24</sup> *De ins.* 6.136D–137A and 7.138A.

<sup>25</sup> For the inconsistency in the description of the *pneuma* and the oscillation between materiality and a higher form of substance see e.g. DI PASQUALE BARBANTI 1998, 163–4 and especially AUJOULAT 1983/84, 1988 and 2004, who stresses the problem of reconciling a sometimes quite material *pneuma* with a more ‘spiritual’ notion of imagination (AUJOULAT 2004, 209–10, 212–13 or 214–15: “En définitive, son φανταστικὸν πνεῦμα est tirillé entre l’éthér et la terre, les sens et l’esprit”). In the passages which present the *pneuma* as material, he sees a Stoic influence at work (221). But, to do justice to Synesius, he only elaborates on a paradox already launched by Porphyry, who probably was the first to link *pneuma* and *phantasia*, creating what Smith terms a “perplexing conflation of a soul faculty with the semi-material astral body” (SMITH 1974, 157). BREGMAN 1982, 151 voices the paradox for Synesius nicely when he writes that Synesius’ *pneuma* “acts as a quasi-physical transformer of matter into spirit”.

<sup>26</sup> *De ins.* 7.137D–138A. *Eidolon*: 7.137D and 138D.

29 as we shall see in detail below, and the *pneuma* is qualified in such contexts as a ‘phantom’, *eidolon*, echoing Plato’s *Phaedo* (81b–d). The *pneuma* thus determines the place of the soul in the cosmos: it can move freely between the τόπος ἀμφικνεφής (“place surrounded by darkness”; i.e. the material world) and the sphere of the stars, the τόπος ἀμφιφαής, (two termini from the *Chaldean Oracles*):<sup>27</sup> in between the two, it can take up innumerable forms of existence characterised by varying degrees of light and darkness (ἐτεροφαεῖς τε καὶ ἐτεροκνεφεῖς), which comprise the divine, the daimonic and the human ranks.<sup>28</sup> But, to make matters even more complicated, not only the state of the soul, but also the material body can affect the intermediate substance, e.g. through lifestyle and diet.<sup>29</sup> The quasi-corporeal and material quality of the *pneuma* comes into play when Synesius describes how a cold *pneuma* contracts into the recesses of the brain and leaves space for evil *pneumata* which take possession of the person;<sup>30</sup> this idea is quite far from and somehow at odds with the original aethereal quality ascribed to the *pneuma*.

Once the soul ascends back safely, it returns the borrowed *pneuma* to the stars, where it is poured back (ὥσπερ ἀναχυθῆναι) into its own nature – that is, the individual astral body is dissolved.<sup>31</sup> Expounding a fragment from the *Chaldean Oracles*, Synesius points out that the ‘extremities’ or ‘summits’ (ἀκρότητες), the highest level and so to speak quintessence of fire and air which were included into the *pneuma* on its way down, may remain united with the *pneuma* and be raised into the realm of the stars, thus gaining a higher station than their place of origin.<sup>32</sup> They are said to be probably “turned into aether and sent upwards together (with the *pneuma*)” (συνεξαίθεροῖτο ἄν καὶ συναναπέμποιτο, 141B). This penetration of material elements into the sphere of the aether does, however, not imply a persistence of the individual personality and conscience: the soul itself leaves the dissolved vehicle behind in the aethereal realm in its ascent.<sup>33</sup>

<sup>27</sup> See fr. 158 (transmitted only by Synesius in *De ins.* 9.140C–D) and fr. 163 DES PLACES. An analysis of the exegesis of the two fragments by Synesius and Byzantine scholars up to Plethon is found in H. SENG, “Ἀμφιφαής: Facetten einer chaldaeischen Vokabel”, in: SENG / TARDIEU 2010 [235–54] 244–52.

<sup>28</sup> *De ins.* 9–10.

<sup>29</sup> *De ins.* 16.150A–B.

<sup>30</sup> *De ins.* 10.142D.

<sup>31</sup> *De ins.* 10.141C.

<sup>32</sup> *De ins.* 9.

<sup>33</sup> See the balanced discussion of scholarship by AUJOULAT 2004, 237–49, who highlights the ambiguity of Synesius’ vocabulary. He interprets the transformation of matter into aether along the lines of LACOMBRADÉ 1951 as a survival of the individual consciousness, although one incompatible with the Christian conception of a glorified body (247). But he also considers that Synesius’ solution to the problem of post-mortem individuality is shaky at best, because it can hardly be reconciled with the doctrine of reincarnation (248–9). See

As the soul has been engrafted onto the pneumatic nature (ἐγκκεκντροσ-μῆνη)<sup>34</sup> which it has borrowed, it must make it ascend and cannot simply leave it behind on earth. Synesius hints however at secret ceremonies, τελεταί, which can effect in exceptional cases a separation.<sup>35</sup> The proper ascent remains the one with the *pneuma*, whose state the soul can diagnose and which it can purify by means of both philosophy and rituals.<sup>36</sup> Of the two, philosophy has the undisputed primate. Not only can it diagnose the affections of the vehicle, but it can also purify it through a proper way of life.<sup>37</sup> The visions of the soul offer a solid basis for diagnosis, as its prophetic capacities are in direct proportion to the health and purity of the *pneuma*.<sup>38</sup> This gives a reason for the occurrence of failures and unclear dreams; furthermore, viewing the *pneuma* as a mixture from the astral spheres serves to explain why there can be no general rule for dream divination: the souls take on varying proportions of the various stars, so that each divinatory organ is different.<sup>39</sup>

On the whole, Synesius presents a *pneuma* with a highly paradoxical nature, which, as an intermediary, borrows from both extremes to produce a mixture of corporeal and spiritual qualities.<sup>40</sup> How exactly that is possible, how the *pneuma* can vary its substance, although it is a θεσπέσιον σώμα (“divine body”) and even qualified as θεῖον, and how bits of fire and air, that is, of matter, can συναιθεροῦσθαι (“be turned into *aither* together”) with the *pneuma* proper, Synesius does not tell us. He does not aim at producing a coherent and metaphysically irreproachable account,<sup>41</sup> but

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also SUSANETTI 1992, 151–2, who also inclines towards Lacombrade’s interpretation, albeit very cautiously. However, Synesius’ text does not speak of the pneumatic vehicle existing on after the soul’s ascent as such, enriched with aetherised material elements, which would be the basic pre-condition in order to assume the continuation of individual personality and consciousness; rather, the astral substance is “poured back” into its origin. This is why I prefer the position of VOLLENWEIDER 1985, 184–7, who stresses the “Entleiblichung” of the soul during the ascent. For an idiosyncratic position see KISSLING 1922, 328 who asserts that Synesius posited the permanence of the vehicle, although not of the irrational soul.

<sup>34</sup> An allusion to the *Chaldean Oracles*, fr. 143, where however the soul is said to have been engrafted upon the corporeal nature, not the pneumatic nature.

<sup>35</sup> *De ins.* 7.138B–C.

<sup>36</sup> Ritual purification: 6.136D (where the rituals are assigned to the ἀπόρρητος φιλοσοφία) or 8.139A. For the role assigned to the rituals by Synesius and the relationship to philosophy see TANASEANU-DÖBLER 2013a.

<sup>37</sup> *De ins.* 6.136D–137A, 10.142B–C, 16.150A–B; also, in 8.139A, the will of the soul and its conversion from the pleasures of matter are seen as the main motor of the ascent.

<sup>38</sup> *De ins.* 6.136C–D.

<sup>39</sup> *De ins.* 17.151C.

<sup>40</sup> *De ins.* 6.137A–B.

<sup>41</sup> Cf. AUJOULAT 2004, 258 or 263–4: “En bref, Synésios tend à unifier les êtres sans trop insister sur leur classification. Il n’est pas étonnant, dès lors, que l’ordre du monde païen, dont les Néoplatoniciens sont les gardiens vigilants, apparaisse bousculé par le Cyrenéen. (...) On obtient ainsi un composé d’éther et de la matière qui peut paraître un défi aux



contents himself with a kaleidoscope of plausible images to stress the median position of the *pneuma*, its importance for the contact with the higher realms through divination and the access to them in the ascent, and therefore, the great care which a true philosopher should bestow on it.

### 3. Situating Synesius' *pneuma* in Neoplatonic discourse and late antique religion

#### 3.1. Origin and final destination of the pneumatic vehicle and its anthropological function

The treatment of the soul's vehicle in *De insomniis* is marked by the massive presence of the *Chaldean Oracles*. They are quoted reverently as an indisputable authority, as the *λόγια*, the divine oracles, which are accepted as such also by his unnamed philosophical opponents; they provide Synesius with the point of departure for his curious theory that even particles of fire and air can accede to the aetheric sphere, and, more importantly, they colour the background of his account of the soul's descent and ascent in 7–10.<sup>42</sup> An accurate assessment of the *Oracles'* influence upon Synesius' understanding of the soul's vehicle is limited, however, by their fragmentary status. We do not possess the whole corpus, and the fragments we have, sometimes only single phrases or fragments of a hexameter line, are woven by their excerptors, the Neoplatonic philosophers, into their own argumentation and made to suit their purpose; sometimes all we have are paraphrases or remarks that certain doctrines are Chaldean, without direct quotations.<sup>43</sup> This is especially the case with respect to the *pneuma*. Only a few snippets refer to the *pneuma* and the vehicle. Fr. 104 enjoins "not to pollute the *pneuma* or to deepen the plane surface". The second, more enigmatic part, is taken in Neoplatonic exegesis to symbolise the attachment to (three-dimensional) matter.<sup>44</sup> Synesius alludes to the first part

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dogmes néoplatoniciens". SHEPPARD also notes Synesius' ambiguity and lack of precision in her essay on the *phantasia* in this volume, p. 110.

<sup>42</sup> For the influence of the *Chaldean Oracles* on Synesius' work (especially the *hymns*) see W. THEILER, *Die Chaldäischen Orakel und die Hymnen des Synesius*. Schriften der Königsberger Gelehrten Gesellschaft: Geisteswissenschaftliche Klasse 18,1 (Halle 1942) and SENG 1996, 119–70. For the vehicle in the *Chaldean Oracles* see TOULOUSE 2001, 178–82.

<sup>43</sup> See P. ATHANASSIADI, "The Chaldean Oracles: Theology and Theurgy", in: ead. / M. FREDE (ed.), *Pagan Monotheism in Late Antiquity* (Oxford 1999) [149–83] 157–8; see also TOULOUSE 2001, 178–9.

<sup>44</sup> E.g. Proclus, *In Remp.* 2.169–170 KROLL or *In Ti.* 1.146 DIEHL. The Chaldean fragment is recorded by Psellus, *PG* 122.1137c (in the critical ed. DES PLACES 1971, 176) = 38, p. 137 O'MEARA. He offers the explanation that the Chaldeans "robe the soul with two tunics (*chitones*), and the one they call pneumatic, which is woven out of the perceptible cosmos for her, and the other one luminous, light and without depth, which is called 'plane surface'". Both tunics must be kept pure from passions and "material additions", respectively. How-

of the quotation, the pollution of the *pneuma*, in *De ins.* 10 and 17; in his hymns he prays that God may preserve his *pneuma* ἀμόλυντον (“undefiled”) or καθαρὸν λωβᾶς (“pure from outrageous defacement”), respectively.<sup>45</sup> Another expression recorded by Hierocles speaks of the “light vehicle of the soul” (ψυχῆς λεπτὸν ὄχημα).<sup>46</sup> Fr. 123 speaks of the soul being rendered light by a warm *pneuma* – which would match Synesius’ explanation of the movements of the soul in the cosmos. However, the *Chaldean Oracles*, being after all not a philosophical treatise, use their terms with some freedom, speaking in one fragment of the soul sent down from the realm of light clad not in *pneuma*, but “in much intellect”,<sup>47</sup> and in another of the intellect being placed in the soul which is in turn placed in the body – without intermediary.<sup>48</sup>

While the few direct quotations from the *Oracles* are of little help, we can gain crucial information from Proclus, whose extensive commentaries on the Platonic dialogues record the *Forschungsgeschichte* on various philosophical questions. Discussing the afterlife of the pneumatic vehicle in the light of Plato’s *Timaeus*, he presents Porphyry as following to a certain extent the *Oracles* in his conception of the composition and origin of the vehicle. According to Proclus, Porphyry and his followers proposed a middle way between the total annihilation of the irrational life and the vehicle on the one hand, and the idea of an incorruptible aetheric vehicle on the other. They asserted the dissolution of the “vehicle and the irrational soul” into their originary elements (ἀναστοιχειοῦσθαι and ἀναλύεσθαι) which are returned to the astral spheres whence they originated. The vehicle and the irrational soul are said to have been regarded by the Porphyrians as astral mixtures (φυράματα), a term used also by Synesius (*De ins.* 17.151C); the soul collects this mixture during its descent. Thus, the vehicle and the irrational soul do not possess a stable existence and identity of their own. The *Oracle* passage which Proclus paraphrases to indicate Porphyry’s source of inspiration presents the soul as collecting in its descent “a portion of the αἴθρη (here probably aether, not simply sunny air), of the sun and the moon and all that floats in the air” – which would open up the range of

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ever, the idea of two layers between soul and body and their labelling as χιτώνες cannot be traced back to the *Oracles* themselves but points to a later tradition: the first to posit two vehicles is Syrianus, Proclus’ teacher. See S. KLITENIC WEAR, *The teachings of Syrianus on Plato’s Timaeus and Parmenides*. Studies in Platonism, Neoplatonism, and the Platonic tradition 10 (Leiden / Boston 2011) 16–17 and 194–9.

<sup>45</sup> *De ins.* 10.142D: Ἀλλὰ τοῦτο μὲν ἀθέων δίκη τῶν μολυνάντων τὸ ἐν αὐτοῖς θεῖον (“But that is the punishment of the godless who have defiled the divine [element] in themselves”). 17.151D: τὸ πνεῦμα ἐμόλυνεν (“it defiled its pneuma”), of the souls who incline towards matter. *Hymn* 1.548–9 and 2.278–9, noted by DI PASQUALE BARBANTI 1998, 159. See SENG 1996, 160.

<sup>46</sup> Fr. 120.

<sup>47</sup> Fr. 115.

<sup>48</sup> Fr. 94.

pneumatic sources beyond the astral spheres to the air as well.<sup>49</sup> The astral origin of the *pneuma* is confirmed in Porphyry's own words in *Sent.* 29: "when it (sc. the soul) has gone out of the solid body, the *pneuma* which it

<sup>49</sup> Proclus, *In Ti.* 3.234–5 DIEHL: Τί τὸ ἀθάνατόν ἐστι τοῦτο καὶ τί τὸ θνητόν, ἐζήρηται παρὰ τοῖς τοῦ Πλάτωνος ἐξηγηταῖς. καὶ οἱ μὲν τὴν λογικὴν ψυχὴν μόνην ἀθάνατον ἀπολείποντες φθείρουσι τὴν τε ἄλογον ζωὴν σύμπασαν καὶ τὸ πνευματικὸν ὄχημα τῆς ψυχῆς, κατὰ τὴν εἰς γένεσιν ὁσπὴν τῆς ψυχῆς τὴν ὑπόστασιν διδόντες αὐτοῖς μόνον τε τὸν νοῦν ἀθάνατον διατηροῦντες ὡς μόνον καὶ μένοντα καὶ ὁμοιοῦμενον τοῖς θεοῖς καὶ μὴ φθειρόμενον, ὥσπερ οἱ παλαιότεροι καὶ ἐπέσθαι τῇ λέξει κρινάντες, δὲ ἧς ὁ Πλάτων φθείρει τὴν ἄλογον, θνητὴν αὐτὴν καλῶν, τοὺς Ἀττικοὺς λέγω καὶ Ἀλβίνους καὶ τοιοῦτους τινάς. οἱ δὲ τούτων μετριάτεροι, ὥσπερ οἱ περὶ Πορφύριον, καὶ πρῶτεροι παραιτοῦνται μὲν τὴν καλουμένην φθορὰν κατασκευαδανύνααι τοῦ τε ὀχήματος καὶ τῆς ἀλόγου ψυχῆς, ἀναστοιχειοῦσθαι δὲ αὐτὰ φασὶ καὶ ἀναλύεσθαι, τὴν τρόπον εἰς τὰς σφαιράς, ἀφ' ὧν τὴν σύνθεσιν ἔλαχε, φυράματα δὲ εἶναι ταῦτα ἐκ τῶν οὐρανίων σφαιρῶν καὶ κατιοῦσαν αὐτὰ συλλέγειν τὴν ψυχὴν, ὥστε καὶ εἶναι ταῦτα καὶ μὴ εἶναι, αὐτὰ δὲ ἕκαστα μηκέτ' εἶναι μηδὲ διαμένειν τὴν ιδιότητα αὐτῶν. καὶ δοκοῦσιν ἐπέσθαι τοῖς λόγοις ἐν τῇ καθόδῳ τὴν ψυχὴν λέγουσι συλλέγειν αὐτὸ λαμβάνουσαν αἰθῆρας μέρος ἡλείου τε σεληναίης τε καὶ ὄσ<σ>α ἡέρι συννήχονται. πρὸς οὐς ἐπακτέον τὰ τοῦ Πλάτωνος οὐκ ἐναργῶς φθείροντα πᾶν τὸ ἄλογον. τρίτοι δὲ αὐτοῖς εἰσὶν οἱ πᾶσαν φθορὰν ἀνελόντες ἀπὸ τοῦ ὀχήματος καὶ τῆς ἀλογίας καὶ εἰς ταῦτ' ἄγοντες τὴν τε τοῦ ὀχήματος διαμονὴν καὶ τὴν τοῦ ἀλόγου καὶ τὸ θνητὸν ἐπ' αὐτοῦ τὸ σωματοειδὲς καὶ περὶ τὴν ὕλην ἐπτοημένον καὶ ἐπιμελούμενον τῶν θνητῶν ἐξηγούμενοι, ὡς Ἰάμβλιχος οἰεῖται καὶ ὅσοι τούτῳ συνάδειν ἀξιούσι, καὶ οὐχ ἀπλῶς ἀπὸ τῶν σωμάτων τῶν θεῶν αὐτῶ διδόντες τὴν ὑπόστασιν, ἵνα δὴ γενόμενον ἐκ κινουμένων αἰτίων καὶ μεταβλητὸν ἢ κατὰ τὴν ἑαυτοῦ φύσιν, ἀλλ' ἀπὸ τῶν θεῶν αὐτῶν τῶν τὸν κόσμον κατευθυνόντων καὶ πάντα διαειωνίως ποιοῦντων. "The meaning of this 'immortal' and the 'mortal' is a standard inquiry among Plato's exegetes. And one group leaves only the rational soul as immortal and has the whole irrational life and the pneumatic vehicle of the soul destroyed, allowing them subsistence according to the inclination of the soul towards becoming and retaining only the intellect as immortal, because it is the only one to endure and to become alike to the gods and not to admit destruction, such as the more ancient philosophers, who also prefer to stick to the literal meaning through which Plato has the irrational soul destroyed when he calls it mortal – I mean men like Atticus and Albinus and scholars of this kind. Those who are more balanced and gentle than these, like the followers of Porphyry, refuse to pour out the so-called destruction upon both the vehicle and the irrational soul, rather, they say that they are turned back into their elements and somehow dissolve into the spheres from which they had received their composition. They say that these are mixtures from the heavenly spheres and that the soul collects them in its descent, so that they both do and do not exist, but both of them individually exist no longer and their characteristic property does not endure. And they seem to follow the *Oracles* which say that the soul collects it (sc. the *pneuma*) in its descent, taking 'a portion of the aether and the sun and the moon and of all that floats in the air'. Against them we must adduce that the words of Plato do not explicitly have the whole irrational part destroyed. The third group are those who take away all destruction from both the vehicle and irrationality and identify the persistence of the vehicle and that of irrationality and interpret the 'mortal' here as that which bears the form of the corporeal and flutters around matter and cares for mortal affairs, as Iamblichus holds and all those who deem it right to agree with him; and they do not simply assign it a subsistence derived from the divine bodies, so that, having been brought about by moving causes it would be also mutable in its own nature, but one derived from the gods themselves who rule the universe and create everything eternally". The Iamblican part is given by DILLON 1973 as fr. 81 of Iamblichus' commentary of the *Timaeus*, p. 194–5.

had gathered from the astral spheres accompanies it".<sup>50</sup> This lengthy meditation on the punishment of the soul in Hades forms the background to Synesius' conception of the cosmic movements of the soul and will be analysed closely in the next section on the *pneuma* in the material world. At this point, just one more similarity between Porphyry and the *Oracles* may be noted: Porphyry outlines in *Sent.* 29 that the soul finds itself a body corresponding to its state: if pure, a body closer to the "immaterial body, that is, the aether", otherwise, in descending order, a sun-like or moon-like body, or, finally, a body corresponding to the "humid vapours" of the corporeal world, which engulfs it in complete oblivion and ignorance.<sup>51</sup> Although here the *pneuma* is not directly named as part of the picture, the basic idea of succession between the aetheric, sun-like, moon-like and lower forms of the body parallels Proclus' quotation of the *Chaldean Oracles* which he had connected with Porphyry. The humid and heavy *pneuma* is associated by Porphyry with the desire of the soul for entering the realm of becoming,<sup>52</sup> an idea echoing a passage from Plutarch's myth in *De sera numinis vindicta*.<sup>53</sup>

Porphyry's idea of a soul which is in its core purely spiritual, taking on the pneumatic envelope only in order to connect with the lower realms can be seen as a development of the Plotinian doctrine of the undescended soul, which leaves its highest part forever in the immaterial realm in communion with the divine hypostases.<sup>54</sup> Plotinus himself, although aware of the conception of a pneumatic vehicle of the soul, collected and assembled

<sup>50</sup> ἔξεληθούση γὰρ αὐτῆ τοῦ στερεοῦ σώματος τὸ πνεῦμα συνομαρτεῖ, ὃ ἐκ τῶν σφαιρῶν συνελέξατο. A first body of the soul which would be aethereal, pneumatic, aerial or a mixture of these is mentioned as a possibility in *Ad Gaurum* 11, p. 49 KALBFLEISCH; see also DI PASQUALE BARBANTI 1998, 111.

<sup>51</sup> *Sent.* 29.19 LAMBERZ: ὡς γὰρ ἂν διατεθῆ, εὐρίσκει σῶμα τάξει καὶ τόποις οικείοις διωρισμένον· διὸ καθαρώτερον μὲν διακειμένη σύμφυτον τὸ ἐγγὺς τοῦ ἀύλου σώμα, ὅπερ ἐστὶ τὸ αἰθέριον, προεληθούση δὲ ἐκ λόγου εἰς φαντασίας προβολὴν σύμφυτον τὸ ἡλιοειδές, θηλυθυεῖσι δὲ καὶ παθαινομένη πρὸς τὸ εἶδος παράκειται τὸ σεληνοειδές, πεσοῦση δὲ εἰς σώματα, ὅταν κατὰ τὸ αὐτῶν ἄμορφον στῆ εἶδος, ἐξ ὑγρῶν ἀναθυμιάσεων συνεστηκότα, ἄγνοια ἔπεται τοῦ ὄντος τελεία καὶ σκότως καὶ νηπιότης. "For in whatever way it be disposed, it finds a body which is determined by its proper order and space. This is why, when it is in a relatively pure state the body which is near to the immaterial corresponds to it by nature, that is, the aethereal, when it proceeds from discursive reason to the projection of imagination the sunlike (body), when it becomes effeminate and acts passionately towards the form the moonlike is at hand, but when it has fallen into the bodies, when she stops at their shapeless appearance, assembled as they are from humid exhalations, then follows complete ignorance of being and obscurity and childish behaviour".

<sup>52</sup> *De antro nympharum* 11. See ad loc. DILLON 1973, 373 and DI PASQUALE BARBANTI 1998, 112.

<sup>53</sup> *De sera numinis vindicta* 27.566A.

<sup>54</sup> This is why the soul's punishment presents for him such a problem, which he solves by means of the *pneuma* in *Sent.* 29, as we shall see below.

during its descent through the cosmos,<sup>55</sup> does not elaborate on it, preferring other paths to the elucidation of the relationship between soul and material world, such as the distinction between a higher and a lower soul or self.<sup>56</sup> It is only with Porphyry and especially with his student Iamblichus that the vehicle becomes a clearly delimited part of Neoplatonic doctrine, which correlates at least with the beginning of the reception of the *Chaldean Oracles*.<sup>57</sup>

Iamblichus, who stresses the ontological difference between the particular soul and the World Soul or Intellect,<sup>58</sup> is presented by Proclus in the above quotation from the commentary on the *Timaeus* as taking a stance contrary to that of Porphyry by asserting the permanence of both the irrational soul and the vehicle after death. As Proclus reports it, in the Iamblichean view the vehicle is not composed from particles of the heavenly bodies, which would make it by nature mutable, but is fashioned by the gods themselves.<sup>59</sup>

<sup>55</sup> A close analysis of Plotinus' use of *pneuma*, *ochema* and *phantasia* can be found in DI PASQUALE BARBANTI 1998, 73–106, esp. 78–82, and TOULOUSE 2001, 190–216. See also SMITH 1974, 152–5, who concludes that “Plotinus is clearly not fully committed to the idea of the πνεῦμα/ὄχημα but he does introduce it most noticeably in an eschatological context, where it fulfils the role of corporeal substrate and serves to answer the problem of a spatial Hades, a concept that Porphyry tackles in *Sent.* xxix” (155). See also Bos 2007, 32, n. 9: “Plotinus himself, though he does not use the term *ochema* in such a context, can yet be regarded as familiar with the theory”.

<sup>56</sup> See A. SMITH, “Unconsciousness and Quasiconsciousness in Plotinus”, *Phronesis* 23 (1978) 292–301 or id., “The significance of practical ethics for Plotinus”, in: J. J. CLEARY (ed.), *Traditions of Platonism. Essays in honour of John Dillon* (Aldershot 1999) 227–36.

<sup>57</sup> DI PASQUALE BARBANTI 1998, 106, asserts a connection between a growing interest in religion and theurgy on the one hand and the rise of the theory of the pneumatic vehicle on the other hand (e.g. 17–18, with reference to Plotinus' lack of interest in theurgy). This reduces too severely the complexity of Neoplatonic attitudes to religion and philosophy; it would be safer to consider the problem in the light of the reception of the *Chaldean Oracles* as a philosophically relevant text. For Plotinus' possible knowledge of the *Oracles* see recently L. G. SOARES SANTOPRETE, “L'emploi du terme ‘ἀμφοιστομοσ’ dans le grand traité antignostique de Plotin et dans les Oracles Chaldaïques”, in: SENG / TARDIEU 2010, 163–78, with a detailed discussion of earlier bibliography on the subject.

<sup>58</sup> *De anima* 7 FINAMORE / DILLON, p. 31.

<sup>59</sup> *In Ti.* fr. 81 DILLON = Proclus, *In Ti.* 3.235 DIEHL; see above, n. 49 for the Greek text. Iamblichus himself emphasises the hierarchy of souls (e.g. *De anima* 18, p. 44), a trait rightly stressed by Finamore in his analysis (FINAMORE 1985, 33–53). In *De anima* 26, p. 53, he takes stance against the position ascribed, here, to Plotinus, Porphyry and Amelios, that all souls originate “from the soul above heaven” and that their descents are equal and similar; he points to the *Timaeus* to prove that the souls are “sown” by the demiurge into different portions of the cosmos: while the universal soul (here the World Soul) is placed in the cosmos as a whole, the souls of the visible gods are placed in the celestial spheres, and another class is allotted the elements. Thus, for Iamblichus the *Timaeus* sets different preconditions for descent; he follows up with an account of various philosophical positions describing the variety of descents (see the commentary on p. 150, with a reference to FINAMORE 1985, 60–91).

When we attempt to inquire into Iamblichus' exact theory of the vehicle, we are faced with the problems of a capricious transmission even more seriously than in the case of Porphyry. Our basis is formed, mostly, by Proclus' extant commentaries, and the excerpts collected by Stobaeus from Iamblichus' treatise on the soul. Some bits of additional information can be gathered from Iamblichus' *De mysteriis*, a polemical work defending the rationale of esoteric ritual expertise against Porphyry. However, any reconstruction of Iamblichus' conception is faced with notable gaps to be filled by scholarly deduction;<sup>60</sup> and the interpreter must not succumb to the temptation to read Iamblichus through the lens of 5th century Neoplatonism, where the doctrine gains its full expression.

What do we learn from Proclus about Iamblichean views of the origin and function of the vehicle? En passant, he mentions that like the cosmos, the soul's vehicle was regarded as spherical and endowed with a circular motion.<sup>61</sup> Iamblichean philosophers are assigned the position that the vehicles are produced from the generative power of the aether, without taking anything away from the divine bodies, but coming into existence and receiving their shape according to the "divine lives".<sup>62</sup> This is parallel to fr. 81 Dillon, where the gods create the vehicle; Dillon plausibly proposes to interpret the lives as the "unreasoning generative principles, neither οὐσίαι nor νόες, of the encosmic gods".<sup>63</sup>

<sup>60</sup> One careful attempt is FINAMORE 1985. See also the corresponding section in DI PASQUALE BARBANTI 1998 and TOULOUSE 2001, 243–60, who however focuses only on the issue of purification, reading Hierocles as a source for Iamblichean material (249–50) and supplementing his account with material from *De mysteriis*. BERGMANN 2006, 372–410 offers a reconstruction of the Iamblichean vehicle as a doctrine stemming from Iamblichus' preoccupation with theurgy and with the philosophical explanations of ritual experience. While providing some valuable observations and material, the account is highly speculative.

<sup>61</sup> *In Ti.* fr. 49 DILLON, p. 152 (ap. Proclus, *In Ti.* 2.72 DIEHL).

<sup>62</sup> *In Ti.* fr. 84 DILLON, p. 196–8; Proclus, *In Ti.* 3.266 DIEHL: δεῖ μὲν οὖν νοεῖν, ὡς εἰώθασι λέγειν καὶ οἱ περὶ τὸν μέγαν Ἰάμβλιχον, ὡς καὶ ἀπὸ παντὸς τοῦ αἰθέρος γονίμην ἔχοντος δύναμιν τὴν τῶν ὀχημάτων τῶν ψυχικῶν ἀπογεννομένην σύστασιν, οὔτε ἐλαττωμένων τῶν θείων σωμάτων οὔτε συμπεφορημένως τούτων ὑφισταμένων, ἀλλὰ κατὰ τὰς ζωὰς τὰς θείας προϊόντων καὶ μορφουμένων τῶν μερικῶν πνευμάτων. "Now, as the followers of great Iamblichus also use to say, we must consider that the substance of the psychic vehicles is brought forth also from the entire aether, which possesses generative power, so that neither are the divine bodies diminished nor do these (vehicles) subsist by being borne along together (with the divine bodies), but the particular *pneumata* proceed and receive their form according to the divine lives". DILLON 1973, 379–80 ponders on the identity of the group and settles that he "persist(s) to take the phraseology as Iamblichean".

<sup>63</sup> DILLON 1973, 380. FINAMORE 1985, 11 and 13–14 reads the Proclus passage in its context to state that, for Iamblichus, "(t)he Demiurge himself produces the vehicle" (*In Ti.* 3.267). Finamore senses here a certain inconcinnity with the affirmation that the vehicle is shaped according to the "divine lives"; he therefore proposes the solution that while the demiurge creates the vehicle as spherical, the divine lives change its shape. However, in fr. 81 the

The vehicle therefore is immutable and remains as such after death, together with the irrational life. Does that mean that it remains connected with the soul, or that it remains by itself in the cosmos, separated from the soul and perhaps ready to be used by it in another trip to the realm of becoming?<sup>64</sup> We might hope to gain some insight from the fragments of *De anima*. However, Stobaeus' interests (let alone those of his later abridgers) were not necessarily our own. He has recorded at length Iamblichus' doxographic passages and categorisation of philosophical positions on certain points, but gives us little about Iamblichus' own view on the subject of the vehicle.<sup>65</sup>

*De anima* 21 distinguishes between souls which ride on luminous *pneumata* (ἐποχοόμενα τοῖς ἀγγοειδέσι πνεύμασι)<sup>66</sup> and those which "are

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*hypostasis*, the existence, of the vehicle is assigned to the gods who rule over the cosmos, so that I do not follow Finamore's solution. Divine demiurgy takes place at different levels, and the demiurge always remains the principal actor, though he assigns some tasks to the gods. What is important for Iamblichus is the purposeful divine demiurgy of the vehicle which makes it endure as something *sui generis* and not just a fortuitous accretion of portions taken from the planets and dispersing again afterwards.

<sup>64</sup> The latter reading in FINAMORE 1985, 16–27 and 147–51, who connects it to Iamblichus' idea that all souls, even the pure ones, must re-descend from the noetic to the material, so that they need a vehicle waiting for them; see also FINAMORE / DILLON 2002, 186 and SCHIBLI 1993, 115.

<sup>65</sup> See FINAMORE / DILLON 2002, 11 or 13. I quote *De anima* in the following pages by the section numbers of FINAMORE / DILLON.

<sup>66</sup> The transmitted text is αὐτοειδέσι πνεύμασι. FINAMORE / DILLON 2002, 47 leave it thus and translate "pneumatic bodies of a uniform nature". This is close to the proposal of A.-J. Festugière: "des corps pneumatiques de nature toujours identique à elle-même", that is, of a nature which always stays the same (FESTUGIÈRE 1953, 206). In their commentary ad loc., FINAMORE / DILLON 2002 point out that, "although an extremely rare word", the adjective occurs also in Simplicius' commentary on *De caelo* and Marcus Aurelius; "thus, although one may be tempted to correct the word to ἀγγοειδής, which is regularly used of the vehicle in Neoplatonism, there seems to be no necessity of doing so" (131). This conjecture was kindly suggested to me by Donald Russell, who emphasised the rarity of the term; he pointed to Reiske's similar emendation of the term in Marcus Aurelius 11.12. The conjecture ἀγγοειδής is also proposed by Westerink / Combès in their note to Damascius, *In Parm.* 201, who also uses the term, for the passages in Marcus Aurelius, Iamblichus and Simplicius on *De caelo* (L. G. WESTERINK / J. COMBÈS (eds.), *Damascius. Commentaire sur le Parménide de Platon III*. Collection des universités de France: Série grecque 418 [Paris 2002] 271–2). In *In Parm* 201, αὐτοειδής is used by Damascius of forms which exist at a lower level, in a class of gods inferior to the demiurge, in whom the forms exist as they really are in themselves; then αὐτοειδής would mean something like 'bearing the likeness of the identical', that is, not always in a perfectly identical state. In his commentary on Aristotle's *De anima* (M. HAYDUCK [ed.], *Simplicius. CAG XI* [Berlin 1882] 29) Simplicius places τὰ αὐτοειδή higher, at the intelligible level, taking them to mean primal, self-formed forms: τὸν νοητὸν (...) διάκοσμον, ἐν ᾧ τὰ αὐτοειδή, τούτῃσσι τὰ πρῶτιστα καὶ αἱ τούτων ἀρχαί, ἢ τοῦ αὐτοενός ἰδέα ἢ τε τοῦ πρῶτου μήκους, ἥτις ἦν ἢ αὐτοδυάς, ἥτε τοῦ πρῶτου πλάτους καὶ ἢ τοῦ πρῶτου βάθους ("the intelligible cosmic order, in which the things that generate their own form, that is, the very first and the principles of these things, the idea of the true One and of the first extension, which was the true dyad, also that of the first plane surface

sown into the more solid bodies”:<sup>67</sup> here, the *pneumata* as vehicle of a specific class of souls seem to constitute a type of body, contrasted with the material bodies (through a  $\mu\acute{\epsilon}\nu/\delta\acute{\epsilon}$  construction). The first type of souls can exercise their proper activity easily, without any negative influence and hindrance from their pneumatic support, while the incorporated souls are infected by the corporeal. The whole passage consists of a series of four parallel antitheses: 1. between the souls which are complete and universal ( $\acute{\omicron}\lambda\alpha\iota$ ) and possess a higher degree of divinity on the one hand,<sup>68</sup> and the particular souls living in matter, on the other; 2. between ascending souls who have left corporeal generation behind, and souls which descend and entangle themselves intricately with the corporeal; 3. between those with luminous *pneumata* and materially embodied souls, and finally 4. the complete and universal souls, who turn towards themselves the object of their rule (i.e. the corresponding body), whereas the particular souls allow themselves to be turned towards the same, that is, towards a lower level of reality. All these four pairs oppose the souls that are free from generation and united with the World Soul to the particular souls, separated from the World Soul, who look primarily towards the body. That might imply that in their natural state, free from entanglement in becoming, the souls ride upon pneumatic vehicles and not upon solid ones, which would imply in turn that every soul necessarily has a vehicle, which would be part of it regardless of its position in the cosmos.<sup>69</sup> In *De anima* 28, Iamblichus em-

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and that of the first depth”). But this meaning cannot be applied to Iamblichus’ *pneuma*, which is ontologically much lower than the forms; moreover, in spite of his predilection of  $\alpha\upsilon\tau\acute{o}$ , he never uses it elsewhere in his extant writings. Furthermore, a reference to light would form a better contrast to the “more solid bodies”; it has been argued convincingly that in Iamblichus’ system light is employed on account of its intermediarity between the spiritual and the corporeal to link these extremes and to explain the workings of the divine within the material world, e.g. in cult (S. I. JOHNSTON, “Fiat Lux, Fiat Ritus. Divine Light and the Late Antique Defence of Ritual”, in: M. T. KAPSTEIN (ed.), *The Presence of Light. Divine Radiance and Religious Experience* [Chicago / London 2004] 5–24, and BERGEMANN 2006). If we link the luminosity of the *pneuma* to its aethereal substance, then the contrast to “more solid bodies” would be that of aether to the coarser compound of the four elements, so that the comparative would make more sense. I thank Donald Russell cordially once more for signalling the problem.

<sup>67</sup> τὰ δὲ τοῖς στερεωτέροις σώμασιν ἐνσπειρόμενα.

<sup>68</sup> Interestingly, he uses the plural and not a singular, which would refer to the universal soul as the World Soul – he might mean divine souls which are still united with the World Soul and in that sense universal (FINAMORE / DILLON 2002, 132).

<sup>69</sup> FINAMORE / DILLON 2002, 46; see also the commentary on p. 132, taking the souls riding on the “uniform” *pneumata* to be “souls which have not, or not yet, descended into bodies, and are therefore ‘pure’”. A passage from Proclus is quoted to illuminate the Iamblican position, to conclude that “So then, for Proclus as for Iamblichus the vehicle under discussion is proper to pure souls, and they, by virtue of it, perform their *erga* without any trouble (...) in contrast to ourselves, who are burdened with solid bodies” (italics in original). That sounds plausible, only we do not find it expressed like this in Iamblichus.



phases that the relationship between souls and body differs depending on the type of soul:

“the complete and universal soul, on the one hand, as is also the position of Plotinus, contains in itself the body which moves towards it, but it does not move towards the body itself nor is it contained by it. The particular souls, on the other hand, move towards the bodies and become souls of bodies and take up their abode in the bodies which are already under the sway of the nature of the cosmos. And the souls of the gods turn divine bodies, imitations of intellect, towards their own intellectual essence; those of other divine classes drive their vehicles each according to their rank”.<sup>70</sup>

This is in tune with the *Phaedrus* which mentions *ochemata* of the gods which easily ascend to the supercelestial place (247b). Are the vehicles here simply the fine bodies of pure and divine souls, which may be exchanged for solid bodies on entering the realm of becoming, as we might also infer from *De anima* 21? *De anima* 33 might also be taken to point in that direction: there, “vehicle” is enumerated as one philosophical metaphor for the relationship between soul and body.<sup>71</sup> Another work of Iamblichus, *De mysteriis*, shows that the “luminous *pneuma*”<sup>72</sup> or “the aetheric and luminous vehicle which envelops the soul”<sup>73</sup> accompanies the soul into the material body; we will discuss the passage in more detail when inquiring into rituals directed at the *pneuma*. This helps place another *De anima* fragment in context: in 38, Iamblichus contrasts two philosophical positions: one directly connecting the soul with a body, and another which is said to posit “aetheric and celestial and pneumatic envelopes clothing the intellectual life; they are said on the one hand to be projected before it for the sake of guarding it, on the other to serve her as vehicles”.<sup>74</sup> This might recall the Chaldean and Porphyrian vehicle, with the only difference that it mentions several envelopes. Unfortunately, the fragment breaks off without recording the position of Iamblichus,<sup>75</sup> who might have opted in favour of a modified version of the latter.

<sup>70</sup> ἡ μὲν ὅλη, ὡσπερ καὶ Πλωτίνῳ δοκεῖ, προσίον ἑαυτῇ τὸ σῶμα ἔχει ἐν ἑαυτῇ, ἀλλ’ οὐκ αὐτῇ πρόσσεισι τῷ σῶματι, οὐδὲ περιέχεται ὑπ’ αὐτοῦ· αἱ δὲ μερισταὶ προσέρχονται τοῖς σώμασι καὶ τῶν σωμάτων γίνονται καὶ ἡδὴ κρατουμένων τῶν σωμάτων ὑπὸ τῆς τοῦ παντὸς φύσεως εἰσοικίζονται εἰς αὐτά. Καὶ αἱ μὲν τῶν θεῶν θεία σώματα, νοῦν μιμούμενα, ἐπιστρέφουσι πρὸς τὴν ἑαυτῶν νοεράν οὐσίαν· αἱ δὲ τῶν ἄλλων θείων γενῶν, ὡς ἕκασται ἐτάχθησαν, οὕτω κατευθύνουσιν ἑαυτῶν τὰ ὀχήματα.

<sup>71</sup> FINAMORE / DILLON 2002, 170: “There is no need to see a reference to Iamblichus’ doctrine of the ethereal vehicle of the soul here”.

<sup>72</sup> *Myst.* 3.11.

<sup>73</sup> *Myst.* 3.14.

<sup>74</sup> Μεταξὺ τῆς τε ἀσωμάτου ψυχῆς καὶ τοῦ ἀγγειώδους αἰθέρια καὶ οὐράνια καὶ πνευματικὰ περιβλήματα περιαμπέχοντα τὴν νοεράν ζωὴν <τίθενται> προπεβλήσθαι μὲν αὐτῆς φρουρὰς ἔνεκεν, ὑπηρετεῖν δὲ αὐτῇ καθάπερ ὀχήματα (...).

<sup>75</sup> See FINAMORE / DILLON 2002, 183–6 for the commentary; they refer back to Finamore’s reconstruction of the theory of the vehicle based on *In Ti.* fr. 81 and 84 DILLON, going so far as to surmise that “(t)he concept of the heavenly garments of the soul Iamblichus seems to have transferred from coverings for the soul to coverings for the vehicle in its descent”.

On the whole, the enquiry into Iamblichus' theory of the origin and substance of the vehicle leaves many spaces blank. Given Proclus' testimony, we may assume that for Iamblichus the vehicle is created by the demiurge and the lesser encosmic gods from a substance similar to the stars, that it is tailor-made to suit each soul and not a mere borrowed series of astral and planetary accretions. We may also note the polysemy of the term 'vehicle', which can also be employed to designate the body. And we are left to wonder whether the soul actually separates from its vehicle during its noetic flight, so that the latter awaits somewhere below the next descent of the soul. But given Iamblichus' insistence on the fact that gods and higher kinds of beings possess bodies, and that this does not mean that they are enclosed in them, but rather that the autonomous souls of these entities envelop and govern the bodies and entertain with them a permanent and pure relationship,<sup>76</sup> maybe we think too rigidly and materialistically if we wonder what becomes of the purified vehicle during the soul's ascent to the noetic realm: the proper relationship to the vehicle which was instituted in the very generation of the soul persists even then, just as in the *Phaedrus* the charioteer of the soul never actually descends from the chariot to contemplate the intelligible.<sup>77</sup>

Apart from Porphyry and Iamblichus, the conceptions about the "vehicle" of the soul vary. Theodoros of Asine, the elusive rival of Iamblichus, is said to have conceived of the nature of the universe as a vehicle for all souls, universal or particular, as if they were all boarding a great ship.<sup>78</sup> The emperor Julian uses the term "vehicle" in a context alluding to the *Chaldean Oracles* for the rays offered by the sun to the descending souls as if they were a vehicle for the safe descent into becoming.<sup>79</sup> Although close in its astral and cosmological connotations to *De insomniis*, this passage presents yet another, temporary, vehicle of the soul, which has nothing in common with the Neoplatonic *ochema-pneuma* except the name and the awareness that the soul needs a mediating instance or vehicle to effect the conjunction with the corporeal world. This idea of the sunrays as vehicle is not developed elsewhere in Neoplatonic discourse; like Synesius, Julian, the amateur philosopher, loosely plays with Chaldean terminology and the-

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For the vestments they refer to the striking parallel with *Corpus Hermeticum* 10 signalled by Festugière and do not follow it further.

<sup>76</sup> *De mysteriis* 1.8 or 17–19.

<sup>77</sup> Even if the soul as charioteer "poke(s) its head into the noetic realm", as FINAMORE 1985, 149 puts it.

<sup>78</sup> Proclus, *In Ti.* 3.265 DIEHL = *Test.* 33, p. 48 in DEUSE 1973. For a commentary see DEUSE 1973, 150–3, esp. 152–3, who stresses the importance of *σχέσις*, relationship, between soul and the world for Theodoros' conception of the state of the soul; see also DILLON 1973, 380.

<sup>79</sup> Julian, *Hymn to Helios* 37.152b.

ory in his *Gelegenheitsschriften*, not overly worrying about technicalities.<sup>80</sup> The conception of a pneumatic vehicle will be articulated in more detail by Synesius' younger contemporary, the Alexandrian Hierocles, who opts for a permanent, coeternal vehicle always attached to the soul in his commentary on the Pythagorean *Golden Verses*.<sup>81</sup> A look at his philosophy is needed to gain a well-rounded picture of Synesius' intellectual context: active in Alexandria, he had studied with the Athenian philosopher Plutarch, whose school Synesius had also briefly visited and dismissed as unworthy of comparison with that of Hypatia in *ep.* 136.<sup>82</sup> In his commentary, which is intended as an introduction to philosophy, Hierocles presents a simple cosmology which emphasises the principle of cosmic order and hierarchy.<sup>83</sup> Below the supreme god and demiurge, he outlines a system of gods, middle entities and human souls,<sup>84</sup> who each must remain within their ontological boundaries.<sup>85</sup> Each rational creature comes into existence with a body associated to it by the demiurge: the astral gods, the heroes and human beings. This body which is by nature united to the soul (συμφυέξ) is immortal;<sup>86</sup> Hierocles qualifies it as ἀγγοειδές σώμα ("luminous body") or, with a reference to the *Chaldean Oracles* as ψυχῆς λεπτὸν ὄχημα ("light vehicle of the soul"); he reads it in terms of the chariot metaphor of the *Phaedrus*, distinguishing the charioteer from the chariot and horses.<sup>87</sup> This immortal and luminous body is in direct contact with the material body, providing it with life and holding it harmoniously together;<sup>88</sup> it forms a ζωή τις ("a life of some sort") (as Synesius had termed the *phantasia* in *De ins.* 4.134C)<sup>89</sup> generating life in matter. After its purification, the whole couple of soul and luminous body is assigned the space immediately below the moon, above the material bodies but below the heavenly ones.<sup>90</sup> In

<sup>80</sup> Insofar TOULOUSE 2001, 268, who sees here a "brèf condensé qui contient des éléments de la théurgie chaldaique" appears to credit Julian with more systematic thinking than he actually displays.

<sup>81</sup> For the pneumatic vehicle in Hierocles see SCHIBLI 1993 and 2002, 98–106 with further bibliography, as well as HADOT 1978, 98–106, AUJOULAT 1986, 229–85 or DI PASQUALE BARBANTI 1998, 187–209.

<sup>82</sup> See DEUSE 1983, 228–9; he points to the middle position of *phantasia* between rationality and irrationality as a tenet Synesius and Hierocles share with Plutarch.

<sup>83</sup> See AUJOULAT 1986, 23.

<sup>84</sup> See e.g. *In carm. aur.* 3.18–19 KÖHLER.

<sup>85</sup> See 1–2.8–15, 23.96–7, 27.120–1 KÖHLER, with SCHIBLI 1993, 115–6.

<sup>86</sup> 26.1–2.

<sup>87</sup> *In carm. aur.* 26.2–3.

<sup>88</sup> 26.5.

<sup>89</sup> See HADOT 1978, 100–1. SUSANETTI 1992, 113, presents Porphyry as the connecting term between Hierocles and Synesius and implicitly as the originator of the expression. For the similarities between the two authors see also DI PASQUALE BARBANTI 1998, 196–7.

<sup>90</sup> 27.3.

Hierocles' system, there is no place for solitary ascents to the intelligible, so that the Iamblichean puzzle does not arise.

### 3.2. Interaction of soul, *pneuma* and the material world

The direct background for Synesius' conception of the correspondence between soul and *pneuma* and of the latter's movement according to physical laws can be found in Porphyrian texts.<sup>91</sup> In *Sent.* 29, Porphyry explains how, although the soul itself does not conform to spatial categories and is always united to being, it can be said to be punished "in Hades" by means of its appended *eidolon* – another term used also by Synesius to indicate the pneumatic envelope, going back to Plato's *Phaedo*.<sup>92</sup> The *eidolon* is explained by the fact that the soul's relationship and affinity with the body (προσπάθεια) determine an imprint of the *phantasia* upon the *pneuma*: ἐκ τῆς προσπαθείας ἐναπομόργνυται<sup>93</sup> τύπος τῆς φαντασίας εἰς τὸ πνεῦμα καὶ οὕτως ἐφέλκεται τὸ εἶδωλον ("as a result from the affinity, an imprint of the *phantasia* is wiped onto the *pneuma*, and thus it drags the image along"). As a heavy and humid *pneuma* is drawn below the earth, a soul attached to it can be said to dive under the earth by entering via the *pneuma* a "relationship" (σχέσις) with one of the bodies which are by nature subterranean, a relationship corresponding to its disposition (διάθεσις, the same term used by Synesius in *De ins.* 6.136D). The state of the *pneuma* corresponds to the state of the soul, more precisely, its attitude towards nature:

"It drags behind itself a humid (*pneuma*) whenever it continually practices interaction with nature, whose action takes place more in the humid and subterranean domain. But when it practices the separation from nature, it becomes a dry blaze, without shade and cloud. For humidity assembles a cloud in the air, but dryness produces a dry blaze out of the vapour".<sup>94</sup>

<sup>91</sup> See already KISSLING 1922, 327–9; LANG 1926, 60–80 followed by TOULOUSE 2001, who reads Synesius therefore as a faithful and reliable source for Porphyrian doctrines (225–8).

<sup>92</sup> *Sent.* 29.17–18 LAMBERZ: Ὡσπερ τὸ ἐπὶ γῆς εἶναι ψυχῆς ἔστιν—οὐ τὸ γῆς ἐπιβαίνειν ὡς τὰ σώματα, τὸ δὲ προεστάναι σώματος ὁ γῆς ἐπιβαίνει—, οὕτω καὶ ἐν Ἄιδου εἶναι ἔστι ψυχῆ, ὅταν προεστήκη εἰδώλου φύσιν μὲν ἔχοντος εἶναι ἐν τόπῳ, σκοτεῖ δὲ τὴν ὑπόστασιν κεκτημένου· ὥστε εἰ ὁ Ἄιδης ὑπόγειός ἐστι τόπος σκοτεινός, ἡ ψυχὴ καίπερ οὐκ ἀποσπασμένη τοῦ ὄντος ἐν Ἄιδου γίνεται ἐφελκομένη τὸ εἶδωλον. "Just as the soul can be on earth – not moving upon the earth, like the bodies, but presiding over a body which moves upon the earth –, in the same way the soul can also be in Hades, when she presides over an image which can by nature exist in space but has its subsistence in darkness. Therefore, if Hades is a dark place under the earth, the soul gets to be in Hades, although it is not torn away from Being, as it drags an image behind". See *Phaedo* 81b–d. For an analysis of *Sent.* 29 see TOULOUSE 2001, 218–24.

<sup>93</sup> Cf. *De ins.* 7.138A. In his discussion ad loc. SUSANETTI 1992, 127 concludes that the term is a "neologismo porfiriano".

<sup>94</sup> *Sent.* 29.20 LAMBERZ: ὑγρὸν δὲ ἐφέλκεται, ὅταν συνεχῶς μελετήσῃ ὁμλεῖν τῇ φύσει, ἥ ἐν ὑγρῷ τὸ ἔργον καὶ ὑπόγειον μάλλον. ὅταν δὲ μελετήσῃ ἀφίστασθαι φύσεως,

Porphry's allegory of the cave of the nymphs in the *Odyssey* presents a closely related picture of the souls who gravitate towards generation:

"It is therefore obviously necessary that also the souls, be they corporeal or incorporeal, but attracting a body to themselves, and especially those which are on the brink of being bound into blood and wet bodies, should incline towards humidity and gain a body after becoming humid. This is also why the souls of the dead are encouraged by pouring out bile and blood, and the souls which love the corporeal attract to themselves a humid *pneuma* and let it grow heavy like a cloud; for when humidity grows heavy in the air it constitutes a cloud. But when their humid *pneuma* grows heavy, then by its sheer superabundance they become visible. And from this kind of souls come the apparitions of phantoms which visit some people, colouring their *pneuma* according to the imaginative faculty; but the pure ones are averted from generation. Heraclitus himself says it: 'the dry soul is the wisest'. Therefore, here as well the *pneuma* becomes humid throughout and rather wet corresponding to the desires of intercourse, because the soul attracts to itself a wet vapour from its inclination towards generation".<sup>95</sup>

We encounter here not only the association of the humid and heavy *pneuma* with the inclination towards matter and generation, but also the quotation of Heraclitus which Synesius employs to confirm his theory of the physical movement of the *pneuma* throughout the cosmos. All that remains as Synesius' own contribution to the Porphyrian picture is a certain systematisation and abstraction together with the connection with the re-feathering of the vehicle in the *Phaedrus* when the *pneuma* of a good soul is warmed and dries.

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αὐγὴ ξηρὰ γίνεται, ἄσκιος καὶ ἀνέφελος· ὑγρότης γὰρ ἐν ἀέρι νέφος συνίστησι, ξηρότης δὲ ἀπὸ τῆς ἀτμίδος αὐγὴν ξηρὰν ὑφίστησιν. Toulouise 2001, 334–5, n. 34 draws the line between the idea of the infernal punishment via the *pneuma* in *Sent.* 29 and *De ins.* on the one hand and Porphyry's *De Styge* on the other hand. Porphyry interprets the Homeric punishments in the Hades as functioning by means of *phantasiai* in *De Styge* fr. 377F Smith; cf. also fr. 378F on the key role of *phantasia* for preserving the consciousness of the earthly life.

<sup>95</sup> *De antro nympharum* 11: ἀνάγκη τοίνυν καὶ τὰς ψυχὰς ἦτοι σωματικὰς οὐσας ἢ ἀσωμάτους μὲν, ἐφελκομένας δὲ σῶμα, καὶ μάλιστα τὰς μελλούσας καταδεισθαι εἰς τε αἷμα καὶ δίγγρα σώματα ῥέπειν πρὸς τὸ ὑγρὸν καὶ σωματοῦσθαι ὑγρανθείσας. διὸ καὶ χολῆς καὶ αἵματος ἐκχύσει προτρέπεσθαι τὰς τῶν τεθνηκότων, καὶ τὰς γε φιλοσωμάτων ὑγρὸν τὸ πνεῦμα ἐφελκομένας παχύνειν τοῦτο ὡς νέφος· ὑγρὸν γὰρ ἐν ἀέρι παχυνθὲν νέφος συνίσταται· παχυνθέντος δ' ἐν αὐταῖς τοῦ πνεύματος ὑγροῦ πλεονασμῷ ὁρατὰς γίνεσθαι. καὶ ἐκ τῶν τοιούτων αἱ συναντῶσι τισι κατὰ φαντασίαν χρώζουσι τὸ πνεῦμα εἰδώλων ἐμφάσεις, αἱ μὲντοι καθαραὶ γενέσεως ἀπότροποι. αὐτὸς δὲ φησιν Ἡράκλειτος "ξηρὰ ψυχὴ σοφωτάτη". διὸ κἀνταῦθα κατὰ τὰς τῆς μίξεως ἐπιθυμίας δίγγραν καὶ νοτερώτερον γίνεσθαι τὸ πνεῦμα, ἀτμὸν ἐφελκομένης δίγγραν τῆς ψυχῆς ἐκ τῆς πρὸς τὴν γένεσιν νεύσεως. I use the text of Porphyry, *On the Cave of the Nymphs in the Odyssey. A Revised Text with Translation*, ed. and trans. by the Seminar Classics 609 at the State University of New York at Buffalo (Buffalo 1969), also reproduced in LELAY 1989. I have translated ἐφέλκομαι in this passage throughout as "attracting to itself", following LELAY 1989, 72. The Arethusa translators prefer "drag along" for the first two occurrences (which would be analogous to the above-quoted passage of *Sent.* 29) and "attract" for the third.

In another context, we had seen how for Synesius the compound of soul and *pneuma* can move freely among the encosmic ranks, between the aethereal τόπος ἀμφιφαῖς (“place surrounded by light”) and the τόπος ἀμφικνεφῆς (“place surrounded by darkness”), becoming either human, daimonic or divine. For him, the *daimones* are grounded in the pneumatic existence, free from a material body, but quite ambivalent.<sup>96</sup> This brings to mind Porphyry’s description of the *daimones* in *De abstinentia*. They are particular souls springing from the World Soul and active in the sublunar world. What distinguishes good from evil *daimones* is precisely their relationship to the *pneuma*, the seat of passions and the link to the lower, material world. Those souls who can govern their *pneuma* according to reason, are the good and helpful *daimones*, whereas those who fail to control the *pneuma* fall prey to the passions inherent in it – it is after all the seat of the irrational soul, comprising anger and desire – and may be called wicked. The *pneuma* appears here as to a certain extent corporeal, although of a subtle quality and malleable, so that the wicked *daimones* can play with a multitude of changing and deceitful shapes.<sup>97</sup>

<sup>96</sup> *De ins.* 7.137B–C, 10.141D–142A.

<sup>97</sup> *De abstinentia* 2.38–9: ὅσαι μὲν ψυχαὶ τῆς ὅλης ἐκπεφυκυῖαι μεγάλα μέρη διοικοῦσι τῶν ὑπὸ σελήνην τόπων, ἐπερειδόμεναι μὲν πνεύματι, κρατοῦσαι δὲ αὐτοῦ κατὰ λόγον, ταύτας δαίμονας τε ἀγαθοὺς νομιστέον καὶ ἐπ’ ὠφελεία τῶν ἀρχομένων πάντα πραγματεύεσθαι, (...) ὅσαι δὲ ψυχαὶ τοῦ συνεχοῦς πνεύματος οὐ κρατοῦσιν, ἀλλ’ ὡς τὸ πολὺ καὶ κρατοῦνται, δι’ αὐτὸ τοῦτο ἄγονταί τε καὶ φέρονται λῖαν, ὅταν αἱ τοῦ πνεύματος ὄργαι τε καὶ ἐπιθυμίαι τὴν ὀρμὴν λάβωσιν. αὗται δ’ αἱ ψυχὰς δαίμονες μὲν καὶ αὐταί, κακοεργοὶ δ’ ἂν εἰκότως λέγοιντο. καὶ εἰσὶν οἱ σύμπαντες οὗτοί τε καὶ οἱ τῆς ἐναντίας δυνάμεως ἀόρατοί τε καὶ τελέως ἀναίσθητοι αἰσθήσεων ἀνθρωπίναις. οὐ γὰρ στερεὸν σῶμα περιβέβληνται οὐδὲ μορφήν πάντες μίαν, ἀλλ’ ἐν σχήμασι πλείοσιν ἐκτυπούμεναι αἱ χαρακτηρίζουσαι τὸ πνεῦμα αὐτῶν μορφαὶ τοτὲ μὲν ἐπιφαίνονται, τοτὲ δὲ ἀφανεῖς εἰσὶν· ἐνίοτε δὲ καὶ μεταβάλλουσι τὰς μορφὰς οἱ γε χεῖρους. τὸ δὲ πνεῦμα ἢ μὲν ἐστὶ σωματικόν, παθητικόν ἐστὶ καὶ φθαρτόν· τῷ δὲ ὑπὸ τῶν ψυχῶν οὕτως δεδέσθαι, ὥστε τὸ εἶδος αὐτῶν διαμένειν πλείω χρόνον, οὐ μὴν ἐστὶν αἰώνιον. “All the souls which have grown out of the universal soul and govern large portions of the sublunar space by leaning on *pneuma* but dominating it according to reason must be regarded as good *daimones* and as doing everything for the benefit of the ruled (...). But all the souls which do not dominate the *pneuma* contiguous to them but are mostly even dominated by it are by this very reason driven excessively here and there, whenever the angers and desires of the *pneuma* take the lead. These souls are also *daimones*, but they may be plausibly called wicked. And all these and those which belong to the contrary power are invisible and completely beyond the reach of human perceptions. For they are neither surrounded with a solid body nor do they all have one single form, but rather, given that the forms which shape their *pneuma* bear the imprint of a plurality of shapes, they sometimes appear, and sometimes are invisible; sometimes they even change their forms, certainly the lesser *daimones*. Insofar as the *pneuma* is corporeal, it is passible and destructible; the fact that it is bound together by the souls so that its form endures for a longer time, definitely does not make it eternal”.

For the Porphyrian background of Synesius’ demonology in *De insomniis* see also SUSANETTI 1992, 121–2.

Unfortunately, little can be said about Iamblichus' ideas of purification and punishment and the role of the vehicle therein. The *De anima* fragments concerned with these issues are mostly doxographic; what emerges as his own position concerns a holistic and harmonious conjunction of the purified particular souls to their cause and the universal entities, when they are separated from what is alien (i.e. the attachment to matter and becoming). Merely understanding purification in terms of actual separation from the body and not in terms of attitude (here, the Porphyry of *De regressu animae*, *De abstinentia* and the *Letter to Marcella* looms large),<sup>98</sup> would mistake the minor aspects for the principal (*De anima* 43). The main eschatological criterium is the relationship of the soul to matter (*De anima* 44). Iamblichus discusses different opinions about whether souls can directly ascend to the divine, about the ontological rank assigned to them after death, and their subsequent preoccupation: active administration of the universe together with the gods, as the ancients say, or contemplation of the gods, as the Platonists would have it (*De anima* 53). All of this can be accommodated with a doctrine of the vehicle and its purification or its role in the active administration of the universe<sup>99</sup> – but none of that is stated *expressis verbis*.

Synesius' hypothesis that the *pneuma* becomes so intimately connected with the 'summits' or 'finest portions' (ἀκρότητες) of fire and air stands rather isolated. His other works do not shed much light on what he exactly means by ἀκρότης: in *hymn* 9.60–61 he employs the term in a metaphysical context (the supreme god is a monad who "unifies and engenders the simplicity of the summits in super-essential birth pangs"), where the 'summits' designates the primal triad which is produced by the monad and finds in it its unity.<sup>100</sup> In a cosmological context the term appears in the *Chaldean Oracles*. Fr. 76 speaks of three ἀκρότητες among the class of ἰνυγες, which function in the *Oracles* not as magical wheels but rather as cosmic entities connecting the upper and the material world.<sup>101</sup> Fr. 82

<sup>98</sup> Cf. G. CLARK, "Philosophic Lives and the Philosophic Life: Porphyry and Iamblichus", in: TH. HÄGG / PH. ROUSSEAU (eds.), *Greek Biography and Panegyric in Late Antiquity* (Berkeley et al. 2000) [29–51] 40–1 for Porphyry's obsessively negative attitude to the body.

<sup>99</sup> Therefore FINAMORE / DILLON 2002 (204) reassert the position of FINAMORE 1985 on purification, ascent and the vehicle, as well as a possible separation of the soul from the vehicle after death. Given Iamblichus' emphasis on hierarchy and on the fact that the demiurge and the gods immediately create a vehicle for the individual souls, whose creation is therefore only complete when mounted on it, we might imagine also the scenario of a soul being free from its vehicle in the sense that it is not mastered by it but instead masters it completely, so that its ascent (which is after all spiritual) can take place whenever it pleases.

<sup>100</sup> See also SENG 1996, 178–9.

<sup>101</sup> The *inyx* is originally a bird (wryneck) used for love spells. It can also designate ritual objects, spells or, in the Chaldean tradition at stake here, a class of cosmic entities. See S. I. Johnston, *Hekate Soteira. A Study of Hekate's Roles in the Chaldean Oracles and Related Literature* (Atlanta 1990) 91–9. Based on Psellos, LEWY 1956, 132 n. 150 and 156 proposes

posits the class of *συνοχεῖς*, a peculiar class of Chaldean abstract deities, as the divinely appointed guardians of the *ἀκρότητες*. What we can safely say about the ‘summits’ in the *Oracles* is that they are part of the intermediary class of entities between the fiery world of the divine and the material cosmos; this does not seem to have any relation to the passage in *De insomniis*. A TLG search shows that the term does not play a conspicuous role as a philosophical *terminus technicus* in the third and fourth century. The closest we come to Synesius’ second use is a passage in Julian’s *Hymn to Helios*, where the intellectual sun is said to unify the “summits” of the intellectual substance.<sup>102</sup> This role of the intellectual sun is a correlate of its essence as the highest entity in the intellectual realm, analogous to the One in the intelligible realm: it is the centre and starting point of the whole intellectual realm, connecting it to the higher level, the intelligible.<sup>103</sup> The situation changes with Proclus, for whom *ἀκρότης* becomes a favoured *terminus technicus* for designating the highest entity and principle of an ontological class, which is in direct connection with the class immediately above it; it contains *in nuce* the whole class which it engenders and unifies.<sup>104</sup> Here, the continuity between the various levels of existence is guaranteed. In his commentary on the *Timaeus*, he employs the term in a way that may remind us of Synesius: the material elements preexist in a higher form, as their own quintessence, on a higher level, in the heavenly spheres,<sup>105</sup> being found eventually *κατ’αίτιαν* (“according to their cause”) and *ἐνοειδῶς* (“in a uniform manner”) even in the demiurge.<sup>106</sup> This would emphasise the continuity of reality going beyond the soul to include also to a certain extent the material world qua demiurgical product. But this use of *ἀκρότης* as a *terminus technicus* of late Neoplatonism has little to do with Synesius and his theory of the *pneuma* and its material accretions; maybe the *Chaldean Oracles* with their continuous cosmology, emphasising that even matter springs forth from the demiurge (fr. 34), can be seen as the common background against which both Synesius and Pro-

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a conjecture which would offer a correlation of the three “summits” with the three levels of the universe: the fiery, the aetheric and the material, but there are no indications in the *Oracles’* fragments or the late antique Neoplatonists to support that. For the conjecture see DES PLACES 1971, 186, n. 4 and MAJERCIK 1989, 172, n. 4 who follow Lewy.

<sup>102</sup> *In solem regem* 22.143c–d; cf. also 15.139b–d for the unifying role of the intellectual Helios in the universe as a whole. In 7.134a, the sunrays are presented as “summit” and “so to speak, flower” of sunlight – here *ἀκρότης* means the finest form of sunlight – this would fit the meaning of the term in *De ins.*, where the highest and finest form of fire and air is meant.

<sup>103</sup> See *In solem regem* 5.132c–133a.

<sup>104</sup> E.g. *Theol. Plat.* 4.2, p. 13.7–8, p. 24–27.11, p. 35–6 SAFFREY / WESTERINK; *In Ti.* 3.163 and 223 DIEHL. See also DILLON 1973, 374.

<sup>105</sup> *In Ti.* 2.49–50 and 3.113–15, where Proclus also states that the ‘fifth body’, i.e. the aether, contains the “summits” of the elements.

<sup>106</sup> *In Ti.* 2.44–7.



clus can develop their theories.<sup>107</sup> Synesius' passage would then represent an idiosyncratic idea which does not enter the mainstream of Neoplatonic discourse.

The interdependence between soul, *pneuma* and body which is so strongly asserted in Synesius has a parallel in a passage of the *Hymn to the Mother of the Gods* written by the Emperor Julian, who describes the effects of the cult of Kybele in close connection with the *Chaldean Oracles*:

“Immediately the divine light illuminates them, and, made divine, they impart a certain tension and vigour to the *pneuma* which accompanies them by nature. and when this is as it were bridled by them and kept in hand, it becomes the source of preservation for the whole body”.<sup>108</sup>

The background of this theory is a Chaldean verse which is similar to the one which Synesius takes as a point of departure for his theory of the aetherisation of fire and air: the promise that the benefic action of theurgy extends even down to the preservation of the “mortal envelope of bitter matter”;<sup>109</sup> the *pneuma*, according to its median nature, acts as the transmitter of divine energy to the body. Here we touch on a distinctive aspect of the Neoplatonic vehicle discourse which shall form the focus of the following section: the impact of rituals on the *pneuma*.

### 3.3. *Pneuma* and Rituals

In *De insomniis*, Synesius repeatedly speaks of τελεταί ('rituals'; in Late Antiquity the term has a predominantly mystic connotation) in connection either with divination or with the purification of the *pneuma*. These rituals are closely connected with the *Chaldean Oracles* and are part of a discourse which he shares with his unnamed philosophical opponents – given the appeal to the *Oracles* as the uncontested authority and criterium, these figures are best identified as pagan Neoplatonists, perhaps of the type described admiringly by Eunapius of Sardes in his *Vitae sophistarum et philosophorum*. Insofar, these rites are part of the Neoplatonic ritual dis-

<sup>107</sup> See also TOULOUSE 2001, 235–6 and 242, who uses Synesius as a source for Porphyrian material; he points to the Aristotelian theory of gradual transition from one element to the other, each element being capable of transformation into the immediately lower element. In his view, Porphyry (and in his wake Synesius) would combine this Aristotelian theme with the Stoic *pneuma* to obtain a *pneuma* which can change between aether and lower elements, so that it becomes a perfect mirror for the disposition of the soul without any substance and individuality of its own. With his interpretation that the Synesian summits “assureraient une forme de survie corporelle supérieure, imitant la vie éternelle de l'âme” (229), he follows, however cautiously, the Christianising interpretation of Lacombrade on which see n. 10 and 33.

<sup>108</sup> In *matrem deorum* 18.178b–c: αὐτίκα μὲν αὐταῖς ἐλλάμπει τὸ θεῖον φῶς, θεωθεῖσαι δὲ αὐταὶ τόνον τινὰ καὶ ῥώμην ἐπιτιθέασι τῷ συμφύτῳ πνεύματι, τοῦτο δὲ ὑπ' αὐτῶν στομούμενον ὥσπερ καὶ κρατυνόμενον σωτηρίας ἐστὶν αἴτιον ὄλω τῷ σώματι.

<sup>109</sup> In *matrem deorum* 18.178d.

course based on the *Chaldean Oracles* and their vocabulary which we commonly call ‘theurgy’.<sup>110</sup> Synesius takes a clear stance. Regarding divinatory rituals, he acknowledges the efficacy of various methods, but extols dream divination as the handiest, most pious and, not least, safest form with regard to the current legislation.<sup>111</sup> When the *pneuma* is appropriately purified, the soul can enjoy true contact with the divine through *phantasia* and even be led to ascend to the intelligible.<sup>112</sup> Regarding the purification of the vehicle, he acknowledges purificatory rituals which are efficacious: the “secret philosophy” purifies the *pneuma* through its τελεταί,<sup>113</sup> the τελεταί open up a possibility to be rid of a presumably extremely recalcitrant *pneuma* in exceptional cases and they minister to a soul which has turned itself upwards through *metanoia* and wants to ascend.<sup>114</sup>

What is the background to this position? Given the preeminence of the *Chaldean Oracles* and Porphyry in the treatise, it is natural to turn to them first. Unfortunately, we do not find any explicit reference to rituals involving the *pneuma* in the fragments of the former.<sup>115</sup> With Porphyry, we have more material, although quite poorly transmitted. His lost work on the *Return of the Soul* is not only echoed in Synesius’ *pneumatike psyche*, which appears in the Latin translation of Porphyry used by Augustine as *anima spiritalis*, but also in the repeated mention of τελεταί (*teletae* in Augustine’s excerpts). The exact nature of these rites is not clear. In the context of purification, *teletae lunae atque solis* are mentioned;<sup>116</sup> other rites seem to effect contact with angels or gods<sup>117</sup> and to produce visions.<sup>118</sup> Through theurgic

<sup>110</sup> For Synesius’ attitude to theurgy at length as well as his possible place in the 4th century Neoplatonic discourse see TANASEANU-DÖBLER 2013a with detailed bibliography.

<sup>111</sup> See *De ins.* 2–3 and 12.

<sup>112</sup> *De ins.* 4.134C–135B, 11.143A–C Before the *phantastikon* introduces a god into itself, ‘inclusions’ (presumably impurities) disappear: 6.136D. *De ins.* 10.142C: a pure soul attracts through kinship a *pneuma theion* to its intercourse; 14.149A: a pure soul enjoys the company of an encosmic god because of their common origin.

<sup>113</sup> *De ins.* 6.136D.

<sup>114</sup> *De ins.* 7.138B–C, 8.139A.

<sup>115</sup> The information given by Psellos in a commentary to *Ch.Or.* fr. 110 that the “Chaldean” teaches a purification and revigoration of the vehicle through ύλικάι τελεταί, by means of λίθοι, πόαι και έπωδαί (Εξήγησις τών χαλδαϊκών όητών, PG 1132A = p. 171 in DES PLACES 1971) might reflect Chaldean lore, but as known to Psellos through the mediation of Proclus.

<sup>116</sup> *De regr.* fr. 284F SMITH.

<sup>117</sup> *De regr.* fr. 285F SMITH presents two classes of angels: those who *deorsum descendentes hominibus theurgicis divina pronuntient* (“who descend and announce divine matters to theurgically skilled men”), and those *qui in terris ea, quae patris sunt, et altitudinem profunditatemque declarent* (“who proclaim on earth that which belongs to the Father, and His sublimity and profundity”). See also fr. 286F, 287F, 288aF.

<sup>118</sup> *De regr.* fr. 290F SMITH: *hanc* (sc. the *anima spiritalis*) *enim dicit per quasdam consecrationes theurgicas, quas teletas vocant, idoneam fieri atque aptam susceptioni spirituum et angelorum et ad videndos deos* (“For he [sc. Porphyry] says that by certain theurgic consecrations, which

rites, the purified spiritual soul may rise to a higher place in the universe.<sup>119</sup> Porphyry is very ambivalent about them: while he recognises their efficacy to produce contact between humans and some higher powers, angels and *daimones*, he seems to consider this a rather unimportant trifle. His main concern is the access and ascent to the highest divine principles, described in terms of the Chaldean supreme triad as Father – median entity – Fatherly Intellect. The purgations of the *anima spiritalis* and the *phantasia* associated with it can only help man to ascend above his sphere to the angelic and daimonic, but not to the divine proper; and these lower powers might even turn against the worshipper. Only the principles themselves and a philosophical life can truly purify the compound of soul and *pneuma* and help it ascend.<sup>120</sup> Additionally Porphyry is as clearly aware as Synesius is of the problematic legal position of the private rites of theurgy;<sup>121</sup> given the serious risks and the trifling advantage, he tends to reject the practice of such rites altogether. This is mirrored by Porphyry's position to rituals in other writings such as *De abstinentia* or the *Letter to Marcella*: the philosopher, who is the priest of the supreme god and renders him the due spiritual cult through his ascent, ultimately does not need material rites to achieve his goal.<sup>122</sup>

Porphyry's student Iamblichus, on the contrary, stands for a Neoplatonism which acknowledges and reveres religion in general, and ritual in particular. The strongest articulation of this position is found in his treatise *De mysteriis*, written as a reply to Porphyry's critique of rituals in his *Letter to Anebo*. In Iamblichus' other writings, which are not born out of a direct

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they call *teletae*, this [sc. the pneumatic soul] becomes capable and apt to receive spirits and angels and to see the gods"). See also fr. 290aF. See also Porphyrios, *In Ti.* fr. 2.51.38 SODANO.

<sup>119</sup> *De regr.* 287F mentions an elevation in *aetherias vel empyrias mundi sublimitates et firmamenta caelestia* ("the aethereal or fiery heights and celestial firmaments"), in a divinatory context, *ut possent dii vestri theurgicis pronuntiare divina* ("so that your gods can announce divine matters to the theurgically skilled"). Fr. 288aF: *daimones* who appear as aetheric gods promise that those who are in *anima spiritali theurgica arte purgati ad patrem quidem non redeunt, sed super aerias plagas inter deos aetherios habitabunt* ("purified in the pneumatic soul by the theurgic art can certainly not return to the Father, but they will dwell above the aereal regions among the aethereal gods"). See also fr. 293F and 294bF.

<sup>120</sup> *De regr.* fr. 284F and aF, 287F, 288F, 290F, 291F.

<sup>121</sup> *De regr.* fr. 289F and aF.

<sup>122</sup> For a detailed discussion of Porphyry's attitude to rituals see I. TANASEANU-DÖBLER, "Nur der Weise ist Priester": Rituale und Ritualkritik bei Porphyrios", in: ead. / U. BERNER (eds.), *Religion und Kritik in der Antike* (Münster 2009) 109–55. For another position see A. SMITH, "Porphyry and Pagan Religious Practice", in: J. J. CLEARY (ed.), *The Perennial Tradition of Neoplatonism* (Leuven 1997) 29–35, or id., "Religion, Magic and Theurgy in Porphyry", in: id., *Plotinus, Porphyry and Iamblichus. Philosophy and Religion in Neoplatonism. Variorum collected studies series 979* (Farnham / Burlington, VT 2011) XIX, 1–10.

polemical involvement, he is much less combative, embracing essentially the same philosophical ideal of spiritual perfection through philosophy.<sup>123</sup>

In *De mysteriis*, the role of the soul's vehicle as the seat of the *phantasia* plays an important role, given the essential importance of *phantasia* for divination. Employing the old division between inspired and technical divination, Iamblichus outlines photagogy as a special form of the former: the gods use the purified "luminous vehicle" to create *phantasiai* and thus enter into contact with the worshippers.<sup>124</sup> Divinatory rites such as those performed at the traditional sanctuary in Kolophon are said to have secondary value, preparing the "luminous *pneuma*" for the presence of the god; the primary agents of the illumination is the god, who operates unconditioned by the rituals.<sup>125</sup> Besides divination, Iamblichus also points out the salutary effects of prayer on the soul and its *pneuma* in a passage rich with Chaldean vocabulary: the soul is brought to gradual union with the divine, while the *pneuma* is purified from all traces of becoming.<sup>126</sup> Synesius shares with Iamblichus not only the theory that the soul contains the forms of becoming in analogy to the intellect, which contains those of being,<sup>127</sup> but also the conviction that dreams can be a medium for contact with the divine,<sup>128</sup> and not just a human or at best daimonic phenomenon, as Porphyry would have it.<sup>129</sup> Iamblichus' description of photagogy, where the divine interacts with the human being by means of the purified luminous body recalls Synesius' praise of dream divination as the means *par excellence* of contact with the divine; as in Synesius, for Iamblichus truly inspired divination leads eventually to the ascent of the soul.<sup>130</sup> However,

<sup>123</sup> See TANASEANU-DÖBLER 2013b, 95–135.

<sup>124</sup> *Myst.* 3.14.

<sup>125</sup> *Myst.* 3.11.

<sup>126</sup> *Myst.* 5.26. On the purification of the vehicle in *De mysteriis* see also TOULOUSE 2001, 250–60.

<sup>127</sup> *De ins.* 4.134A–B with *Myst.* 3.3.

<sup>128</sup> Inspired dreams in Iamblichus as a distinct class to be distinguished from other dreams: *Myst.* 3.2–3.

<sup>129</sup> Porphyry on dreams and divination in general: *Ep. ad Aneb.* 2.3–7 SODANO and Iamblichus' paraphrase and reply in *Myst.* 3.2; 3.7–8; 3.20–2; 3.25; 3.27. In *De abst.* 2.51–3 Porphyry states that the philosopher does not actually need to practice divination, but nevertheless concedes that although the philosopher does not take the initiative in divination, he may be warned of dangers by the interventions of good δαίμονες, through dreams, signs or a special voice.

<sup>130</sup> *Myst.* 3.31. Cf. also the general reference of DI PASQUALE BARBANTI 1998, 167 or TOULOUSE 2001, 250. ATHANASSIADI 1993, 130 sees the connection between Synesius and Iamblichus especially in the connection between prophetic dreams and "holiness" as well as in the corresponding critique of technical divination. BERGEMANN 2006, 391–2 and 394–9 rightly points out the proximity between Synesius' conception of divination by means of the purified *pneuma* to Iamblichus, but develops his analysis against the background of his speculative reconstruction of Iamblichus' conception of theurgy and the vehicle. The points of contact between Synesius and Iamblichus regarding inspired divination and *phantasia*

Synesius concentrates his praise of inspired divination to dream divination and thus restricts the influence of ritual practice.<sup>131</sup>

The need of specific purifications for the vehicle is expressed at its clearest in Hierocles' commentary on the *Golden Verses*, who insists that the whole man, i.e. soul and immortal body, must be purified in order to ascend after death to his heavenly, sub-lunar dwelling.<sup>132</sup> Only if the vehicle is properly purified can it bear the communion with the other aetheric bodies;<sup>133</sup> it needs to be freed from the *sympatheia* towards the mortal body and from all material pollution (μολυσμός; ὕλικαὶ φαντασίαι).<sup>134</sup> While the purification of the soul comes about through theoretical and practical philosophy,<sup>135</sup> the distinctive purification of the vehicle is performed ritually, by means of the "hieratic ascent",<sup>136</sup> "telestic"<sup>137</sup> or "the art of sacred rites",<sup>138</sup> according to the "sacred customs", rites performed in a decent manner, not in the manner of beggar-priests.<sup>139</sup> The rites envisaged are not esoteric rites available to a select few; on the contrary, all cults of the cities are seen as products of telestic.<sup>140</sup> However, the superior purification of the soul through philosophy also impacts on the vehicle, as lifestyle or diet influence the purity of the vehicle,<sup>141</sup> even for the vehicle the best purification and re-feathering consists in gradually growing accustomed

are also noted by SHEPPARD 1997. She interprets them however not in terms of reception, but rather as parallel developments based on a Platonic tradition of a link between *phantasia* and divination which she ultimately traces back to the description of the mantic function of the liver in the *Timaeus* (208). However, the points of contact go beyond a mere general connection between *phantasia* and inspired divination: they ground this connection in the doctrine of the pneumatic envelope and its purity. Therefore the assumption of Iamblichean influence on Synesius represents the simplest solution, given also the parallel to *Myst.* 3.3 in *De ins.* 4.1.

<sup>131</sup> The only type of ritual practice envisaged is going to sleep in pure silence after washing one's hands (11); Synesius contrasts this quite Hellenic (because already Homeric) simplicity with the complicated practice required by other divinatory methods (12). His preference for dream divination against other, more ritual types of divination parallels what Eunapius tells us about Iamblichus' student Aedesius in *VS* 6.1.4–5 and 6.4.1–4.

<sup>132</sup> *In carm. aur.* 26.6–11 and 26.21–27.2. Cf. DI PASQUALE BARBANTI 1998, 197–209 and TOULOUSE 2001, 285–290, whose interest does not lie in the rites but rather in the general philosophical conception of purification outlined by Hierocles.

<sup>133</sup> *In carm. aur.* 26.23.

<sup>134</sup> 26.8, 26.10–11, 26.22, 26.26.

<sup>135</sup> E.g. 26.5.

<sup>136</sup> 26.22.

<sup>137</sup> 26.22, 26.25–27.

<sup>138</sup> 26.9, 26.24.

<sup>139</sup> 26.9.

<sup>140</sup> 26.26–7. SCHIBLI 2002, 107–18 discusses the role of ritual purification in Hierocles, but assigns it to a clear complex of esoteric theurgic rites, in spite of the mention of public cults. I have attempted to argue against this fixed notion of theurgy, but will not enter upon this subject here, as it is irrelevant for our subject (see TANASEANU-DÖBLER 2013b, on Hierocles 175–85, for further information).

<sup>141</sup> 26.5.

to distance itself from the material world.<sup>142</sup> So here, as in Synesius, we have the same combination of ritual and philosophical purification and the clear subordination of rituals, although Hierocles takes the latter to encompass a wider scale, not simply esoteric philosophical rituals. Hierocles' account is also more systematic, outlining clear domains of philosophical and ritual purification, whereas Synesius considers both in relation to the *pneuma*. Given this play with Iamblichean and Porphyrian tenets as well as the parallels to and also differences from Hierocles, the later student of Plutarch, one may wonder (although here we enter the domain of speculation) whether the unnamed philosophical opponents "in white mantles" from *ep.* 154 might be connected to the Athenian milieu. Synesius' *ep.* 56 shows a rivalry between philosophers who have studied in Athens and others like Synesius who have never seen the Mecca of philosophy, having studied in other, 'provincial', locations such as Alexandria; after his visit to Athens, he retorts with the scornful dismissal of the "pair of Plutarchean wise men" in favour of the supremacy of Alexandria and Hypatia (*ep.* 136).

Whatever the exact identity of Synesius' philosophical opponents, we may note that even in the particularly Neoplatonic domain of theurgic rites Synesius is not devoid of originality: he is the only voice to assert that the pneumatic body may be put aside and left back in the material world in exceptional cases, basing himself on the authority of unspecified rites (*τελεταί*). How such a separation should be effected remains unclear; in the Porphyrian and Iamblichean system which he himself adopts when describing the quasi-physical behaviour of the encosmic *pneuma*, such a situation is out of the question.

#### 4. Synesius in Context

Our review of the Neoplatonic background of Synesius' pneumatic vehicle has shown how he draws freely upon various philosophers to create a synthesis of his own. Although he is indebted to Porphyry even for the very literary allusions in his description of the vicissitudes of the *pneuma*, he does not follow Porphyry's dismissal of cathartic rites but asserts their efficacy and usefulness, albeit considering them as secondary to the philosophical life. He shares Porphyry's doctrine of the provenance and dissolution of the vehicle, but enriches it with the curious idea that some particles of fire and air might become aetheric. Regarding divination, he prefers the side of Iamblichus and sketches a theory of dreams that clearly recalls Iamblichus' theory of inspired divination and especially photagogy, not the skeptical attitude of Porphyry. This shows us how flexible late antique Neoplatonism could be; it also shows us a Synesius who wants to show that he knows

<sup>142</sup> 26.10–11.

and masters this 'technical', specialised philosophical discourse. The fact that he chose *pneuma* and *phantasia* as his subject in this showpiece testifies indirectly to the importance of these doctrines in his philosophical milieu, which we can otherwise hardly grasp, apart from Hypatia. In his close terminological analysis of *De insomniis*, Aujoulat has noted how Synesius shifts his terms from the *phantasia* as a faculty of the soul to the more material aspects of its substrate, the *pneuma* or the *eidolon*, and particularly stresses the conceptual ambiguity; but this can also be read as a display of Synesius' rhetorical versatility, exploiting kindred concepts and their ambiguity to create a picture in bold strokes which appears plausible as long as one looks at it from a distance and does not inquire into the minutiae.

## Rhetoric in *De insomniis*: Critique and Practice

Donald A. Russell

By Synesius' time, the old quarrel between rhetoric and philosophy, classically described in the long first chapter of von Arnim's *Dio von Prusa* (Berlin 1898, 1–114), with all its mutual disparagement, had little relation to real professional life, although it remained a literary topos. It was now quite usual for a scholar to excel in both these departments of the classical *paideia*. The Neoplatonist philosopher Syrianus comments on Hermogenes as well as on Aristotle. The orator Themistius, the most elegant of panegyrists, is also the interpreter of Aristotle's *De anima*. Synesius too has a foot in both camps, and every page reveals his rhetorical expertise.

The most rhetorical of his works is, no doubt, the *Encomium of Baldness*; yet even this plays, half-seriously, with cosmological and theological ideas. More importantly, in his *Dion* – written about the same time as *De insomniis*, and sent with it to Hypatia – he offers what may be seen as a theory to justify his stance. In his view, the liberal arts, and especially rhetoric, are not only a propaedeutic to philosophy, inasmuch as they sharpen and train the intellect to make it capable of reaching out to higher things – that is, to reality and to God – but they have an intrinsic value of their own. A reader of poetry who accepts it on quite a superficial level, without seeking deeper meanings (by allegory, presumably, or by the kind of close reading that looks for moral implications in the fiction), has nevertheless achieved something of value for his own life. Synesius has no doubt that the liberal arts are an essential part of the philosopher's equipment. He would not be happy, we may suspect, with the traditional description of them as mere 'handmaids'.<sup>1</sup> One of the main themes of *Dion* is a polemic against monks who (rather like the Cynics attacked by Julian a generation earlier) claimed that knowledge of God could be attained by devotion, unaided and unprepared. It might, Synesius thinks, be very occasionally so achieved, by a rarely gifted spirit, but most of us need all the help we can get to make such spiritual ascent a possibility, and that help is provided by education and study.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> See, e.g., A. STÜCKELBERGER, *Senecas 88. Brief* (Heidelberg 1965) 61.

<sup>2</sup> For this aspect of *Dion*, see I. HADOT, *Arts libéraux et philosophie dans la pensée antique* (Paris 1984) 276–80.



The letter to Hypatia<sup>3</sup> sent with *Dion* and *De insomniis* (*Epist.* 154) enlarges on the same theme. Synesius complains that some critics – ‘the men in white’ (philosophers) and ‘the men in black’ (monks) – think he is wrong to spend time on style and rhythm, or to express opinions on Homer or rhetorical figures: such concerns are unworthy of a philosopher who ought to be dwelling on divine matters and ‘the intelligibles’. They think he is a frivolous person, “fit only for play” (πρὸς μόνην παιδιὰν ἐπιτήδειον), because of his writing on hunting and the archaism of his poetry. He disagrees: literary art is good, and quite proper in a philosopher. But perhaps one can go too far: in *De insomniis* (148B) he tells us that God warned him in a dream not to write too elaborately out of “enthusiasm for the ancient Attic”.<sup>4</sup>

It is in this light that we should consider the part played by rhetoric in *De insomniis*. There are two aspects, one critical, one structural.

(I) On the critical side, the most striking feature is the anecdote about the two nonagenarian declaimers (155C–D). They are ridiculed because, even at their age, they have not practised τὴν τῶν λόγων ἀλήθειαν. The phrase seems vague and ambiguous. It is tempting to think that it hints at philosophy: men of that age ought to be wondering what life is all about. I certainly took this view of the passage when I mentioned it in the context of critiques of declamation<sup>5</sup> and remarked that Synesius here “speaks as a philosopher”. But, although a ninety-year old in court would be a ridiculous spectacle, I think I was wrong. The passage is best seen as a critique of the unreality of declamation themes: this is traditional.<sup>6</sup> It is the unreality of these themes, compared with the problems of real life that the pupils will have to confront one day, that is the fundamental objection. The theme involves standard elements: rich man, poor man, war hero’s reward. The nearest parallel I can find is in Sopotros, Case 23.<sup>7</sup> Here the rich man distinguishes himself in battle while the poor man is out of the country, and he demands as his reward that the poor man should be surrendered to him. Rather than suffer this, the poor man kills himself; and his enemy is tried for murder.

In any case, Synesius’ complaint against the two old gentlemen – and maybe it holds against all elderly teachers and scholars – is that they have not grown up. They spend all their lives in the classroom, doing exercises,

<sup>3</sup> See *Intro.* pp. 4–5, GARZYA 1979, 271–7.

<sup>4</sup> For a general survey of Synesius’ rhetorical stance, see LUCHNER 2010, 9–16. See also A. SHEPPARD (above, pp. 101–102) on the relevance of the rhetorical concept of φαντασία to Synesius’ own views.

<sup>5</sup> See RUSSELL 1983, 21.

<sup>6</sup> See S. F. BONNER, *Roman Declamation in the Late Republic and Early Empire* (Liverpool 1949) 71–83.

<sup>7</sup> To be found in: C. WALZ, *Rhetores Graeci*, vol. 8 (Stuttgart 1835) 148–61; more recently, M. WEISSENBERGER, *Sopatri Quaestionum Divisio* (Würzburg 2010) 94–104.

instead of using their skills profitably in the real world of courts and senates. Synesius himself, of course, was a man of affairs, and much of his life was spent in public, however much he may lament (148C) the three years wasted in his (not unsuccessful) embassy to the emperor Arcadius. Irsome as such labours may be, he knows that they are a man's work and they need all a man's skill.

His other critical point is, so far as I know, without parallel. It concerns μῦθος, 'fable', the most elementary of the traditional progymnasmata. He suggests (154D) that the idea of animals or inanimate objects talking, as they do in Aesop and his imitators, is derived from the experience of dreams, in which we do seem to hear such things. He then goes on to propose (155B) that to put a dream experience, with all its inconsequentialities, into words, would be a demanding task for the rhetorician, the crowning exercise of his training rather than the first step. For a philosopher, he thinks, it would be an appropriate relaxation, so here at least the rhetor and the philosopher, even if they are combined in one person, have different standards of seriousness. What is a big thing for one of them, is play for the other. How serious is this? It seems to me characteristic of Synesius' whimsicality, a teasing and original way of combining serious thoughts with humour: not a very common thing in Greek literature, but perhaps learned above all from Plato.

(II) I turn now to the structural elements of *De insomniis* which are due to rhetorical teaching. The book is explicitly an encomium – or rather a pair of encomia, one of divination in general and one of divination by dreams. The end of the first is signalled at 133C: τὸ ὄλον αὐτῆς ἐκ τῶν ἐνόητων ἐγκεκωμίασται – “now divination in general has already received its meed of praise, so far as our means have allowed”. (We shall need to return to this later.) The end of the second is similarly signalled at 147D: Ἄλις ἐγκωμίων καὶ καταβάλωμεν – “enough of encomia, let us put them aside”, if this is what καταβάλλω here means.

Now encomia of an art or skill, like encomia of cities or inanimate things, are, in rhetorical teaching, constructed by analogy with encomia of persons. Origins, virtues, benefits and comparison with rivals are standard topics.<sup>8</sup> Hermogenes<sup>9</sup> gives hunting as an example. It should be praised (a) from its inventors, Artemis and Apollo, (b) from its practitioners, the heroes. The main approach should be by the qualities of those who practice it: with hunters, this means courage, daring, quickness of thinking and physical strength.

A classic school model of the technique is Libanius' encomium of farming.<sup>10</sup> This begins by citing Hesiod, for whom farming and theogony were

<sup>8</sup> See L. PERNOT, *La rhétorique de l'éloge dans le monde gréco-romain* (Paris 1993) 238–49.

<sup>9</sup> H. RABE, *Rhetores Graeci* vol. 6 (Leipzig 1913) 17.13–20.

<sup>10</sup> R. FOERSTER, *Libanii Opera* vol. 8 (Leipzig 1915) 261–7.

equally important themes for poetry. It then proceeds to the divine origins of agriculture: Athena yoked cattle, Dionysus revealed the vine, Athena gave the olive and showed, in her rivalry with Poseidon, that agriculture is the foundation of all civilized life. The speaker then turns to the virtues of farmers. They are just, because they are far removed from the deceits and wickednesses of the city. They are temperate, because they do not have brothels or indulge in sexual licence, but are faithful to wives whom they take solely to father children. They are brave, because they have to contend with every extreme of weather. They are wise because (for instance) they have to understand the stars and seasons. So they have all four cardinal virtues. They also have health, the greatest of human goods. They score highly for usefulness: indeed, without them we should be no better than wolves. And finally their life is pleasurable: what could be more delightful than lying under a pine or plane, watching cornfields waving in the winds, hearing cows low or watching calves gambol or suck from their mother's udders? Comparisons round off the encomium: athletics is a labour which gives strength but no profit; rhetoric is quite unnecessary for life; seafaring is full of risk and danger.

How much of this conventional encomiastic structure can we find in Synesius? Obviously not all: perhaps only *disiecta membra*. We should note the closing formula of 133C: ἐκ τῶν ἐνότων ἐγκεκωμιάσται. What precisely does this mean? There are, I think, two possibilities. One is that it means "on the basis of the inherent qualities of divination" – as opposed perhaps to its incidental benefits, like the colonizing due to Delphi, which is a regular theme in this context.<sup>11</sup> More probably – and so most translators take it – it means "on the basis of the topics available to me". Some of the conventional topics were not available: how could Synesius, a Christian, begin with Apollo, as pagan writers naturally would?<sup>12</sup>

But some topics *are* available. Divination is "the greatest good" (131A), it is a special form of *wisdom* (one virtue at least), and it is the privilege of a very few who, like Calchas, can by its means come nearer to God.

But this more general encomium is of course less important for Synesius than the special one of dreams. This too contains *disiecta membra* of the conventional encomium, but they are embedded in the philosophical arguments relating to *pneuma* and *phantasia*. Note the following:

(a) The argument in defence of the obscurity of dreams, which is admitted to be a feature of them (130B), but not one peculiar to this form of prophecy, and possibly even a mark of nobility (133D).

(b) The treatment of the accessibility of dreams. This shows very clearly how the rhetorician can take both sides of an issue, without expecting to be accused of inconsistency. On the one hand (144C), it is a positive char-

<sup>11</sup> See, e.g., Men. Rhet. 442.14–21 Spengel = RUSSELL-WILSON 1981, 216, Cic. *Div.* 1.3.

<sup>12</sup> See, e.g., Men. Rhet. 442.9 Spengel = RUSSELL-WILSON 1981, 216.

acteristic that divination is the province of an élite. On the other, universal accessibility is no disadvantage (135C–D); indeed, the ‘democratic’ quality of dreams is its most ‘divine’ feature (144C) and it exhibits two virtues – wisdom and piety – and we have seen that the identification of virtues is a crucial element in encomium. Furthermore (143B), given the need to keep one’s *pneuma* in a healthy condition, practising dream-divination is also an incentive to a third virtue, σωφροσύνη.

(c) Usefulness, another essential topic, is seen on two levels. In everyday life, as Synesius shows from his own experience, dreams have been known to help the philosopher and writer (148A), the hunter (148B) and the ambassador (148D). On the higher, and infinitely more important, level, it has the power to raise the soul to communion with higher beings (143A, 149A), and the faculty on which it depends (φαντασία) is possibly (134C) even superior to ordinary sense-perception – on which other forms of divination depend. So here too is a comparison (σύγκρισις), another key feature of the encomium, always to the advantage of the dreams.

(d) So too (see esp. 145A–D) the cheapness, easiness and autonomy of dreams are contrasted with the elaboration, trouble, expense and political danger of other ways of inquiring into the future.

(e) The development on hope (146B–147A) is also very much in the rhetorical tradition. This too draws a comparison: what our dreams offer is the kind of hope that has a real assurance in it, because it comes from God; it is therefore totally different from the wishful thinking in which we indulge in our waking hours.

I conclude with one further point. This is a very personal work, and is so written as to appear spontaneous.<sup>13</sup> So we should note phrases like “This ought to have been said first” (144C), and “I have come close to being convicted of ingratitude” (147D). These remind us of the advice of Hermogenes (359.6–14 Rabe) on one of the techniques of the “sincere and, as it were, living speech” (ἀληθινοῦ καὶ οἷον ἐμψύχου<sup>14</sup> λόγου): “The trick is, in all subjects and not only in passages of abuse, to give the impression of being moved and not speaking with due consideration, e.g. ‘It nearly escaped me’ or again ‘I have stumbled into saying what it will be proper to say later on’”.<sup>15</sup>

Synesius was an artist in words: we should give him credit for it, and read him with a proper scepticism.

<sup>13</sup> See Introduction, p. 5.

<sup>14</sup> Cf. 154A μὴ ἄψυχα φθέγγεσθαι.

<sup>15</sup> Ἐπι μέθοδος ἀληθινοῦ καὶ οἷον ἐμψύχου λόγου ... ἔστι τὸ κἀν τοῖς ἄλλοις καὶ μὴ μόνον ἐν ταῖς λοιδορίαις δοκεῖν αὐτόθεν πῶς κινούμενον λέγειν ἄλλὰ μὴ ἔσκεμμένον, οἷον ‘ἀλλὰ γὰρ μικροῦ με παρῆλθε’ καὶ πάλιν ‘ἀλλὰ γὰρ ἐμπέπτακα εἰς λόγους, οὗς αὐτίκα μάλα ὕστερον ἀρμόσει λέγειν’.



# Nikephoros Gregoras' Commentary on Synesius, *De insomniis*

Börje Bydén

Sometime between 1330 and 1332 Nikephoros Gregoras wrote to his friend Demetrios Kabasilas about a work he had composed a long time ago,<sup>1</sup>

“a book that does the famous Synesius a considerable favour. For as you know this man published in antiquity a very excellent book on dreams. For in the same measure as nature in splendid ambition rendered him outstanding among Greeks in wisdom, he himself ambitiously made this book the best of all that he had written, as though he were competing against his own nature and bringing back to it the fruits that it had borne, as splendid as you would expect. He himself testifies to this: for he says that his movements were directed by God; he had not relied on human ability for his work; he had provided the stylus, but God had carried out the whole enterprise, that's how prophetic and inspired a book it is. For this very reason, most of it is expressed in a difficult style, as hard for us to understand as the oracles that issue from the tripod of Delphi, in which mystical principles, not to be divulged to the multitude, may lie concealed, covered by words as if by veils that throw a mighty shadow. Anyway, this book I elucidated with interpretations of many kinds, to the best of my ability, in deference to the entreaties of many people” (*Letter* 148.214–32).<sup>2</sup>

Gregoras' commentary on the *De insomniis* survives in at least thirty manuscripts, some of which are dated to the fourteenth century.<sup>3</sup> It was printed by Turnèbe in the sixteenth century, by Pétau in the seventeenth century and by Migne (mostly reproducing Pétau) in 1865 (*PG* 149, coll.

<sup>1</sup> On the addressee and the date of the letter, see BEYER 1989, esp. 148–55. Cf. also ŠEVČENKO 1964, 444–5.

<sup>2</sup> εἰδέναι σε οἶμαι, ὡς ἐκ πολλοῦ μοι βιβλίον πεπόνηται μακρᾶς τινος χάριτος Συνεσίῳ τῷ πάντῳ δημιουργόν. περὶ γὰρ ἐνυπνίων οἶσθα ὡς ἐξηγήγε πάλαι βιβλίον ἐκεῖνος πάντῳ τοι κράτιστον· ὅσῳ γὰρ αὐτὸν ἡ φύσις λαμπρῶς φιλοτιμησάμενη περιττὸν τὴν σοφίαν ἐν Ἑλληνισμῷ ἔδειξε, τοσοῦτῳ καὶ τὸ βιβλίον τοῦτῶν ἄλλων ὅποσα τάνδρῃ πεπόνηται πάντων βέλτιστον φιλοτιμησάμενος ἔδειξε καὶ αὐτός, ἀνθαμιλλώμενος οἷον τῇ φύσει τῇ ἑαυτοῦ καὶ τοὺς ἐκ ταύτης εἰκότως λαμπροὺς ἀναφῆρων ταύτη καρπούς. καὶ τοῦτ' αὐτὸς ἑαυτῷ μαρτυρεῖ· πρὸς γὰρ θεοῦ κεινησθαι καὶ οὐκ ἀνθρωπίνῃ πρὸς τοῦργον χρήσασθαι φάσκει δυνάμει, καὶ αὐτὸν μὲν τὴν γραφίδα διδόναι, θεὸν δὲ τὸ πᾶν ἐξεργάζεσθαι· οὕτω τι μαντικὸν καὶ ἔνθεον εἶναι φησι τὸ βιβλίον. διὰ δὴ τοῦτο, καὶ τὰ πλείω τουτοῦ δυσείκαστά τε ἐξηγήνεκται καὶ ὁποῖους τοὺς τοῦ Δελφικοῦ τρίποδος ἐξιόντας εἶναι χρησμούς ἀκούομεν, οἷς μουσικούς τινας καὶ τοῖς πολλοῖς ἀπορρήτους ὑφεδρῶν ἐνεσι λόγους, ὄνομασι κρυπτομένους καθάπερ τισὶ παραπετάσμασιν, ὅποια πολλὴν ἐπισύρονται γνῶφον. Τοῦτο τοίνυν πολλῶν παρακλήσεσιν εἴξαντες, ὅσον ἡμῖν ἐφικτόν, ἐρμηγείας πολυειδέσι διελευκάναμεν.

<sup>3</sup> PIETROSANTI 1996, 158–63 (enumerates in total 34 MSS).

521–642). The first critical edition, with an introduction and appendices, by Paolo Pietrosanti, appeared only in 1999.<sup>4</sup> References to the commentary in the following will be keyed to this edition. The only translation known to me is the Latin one by Antoine Pichon, first printed in 1586 with his translation of Synesius' text, and later reprinted by Migne.

## 1. The preface

All the editions (as well as Pichon's translation) also contain the commentator's preface to his work, which has partly been transmitted independently. This offers some interesting, if opaque, insights into the date and occasion of the composition as well as into Gregoras' purpose and method and his view of Synesius and the *De insomniis*. It may be useful, therefore, to summarize its content before proceeding to discuss these questions and any others that will be raised by the commentary itself.<sup>5</sup>

Given the deep-seated conservatism of Late Byzantine literary culture, Gregoras opens on a surprisingly whiggish note. It is nothing strange, he says, if ancient discoveries are developed for the better, whether this is due to the nature of time or the inability of human nature to reach perfection from the outset.<sup>6</sup> He commends his unnamed addressee's love of learning, which increases proportionally with his learning, like a fire running rampant in the reed.<sup>7</sup> Such is the nature of philosophical desire: the deeper one probes into the principles of things, the stronger the urge to advance even further. But one thing has never ceased to astonish Gregoras: as many Hellenes as flourish in their environment, the addressee never hesitates to lay the burden of his intellectual problems on Gregoras alone. Thus he has again proposed to the latter a task so laborious that Gregoras would rather have betrayed his fortune and left the undertaking to the others. Still, since the addressee has persuaded him that a philosophical ear should pay no attention to unjust talk, he will try to fulfil his wish (123.1–125.12).

Without divulging the exact content of his addressee's proposal, Gregoras points out that the great Synesius, as everyone agrees, did not practise just one branch of wisdom, but nearly all of them. He was well versed not only in Hellenic learning — especially in the tradition of Plato and Pythagoras — but also in the Chaldaean mysteries, and was as much at

<sup>4</sup> PIETROSANTI 1999.

<sup>5</sup> Another summary will be found in PIETROSANTI 1999, xxxiii–xxxv.

<sup>6</sup> Contrast the more typically Byzantine *aporia* introducing e.g. Theodore Metochites' *Semeioseis gnomikai*: “for us late-comers in history there is absolutely nothing left to say, even granted that we know how to say it” (1.1).

<sup>7</sup> For the theme of φιλομάθεια developed here, cf. *In De ins.* 40.25–6: φιλομαθῆ δὲ τὸν φιλόσοφον λέγει [sc. ὁ Πλάτων, *Phd.* 82c1], ὡς φιλοπράγμονα καὶ ἐρευνητικὸν περὶ τὴν φύσιν τῶν ὄντων.

home in the lore of Egyptian as in that of Delphic religion. Indeed, it would be impious for a lover of learning to refrain from inquiring into accounts of every kind of theory and practice, embracing some of them but not others. Synesius himself adhered to practically all of them, so long as he was a pagan (Ἕλληνην), but renounced them after becoming a Christian. His erudition and intelligence are easily recognized, as are his constantly philosophical mindset and dignified character, not least in the *De insomniis*. This is well illustrated by his letter to Hypatia (*Letter* 154), where he testifies to his divine inspiration in writing it (125.12–127.3).

Nevertheless, he can be reproached for expressing his lofty philosophical thoughts in an unconventional and difficult style.<sup>8</sup> His idiosyncratic diction and character grate on the reader's ears, as the thorn pricks the hand of one who picks roses. This may be explained by the fact that people in different parts of the world have different linguistic habits: Synesius, who spent his life in northern Africa, adopted some of the atticisms of the authors he read, but not all (127.3–128.5).<sup>9</sup>

This entails difficulties for the aspiring commentator, who has to be able to adapt to various kinds of alien doctrines and constantly runs the risk of being unfairly judged by biased critics. Still, if others are entitled to translate the works of Indians and Persians,<sup>10</sup> it will be admissible for Gregoras to clarify alien doctrines. Those who find the commentary useful will no doubt be more numerous than those who take exception (128.5–129.7).

To conclude, Gregoras explains that the commentary has been written for the benefit of the more as well as the less knowledgeable. Different readers will consult different parts, and some will have the ability and inclination to study it all. Synesius' *ipsissima dicta* on soul, imagination and oneiromancy will be elucidated, and it will be noted with whom he agrees or disagrees among the ancient philosophers. It will be a running commentary in the sense that each particular passage will be commented on in the order of the text (129.7–23).

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<sup>8</sup> According to the Late Byzantine version of the "character doctrine" as formulated by Joseph Rhakendytes (d. 1330), *Synopsis artis rhetoricae* 5 (pp. 530–4 WALZ), the simple character combines lofty thoughts with a humble, i.e. pure and clear, diction, as in Gregory of Nazianzus, *Or.* 38. Lofty thoughts couched in high-flown language make for obscurity.

<sup>9</sup> In his scholion on 148B (τῆς ἀρχαίας), Gregoras suggests that the "old Attic" to which Synesius says he is partial is the style developed by Gorgias, who made use of poetical words for the sake of dignity and *paradoxologia* (81.3–7). Cf. Philostratus, *VS* 1.481.12–26, 492.16–21.

<sup>10</sup> An allusion, no doubt, to such works as Manuel Planudes' treatise on Indian numerals (c. 1294) and the translations of Persian astronomical works carried out by Gregory Chioniades (and probably others) in the 1300s.



## 2. Date and circumstances of composition

As implied by Gregoras' letter to Demetrios Kabasilas, the commentary is a work of the author's youth. More precisely, it was published before his treatise on the astrolabe,<sup>11</sup> dedicated to emperor Andronicus II, who was forced to abdicate in May 1328. There is a complication in that Gregoras claims to have prepared two versions of his treatise on the astrolabe, first a "plain" one and then one in which he added "diagrammatic proofs of the causes".<sup>12</sup> Moreover, it has traditionally been held, partly on the basis of a remark in a later hand in a fourteenth-century manuscript,<sup>13</sup> that the unnamed addressee of the preface, and thus the dedicatee of the commentary, should be identified as Gregoras' mentor and benefactor, the Grand Logothete Theodore Metochites.<sup>14</sup> Since Metochites was ousted and driven into exile in connection with the fall of Andronicus II, this would be a further indication of a *terminus ante quem* in 1328. There is a complication here, too, in that Gregoras in his *Letter* 120 offers his commentary "as a sort of firstlings" to the Grand Domesticus John Kantakouzenos, who only came into office after the accession of Andronicus III. This led Ševčenko (1964, 438–45) to argue that the traditional identification of the addressee of the preface with Metochites must have been mistaken and to suggest a date of publication for Gregoras' commentary in c. 1330–35. His arguments were, however, far from conclusive (see the *Appendix* for a summary and rebuttal); on balance, the evidence favours the earlier dating.<sup>15</sup>

As far as Metochites is concerned, we know that Synesius was one of his favourite authors, probably the one besides Plutarch that he himself found most congenial to his own literary and philosophical aspirations.<sup>16</sup> When Gregoras wrote his mentor's obituary as part of the *Byzantine History*, he could think of only one criticism to level against him, namely that he had not modelled his style on any ancient author, with the result that it grated on the readers' ears, as the thorn pricks the hand of those who pick roses.<sup>17</sup> But for the initiated reader, who recognizes the passage from Gregoras' commentary on the *De insomniis*, even this is not really criticism but

<sup>11</sup> *Letter* 148.232–54, *Letter* 114.82–4, 89–90.

<sup>12</sup> *Letter* 114.88–94.

<sup>13</sup> Vindob. phil. gr. 273 (xiv/3), f. 1r. Other MSS have other superscriptions: τῆ παλαιολογίῃ (Monac. gr. 29); τῷ παλαιολόγῳ (Angel. gr. 82, f. 119v; Monac. gr. 10, p. 274); τῷ μεγάλῳ (Vat. gr. 116, f. 94r).

<sup>14</sup> For a brief account of Metochites and his philosophical works, see the entry "Theodore Metochites" in: H. LAGERLUND (ed.), *Encyclopedia of Medieval Philosophy. Philosophy Between 500 and 1500*. Springer reference (Heidelberg et al. 2011) 1266–69.

<sup>15</sup> This seems also to be the view of PIETROSANTI 1999, xl–xli.

<sup>16</sup> BYDÉN 2002a, esp. 286–87.

<sup>17</sup> *Hist.* 8.11 (1.272.6–11 SCHOPEN).

recognition of the fact that Metochites had after all succeeded in somehow modelling himself on the inimitably original Synesius.<sup>18</sup>

Metochites discusses Synesius' style at length in *Semeioseis gnomikai* 18. His way of presenting his subject is very similar to Gregoras':

"Synesius of Cyrene is a lover of every branch of wisdom, and highly successful in each one of them .... Philosophy is his aim above others, but because of his fertile mind he also cares about language (...)" (*Sem. gnom.* 18.1–2, trans. Hult).

Unusually for a philosopher, says Metochites, Synesius succeeds in marrying philosophical content to natural eloquence, albeit with some idiosyncrasies of style:

"(...) he does not use an everyday vocabulary, but sometimes — in fact, very often — takes leave of common and well-known usage (...) and makes his diction openly harsh" (*Sem. gnom.* 18.4.2–3, trans. Hult).

Like Gregoras, Metochites has an explanation for this — in fact, the very same one:

"(...) all those who were educated in Egypt (...) resemble each other in their language: they write on the whole somewhat harshly, and particularly in their vocabulary" (*Sem. gnom.* 17.1.1, trans. Hult).<sup>19</sup>

Synesius' philosophy, according to Metochites, is characterized by Platonic and Aristotelian eclecticism (*Sem. gnom.* 18.5.2–3) and by its scope, covering as it does natural philosophy, metaphysics and ethics as well as mathematics (*Sem. gnom.* 18.5.4–6). If Metochites is not confusing Synesius with his namesake the alchemist, I suppose "natural philosophy" must refer to the cosmology and psychology of the *De insomniis*. Metochites' only complaint is that Synesius was not, perhaps,

"as well-versed (πολυμαθής) in the works of his predecessors, or studied them so much, as some other men who are famous for their learning ..." (*Sem. gnom.* 18.5.7, trans. Hult).

That is to say, perhaps, that he did not leave behind any commentaries. In addition to the points of agreement between Gregoras' and Metochites' views of Synesius, there is, more pertinently to the question of the identity of the preface's addressee, some overlap between the compliments paid by Gregoras to the latter and the way Metochites describes the former. "Love of learning", the very theme of the preface, appears, as we have seen, already in the first sentence of Metochites' essay on Synesius. Now, the prac-

<sup>18</sup> Ševčenko, on the other hand, brushed aside Gregoras' double use of the simile as a "coïncidence ironique" (I. ŠEVČENKO, *La vie intellectuelle et politique à Byzance sous les premiers Paléologues. Études sur la polémique entre Théodore Métochite et Nicéphore Choumnos* [Brussels 1962] 35–6 n. 3).

<sup>19</sup> In *Sem. gnom.* 17.2.6–8, Synesius' style is singled out as an example of this Egyptian harshness: "(...) sometimes one is justified in censuring the strangeness of Synesius' style" (*Sem. gnom.* 17.2.8, trans. Hult).

tice of making reverence by making (tacit) reference, that is, approvingly quoting or alluding to the writings of one's addressee, was widespread in Byzantine correspondence. And the further refinement of praising your addressee for features and accomplishments he himself has praised in others is amply illustrated by Gregoras' borrowings from Metochites' essay on Plutarch (*Sem. gnom.* 71) in a congratulatory letter to the essayist himself (*Letter 23*).<sup>20</sup>

### 3. Background and purpose

This is not the proper place to discuss the reason why ambitious people in early fourteenth-century Constantinople wrote learned commentaries on ancient texts: let it suffice to observe that they did.<sup>21</sup> A more manageable question is why Gregoras chose — or was commissioned — to comment on the *De insomniis*. Part of the answer no doubt lies in the fact that Synesius was an author very much in fashion in the early Palaiologan period. He was held up as a model of the combination of rhetorical and philosophical concepts as well as of “bombastic diction” (ὀγκηραὶ λέξεις).<sup>22</sup> The lexica of the time (Thomas Magister, *Lexicon Vindobonense*, *Lexicon de Atticis nominibus*, *Fragmentum lexicum Graeci* — the last of which may indeed be the work of Gregoras) list dozens of uncommon words and uses of words from his writings. Handbooks of rhetoric especially recommended the reading of his *Letters*, and students followed their advice: witness 261 surviving manuscripts, around 70 of which date from the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, and a very considerable indirect tradition. Other Synesian works were also frequently copied: the *De insomniis*, for instance, is

<sup>20</sup> See BYDÉN 2002a, 269–73. This is not to deny there are also some intriguing points of friction between Gregoras' preface and the works of Metochites. I have already mentioned, for example, the progressive tone of the introductory sentence, which contrasts starkly with the pessimism vented in the introductory chapter of the *Semeioseis gnomikai*.

<sup>21</sup> There is no up-to-date broad synthetic work on the intellectual culture in the early Palaiologan period, but older works include E. FRYDE, *The Early Palaeologan Renaissance (1261–c. 1360)* (Leiden 2000); I. ŠEVČENKO, “The Palaeologan Renaissance”, in: W. TREADGOLD (ed.), *Renaissances Before the Renaissance. Cultural Revivals of Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages* (Stanford, CA 1984) 144–71; C. N. CONSTANTINIDES, *Higher Education in Byzantium in the Thirteenth and Early Fourteenth Centuries (1204–ca. 1310)*. Text and Studies of the History of Greece 11 (Nicosia 1982) and D. M. NICOL, *Church and Society in the Last Centuries of Byzantium*. The Birkbeck Lectures 1977 (Cambridge 1979). For a recent scholarly discussion of the nature of the so-called Palaiologan Renaissance, see N. GAUL, *Thomas Magistros und die spätbyzantinische Sophistik. Studien zum Humanismus urbaner Eliten der frühen Palaiologenzzeit*. Mainzer Veröffentlichungen zur Byzantinistik 10 (Wiesbaden 2011).

<sup>22</sup> Combined concepts: Joseph Rhakendytes, *Synopsis artis rhetoricae* 2, p. 521 WALZ; bombastic diction: Joseph Rhakendytes, *Synopsis artis rhetoricae* 4, p. 526 WALZ.

preserved in 64 manuscripts.<sup>23</sup> But Palaiologan scholars were not content to copy and to imitate. At the beginning of the period, George (Gregory II) of Cyprus wrote a detailed refutation of the *Calvitii encomium*.<sup>24</sup> And then, of course, there was Metochites. Second, some of Synesius' philosophical views were bound to strike a chord with men like Metochites and Gregoras, who both had a strong predilection for late antique Platonism — as did many other Byzantine intellectuals from Michael Psellos to George Gemistos Plethon. One could expect that Synesius' treatment of the theories of cosmic sympathy and the imaginative *pneuma* (both of which commanded the attention of Psellos)<sup>25</sup> would hold particular interest to Metochites and Gregoras, not only on account of these theories' potential value for making clear the conditions for the prediction of future events, but also for purely cosmological and psychological reasons.<sup>26</sup> As it turns out, Gregoras devotes little space to discussing either of these theories *per se*, but refers to both in a way which suggests that he basically agrees with Synesius about them.<sup>27</sup>

Third and lastly, there was always a keen interest in oneiromancy in Byzantium. Seven manuals have been preserved from the period between the fourth and the fifteenth centuries, some of them in multiple copies.<sup>28</sup> The *De insomniis*, of course, is highly sceptical about the usefulness of such standardized tools for the interpretation of dreams (151B–152C), but purports to lay the theoretical foundation for an oneiromantic art which is adaptable to individual circumstances. In this respect it is a parallel to Ptolemy's *Tetrabiblos* in the field of astrology. The challenge to oneiromancy in general in Byzantium was perhaps not posed so much by the Church as by Aristotle, that authority in all things scientific. Aristotle's *De*

<sup>23</sup> *Letters. Rhetorica anonyma*, 3, p. 573 WALZ; Joseph Rhakendytes, *Synopsis artis rhetoricae* 14, p. 559 WALZ. On the ms traditions of Synesius' works (especially the *Letters*), see GARZYA 2000, cxxv–cxlii.

<sup>24</sup> Edited by I. PÉREZ MARTÍN, *El Patriarca Gregorio de Chipre (ca. 1240-1290) y la transmisión de los textos clásicos en Bizancio*. Nueva Roma 1 (Madrid 1996) 362–97.

<sup>25</sup> On Psellos on the pneumatic body, see E. DELLI, "Entre compilation et originalité: Le corps pneumatique dans l'œuvre de Michel Psellos", in: C. D'ANCONA (ed.), *The Libraries of the Neoplatonists*. *Philosophia antiqua* 107 (Leiden / Boston 2007) 211–29; on Psellos on cosmic sympathy, see K. IERODIAKONOU, "The Greek Concept of Sympatheia and Its Byzantine Appropriation in Michael Psellos", in: P. MAGDALINO / M. MAVROUDI (eds.), *The Occult Sciences in Byzantium* (Geneva 2006) 97–117 (who, however, leaves the possible influence of Synesius out of account).

<sup>26</sup> On the role of cosmic sympathy in Gregoras' *Florentius*, see BYDÉN 2003, 155–61 and 2012, 118–21. On the role of imagination in Metochites' epistemological and psychological views, see BYDÉN 2003, 301–10.

<sup>27</sup> The two most substantial scholia on cosmic sympathy are found at 6.2–7.13 and 8.12–9.24. His comments on the *pneuma* are a bit more scattered, but see especially 32.1 ff. See also below, p. 175 and n. 49.

<sup>28</sup> See the overview in S. M. OBERHELMAN, *Dreambooks in Byzantium. Six Oneirocritica in Translation, with Commentary and Introduction* (Aldershot 2008) 1–58.

*insomniis* and *De divinatione per somnum* were diligently studied at least in the twelfth to fifteenth centuries, when five commentaries/paraphrases were produced.<sup>29</sup> So another possible motive for Gregoras to comment on the *De insomniis* would have been to draw attention to a respectable alternative to Aristotle's wholesale dismissal of divination by dreams.

#### 4. Formal features

From a formal point of view, Gregoras' commentary is primitive. Apart from the preface, it is composed entirely of disconnected notes on particular words, sentences or paragraphs in Synesius' text. Some notes are very short, often consisting of just a word or two and for the most part providing basic lexical or grammatical information or clarifying the reference of a pronoun or an elliptical noun phrase. Others are up to three printed pages in length and generally more concerned with elucidating the content of the text. The shorter notes are usually designated, after Terzaghi (1904, 186–88), as 'glosses', the longer as 'scholia'. The scholia are for the most part transmitted in the margins, and the glosses between the lines, of manuscript pages containing Synesius' text.<sup>30</sup> A few manuscripts preserve Gregoras' scholia without Synesius' text (or the glosses). The scholia may be divided further on the basis of their level of explication into 'paraphrastic' and 'antiquarian' ones, the former simply seeking to rephrase Synesius' thoughts in less compressed and more conventional Greek, the latter providing background information on mythological, historical, literary and geographical facts.<sup>31</sup> Not seldom Gregoras quotes in full the passages of poetry or prose only alluded to by Synesius.<sup>32</sup> Both types of scholia may

<sup>29</sup> By Michael of Ephesus (early 12th cent., ed. WENDLAND, *CAG* 22.1); Sophonias (late 13th cent., ed. WENDLAND, *CAG* 5.6); George Pachymeres (late 13th cent., unedited); Theodore Metochites (early 14th cent., unedited); George (Gennadios II) Scholarios (mid-15th cent., ed. M. JUGIE / L. PETIT / X. A. SIDÉRIDÈS, *Oeuvres complètes de Georges [Gennadios] Scholarios*, vol. 7). On Michael's commentaries on Aristotle's works on sleep and dreaming, see RICKLIN 1998, 294–307.

<sup>30</sup> See the descriptions in PIETROSANTI 1996, 158–63. Unfortunately, interlinear and marginal notes have not been distinguished in Pietrosanti's text or apparatus. Perhaps they are simply too differently organized in the different MSS for this to be feasible. Cf. TERZAGHI 1904, 188: "In seguito alla divisione (...) in glosse e scoli è nata nei codd. una certa confusione poiché veniva lasciato quasi all'arbitrio del copista di considerare le parti del testo di Niceforo come pertinenti alla prima od alla seconda classe."

<sup>31</sup> See also TERZAGHI 1904, 187–9. PIETROSANTI 1999, xlii–xliv, introduces a division that cuts across the distinction between glosses and scholia, based partly on the subject matter and partly on the mode of exposition of the notes: 'paraphrastic' notes include those explaining the semantics, morphology, etymology or stylistics of a word or phrase; what we may call 'antiquarian' notes furnish information (for the most part accurate) on mythological, historical, literary and geographical facts; the remainder are 'philosophical' notes.

<sup>32</sup> Poetry: e.g. *Iliad* 24.527–33 in his scholion on 140B (τῶν πῖθων) or *Odyssey* 19.535–67 in that on 147B (χρηεὺς μὲν). Prose: e.g. Plato's *Phaedo* 67b–d (38.17–26).

have a 'philosophical' content, but in principle it is only the antiquarian ones that will add any new information to what is already present in Synesius' text. To a certain extent it may be possible to discern a rudimentary *theoria-lexis* structure,<sup>33</sup> inasmuch as a paraphrastic scholion is often followed by several glosses (or in some cases perhaps shorter scholia?) on the same passage, but only with the important qualification that these *lexeis* are practically always concerned with the explanation of words or phrases, not with real interpretative issues.

There are also a few notes relating to textual issues (27.12–15 [ad 135B ζώην]; 46.7 [ad 139B πρώτη (see Pietrosanti's apparatus)]; 51.13–14 [ad 141B θέα]; 96.9–12 [ad 152C φαντάσματι]). In two of these (27.12–15 and 96.9–12), Gregoras takes an unusual approach to the problem of choosing between two similar variants (ζώην : ζωῆς and φαντάσματι : φάντασμα τι, respectively): it does not matter which is retained and which is left to be understood by the reader, since both are needed for the sense. He maintains that in both passages the reason for omitting either variant was the stylistic awkwardness created by the repetition, but fails to explain how Synesius could have expected his readers to supply the ellipsis.<sup>34</sup>

Gregoras' antiquarian scholia occasionally verge on pedantry and not so seldom cross over into irrelevant display of erudition (in spite of his pretension to stay to the point at 82.26–83.1).<sup>35</sup> But his ability to trace down literary references and explain historical or mythological allusions is truly admirable, and has, I think, been of some help to later editors and translators of Synesius' text.<sup>36</sup> In some cases our commentator has evidently failed to find any accurate and/or relevant information.<sup>37</sup> His failures can sometimes be enlightening. No doubt his omission to trace the proverb at 144D to Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* 1.7 or to specify the reference

<sup>33</sup> See A.-J. FESTUGIÈRE, "Modes de composition des Commentaires de Proclus", *Museum Helveticum* 20 (1963) 77–100.

<sup>34</sup> In 152C (ἔτι δὲ χαλεπότερον ἐλεῖν <ἐν> ἐν ἐκάστῳ τόπῳ κοινῶ φαντάσματι παραπλήσιον), φάντασμα τι would provide ἐλεῖν with a needed object and φαντάσματι could just possibly be understood, but hardly the other way around. In 135B (παρὰστατικὸν τῆς ἀξίας τῆς κατὰ τὴν ἐν φαντασίᾳ ζωῆν [...]), it is difficult to see what role ζωῆς could play at all.

<sup>35</sup> Pedantry: e.g. 131D: "soothsayers are not using *all* the entrails, only the liver: there are seven entrails, namely heart, liver, spleen, stomach, lungs and two kidneys" (7.10–13); 143D: Penelope is actually not going to bed when she prays (65.7–9); 156A: *pankratation* is no Olympic discipline, so Synesius must be using the word in a figurative sense, i.e. "entering and winning all the contests" (105.15–106.2). Display of erudition: e.g. 143D: position and distance from the sea of the oracle of Ammon in Libya (65.2–5); 144C: "water or rock or chasm" is taken to refer precisely to the Kastalian spring at Antioch, Delphi and the cave of Trophonius respectively, which locations are described in dependence on Plutarch, Pausanias and/or Strabo (68.10–69.3).

<sup>36</sup> Thus, for instance, he correctly identifies the "rules of science" invoked by Synesius at 134A with Euclid, *El.* 5, defs 12–13 (22.2–23.12).

<sup>37</sup> He does not, for instance, try to explain ὁ Μάνης (144C) or τὰ κολαστήρια (145A).

at 151A–B to Aristotle’s *Metaphysics* 1.1 is due to simple neglect, but it is tempting to think that the reason why he resorts to mere inference from Synesius’ text in his explanation of *σίγασιον* (142A) is that he lacks familiarity with those works on *materia medica* in which the correct sense of the word is to be found.<sup>38</sup> (It should be noted that the correct sense is provided by later additions in two manuscripts [Pietrosanti 1999 ad loc.])

I think it is fair to say that Gregoras’ commentary adequately carries out the programme stated in his preface. It is certainly — and regrettably for us — harnessed to the elucidation of the text rather than used as a vehicle for developing the commentator’s own views. The stylistic obstacles are dealt with by means of paraphrases and glosses, the latter of which obviously reflect the contemporary lexicographical interest in Synesius.<sup>39</sup> Quite a few of them (and indeed some of the scholia) are astoundingly trivial: for example, 63.20: ὁ δὲ. οὗτος.<sup>40</sup> This suggests that we should take Gregoras’ declaration to have composed his work for the benefit of both the knowledgeable and the ignorant at face value. Similarly, his resolve to follow the order of Synesius’ text is illustrated by the fact that he defers discussion of the σκοπός of the work, normally an obligatory subject for the introductory part of a commentary, until he reaches 143A (62.29–63.5), where Synesius explains his purpose in speaking about divination through dreams as well as the rationale of his disquisition on *pneuma*. Not that Gregoras has much to say on the subject even here, though. It should be noted in this connection that there is no comment on Synesius’ preface — in fact Gregoras twice refers to the first sentence of the main body of text as the προοίμιον (2.23, 3.10), remarking that it is phrased as a conditional (literally “a hypothetical syllogism”, 3.11), in spite of the fact that Synesius himself was absolutely convinced that dreams have prophetic power, so as to take the edge off potentially offensive assertiveness.<sup>41</sup> Apart from this, it is striking that the commentary gets less detailed the longer it proceeds, which may be a sign of time pressure or simply loss of interest (to 42 pages on 130C–138C correspond 36 on 138D–147B and 27 on 147C–156A).

<sup>38</sup> I do not wish to imply that *σίγασιον* is the correct reading in Synesius’ text. See RUSSELL’S note (83) to the translation ad loc.

<sup>39</sup> Gregoras especially notes cases of metaphorical and ‘catachrestic’/‘parachrestic’ usage (e.g. 7.2–3, 66.11–14, 80.13–15, 81.14–17, 89.14–15, 105.20–106.2).

<sup>40</sup> Cf. 81.8, 84.23.

<sup>41</sup> 2.20–3.11. I am not sure whether Gregoras means to say that this explains the use of ἀποδείξεις in 131D.

## 5. Substantial features

### 5.1. Paganism

As is clear from his preface, Gregoras shares the traditional view of Synesius as a late convert to Christianity (126.6–10). The *De insomniis* is consistently treated as the work of a pagan Platonist.<sup>42</sup> Gregoras is careful to point out, as promised in the preface (126.1–6), which of Synesius' views are distinctly pagan, but never descends to polemic or apologetics. The closest he gets is perhaps his comment on 136D καθαιρόμενον: "the Hellenes purify their *phantasia* through rituals (τελεταί).<sup>43</sup> The pious of our faith do it through moderation, righteousness, fast and vigil" (32.14–25, partly repeated in 32.26–28).<sup>44</sup> His three-word retort to Synesius' assertion that "to have the vision of a god with one's own eyes is a blessed thing" (135D) is intriguing in view of the fact that so much of his later life would be devoted to combatting the Hesychast claim to be able literally to see God's uncreated light: "But also impossible" (28.12).

On the other hand, Gregoras' choice of Biblical examples and parallels for many of the views and practices referred to by Synesius may well be partly intended to placate suspicious Christian minds. It certainly tends to play down some of the apparent differences between these views and practices and those adhered to by Gregoras' contemporaries. Thus, the Chaldaean and Egyptian (i.e., Hermetic, see below) accounts of the creation of man are compared to that in *Genesis* (85.6–9). Of individuals who have "made contact with immaterial forms" (*De ins.* 137C) two examples are offered, namely the holy prophets and Paul in ecstasy (37.11–16). Hebrew words from the Septuagint are made to illustrate the "ineffable ritual

<sup>42</sup> It is fascinating how Ἕλληνας is treated as a *media vocabula* by Gregoras: in the preface (124.11), it is apparently used in the sense of 'someone highly learned in the ancient literature'; in the commentary, it repeatedly denotes pagan Greeks as opposed on the one hand to Christians, on the other to "Egyptians and Chaldaeans". More unambiguously, the terms θύραθεν and ἔξω are used to qualify thinkers and doctrines as difficult or impossible to reconcile with Christianity.

<sup>43</sup> Cf. ad 133B (19.21–7): pagans (thus including Synesius) think sorcery has many forms and they call the participation in the mysteries "perfection" (although at 41.22–3 τελεταί is glossed as "mystical and sacred teachings": cf. 66.11–14, where the literal sense is said to be "the things secretly handed down in words and deeds at Delphi, Eleusis and the other prophetic shrines" and Synesius' use of the word ["divination through dreams"] is said to be catachrestic).

<sup>44</sup> Likewise, the heat and dryness said by Synesius 138A to cause the *pneuma* to soar are according to Gregoras induced by fast, vigil and humility (39.10–11). When Synesius talks in 139D about the power of matter over those of us who "take pleasure in one of those things connected with body", Gregoras chooses to illustrate this with some rather impassioned words about the torments of sexual frustration (48.7–16). But this, of course, need not have any religious implications.



power" in names, impossible to preserve in translations (13.3–8). And so on.<sup>45</sup>

Practices specifically associated by Gregoras with paganism include, besides the rituals already mentioned, various forms of divination and magic, especially those forceful manipulations of demons condemned also by Synesius at 145B (70.12–71.14). On the side of theory, however, it seems to be particularly through his conceptions of soul that Synesius offends Gregoras' Christian sensibilities. One example is the doctrine of the transmigration of souls, touched upon in passing in a brief comment on 139C (πρῶτον βίον), in which Gregoras explains that Synesius speaks of the soul's "first" life in contradistinction to later incarnations (47.13–15).<sup>46</sup> Another is the belief that the heavenly bodies are ensouled and thus exert providence over the terrestrial realm. Gregoras explains that it is in order to distinguish the Creator's providence from theirs that Synesius at 139B qualifies the former as "the first" (46.8–12).

Both of the above-mentioned doctrines were regularly denounced as pagan in Byzantium.<sup>47</sup> So was the theory of a world soul, espoused by

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<sup>45</sup> At 95.9–96.8 Gregoras mentions, as examples of the variation not only in the character and mindset, but also in the technical competence, of human beings, which makes it so difficult to find a universal method for the interpretation of dreams, the facts that God showed Nebuchadnesar the future by means of an image of silver and gold (Dan 2.31–2), materials with which the Babylonian king was well acquainted; the Magi, being experts in astronomy, were shown the star of Bethlehem (Mt 2.2); and Abraham, who was well versed in Chaldaean genethliology and extispicy, was told to make an animal sacrifice (Gen 15.9). Note also 11.12–12.7 on Solomon's knowledge of the natures of plants and animals as well as his proficiency in the exorcism of demons. Cf. also 2.16–17.

<sup>46</sup> According to TERZAGHI 1904, 189, Gregoras misunderstands Synesius, who really wishes to contrast terrestrial life to "la vita celeste dell'anima pura". But both Gregoras and Synesius knew well that the soul, according to the myth of Plato's *Phaedrus* (249a), has to choose three philosophical lives in a row in order to "acquire wings". Synesius' statement at 137D that "philosophy agrees that our first lives are a preparation for our second" is pertinently referenced by Gregoras (*Phaedo* 67b–d), as is his mention at 138A of the soul's acquisition of wings (*Phaedrus* 246c ff.); πτέρωσις is not found in Plato, but is used by Proclus in this context [*In Ti.* 3.292.9]).

<sup>47</sup> The belief that the heavenly bodies are ensouled was condemned by the Synod of Constantinople in 543 (ACO 3:203.14–16; cf. 3:213.27–8) as among the errors of Origen, and, if not actually condemned again by the Fifth Ecumenical Council ten years later, then at least assumed in Byzantine times to have been so (see George [Gennadios II] Scholarios, *Contra Pleth.* 99.37–100.18). Cf. e.g. Stephanus, *De arte mathematica* 6.3–9; Michael Psellos, *Theol.* 90.54–9; Symeon Seth, *Conspectus* 29; John Galenus, *In Theogon.* 330.2–10; Eustratios, *In Eth. Nic.* 330.1–11; Nicholas of Methone, *Refutatio Procli* 129.1–9; Sophonias, *In De an.* 55.32–4. The doctrine of the transmigration of souls was considered by the 543 Synod, following Gregory of Nyssa (*Op. hom.* 232.4–18), as a necessary consequence of Origen's erroneous belief in the soul's pre-existence to the body (199.32–200.37). An express denunciation of the doctrine as 'pagan' was added to the *Synodicon of Orthodoxy* in 1082 (ed. GOULLARD, lines 194–7).

Synesius at 132A.<sup>48</sup> In his scholion on 131D (σημαίνει), Gregoras presents the doctrine of cosmic sympathy as a consequence of this theory (6.2–10). But the view that the world forms a unified whole in which all things are somehow interconnected does not, conversely, imply that the world is a living being. And in fact such a view is not at all uncommon among philosophical writers in Late Byzantium.<sup>49</sup> It is hardly surprising, therefore, that Gregoras qualifies those who are able to detect the correspondences as 'wise' (6.13–15, 7.4–5, 9.6–8). Nor indeed is it very remarkable that he seems personally to subscribe to a strong (i.e., non-analogical) view of the unity of being at 20.1–7.<sup>50</sup>

The main function of the theory of cosmic sympathy in antiquity and the Middle Ages was obviously to explain how it would be possible for different things to interact over distances. Gregoras shows his support for the theory in his comment on 132C (δακτύλου κακόν), where the obvious literary reference is missing (Plato, *Resp.* 5.462c10–d5), but we are instead offered an example from the commentator's own experience (a child was injured in the neck and suffered paralysis of one of his legs) and the conclusion that such examples can only be accounted for by reference to cosmic sympathy (13.21–14.12).

More startling than Gregoras' tendency to monism is his simultaneous insistence that the cosmos mentioned by Synesius at 133B must be the sublunary realm, composed of the four elements,<sup>51</sup> since the superlunary realm is simple and changeless (indeed, it is "rather intellectual", νοερώτερον), and thus unsusceptible to magic (18.16–23). In his comment on 149A (τοῖς ἐστραμμένοις) he repeats the view that the sublunary and superlunary realms make up two distinct cosmoses.<sup>52</sup> Apparently he understands "[w]hatever divinity there is" in 133B as referring to the heavenly bodies, an interpretation which is all the more remarkable as it is in no way necessitated by Synesius' text. Gregoras does not address the implications of his cosmic dualism for the influence of the heavenly bodies

<sup>48</sup> Examples range from Michael Psellos, *De omn. doct.* 156 to Gregory Palamas, *Cap. phil.* 3.

<sup>49</sup> Nikephoros Blemmydes, *Epitome physica* 11.22; Theodore Doukas Laskaris, *De naturali communione* 2 (on which see G. RICHTEK, *Theodoros Dukas Laskaris, Der natürliche Zusammenhang. Ein Zeugnis vom Stand der byzantinischen Philosophie in der Mitte des 13. Jahrhunderts* (Amsterdam 1989) 9–84, 149–76; Nikephoros Choumnos, *De natura mundi* (Par. gr. 2105, 1v). The hierarchical chain of participation, based on the "law of mean terms", set out by Gregoras at 23.18–22 (no sources have been found for this passage) is typical of the late Byzantine approach: intellect shares in rational soul by the mediation of discursive reason; rational soul shares in sensible soul by the mediation of the imaginative *pneuma*; sensible soul shares in vegetative soul by the mediation of the nutritive *pneuma*. Cf. also his comment on the intermediate regions mentioned by Synesius at 141C–D (56.14–57.2).

<sup>50</sup> Cf. Gregoras, *Florentius* 956–64.

<sup>51</sup> The same is said of the corporeal cosmos mentioned at 138B (41.13–14).

<sup>52</sup> See below, p. 181.

on terrestrial phenomena, but presumably he would simply have denied that the sympathetic relation between the two realms is symmetrical.

## 5.2. Platonism

Synesius' Platonic affiliation is repeatedly and heavily underscored by Gregoras. Not only most of his doctrines (39.21–25), but many of his notions, his approaches, and indeed his very terms are said to be borrowed from Plato (33.15–19, commenting on 137A [τὸ ὁστροεῶδες περιβλημα]).<sup>53</sup> Gregoras does, however, notice the discrepancy between Synesius' location of the imaginative *pneuma* in the head (136A) and the account in the *Timaeus* (71a–72b), where the liver is said to have been created, for the sake of divination, as a mirror reflecting images (εἰδῶλα) of the intellect's thoughts during sleep, in sickness or under divine influence (29.4–30.2).

## 5.3. Chaldaica and Hermetica

In addition, Gregoras ascribes a decisive influence on Synesius to “the Chaldaean and Egyptian commandments” (27.20–21).<sup>54</sup> When he speaks of “the Egyptian commandments” he apparently has in mind the *Corpus Hermeticum*, which, in Richard Greenfield's words, “seems to have enjoyed something of a vogue in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries”.<sup>55</sup> He actually quotes the second paragraph of “Asclepius' definitions to King Ammon” (*CH* 16) in support of the view that a word's phonetic qualities are crucial for its efficiency in incantations (13.8–14).<sup>56</sup> Not infrequently, Gregoras chooses to elucidate Synesius by way of explicating the *Chaldaean Oracles*, on the assumption that, as he says, the former follows the latter (e.g. 85.5–6, 85.16–17). This is why he incorporates chunks of Michael Psellos' commentary on the *Oracles*,<sup>57</sup> as for instance in his scholion on 149A (τοῖς

<sup>53</sup> Cf. 5.10–14, commenting on 131C (προσπερονᾶ). More questionably, Gregoras also thinks he can see close similarities between *De ins.* 141D–142A and Plotinus, *Enn.* 5.9.1 (which he quotes in full, 59.8–60.3).

<sup>54</sup> Cf. 125.16–22.

<sup>55</sup> GREENFIELD 1995, 128.

<sup>56</sup> Hermes Trismegistus is also mentioned by Gregoras at *Florentius* 1285–87, as the author of a phrase from *Genesis* 2.6 (the fiction is probably motivated by the fact that the dialogue is set in ancient Corcyra and Athens: some sort of historical link between Moses and Hermes Trismegistus was always taken for granted).

<sup>57</sup> It seems likely that Gregoras has actually used Psellos' commentary, and not some intermediate source, since the relevant passages tend to come in groups corresponding to groups of passages in Psellos: 12.7–10 (cf. etiam 66.6–8) ≈ 145.1–3 O'MEARA; 12.13–16 ≈ 145.4–7 O'MEARA; 12.16–13.1 ≈ 133.16–20 O'MEARA; 13.2–8 ≈ 132.26–133.4 O'MEARA, but note that Gregoras refers to Origen (*Contra Celsum* 1.22–4, 4.33; *In Ezech.* 8.1); 49.1–6 ≈ 143.22–144.1 O'MEARA; 51.19–30 ≈ 127.5–11 O'MEARA; 52.22–53.5 ≈ 126.16–22 O'MEARA; 54.9–28 is more remotely inspired by 127.27–128.7 O'MEARA; 58.19–26 ≈ 138.10–14 O'MEARA; 85.6–11 ≈ 140.11–15 O'MEARA; 85.11–16 ≈ 142.13–19 O'MEARA.

ἑστραμμένοις), where he sees fit to inform his readers that both the Chaldaeans and the Egyptians considered that the Father of the world sowed tokens of his own character in souls and that all the superior stations (τάξεις) grew from these (85.1–16). Psellos makes no mention of Egyptians in this context, so Gregoras must have recognized the similarity of this account with the Hermetic discourse on thought and sense-perception (*CH* 9.3–4) as well as other passages.

In some cases (as for instance in the scholion just cited), Gregoras notes or postulates differences of opinion between the Egyptians and Chaldaeans on the one hand and the ancient Greeks on the other. Synesius will then sometimes have followed the Greeks, but more often the Chaldaeans.<sup>58</sup> For instance, when he says at 141B that “we are at liberty to believe or not to believe” the interpretation he has suggested of *Chald. Or.* fr. 158 (namely that the soul in its ascent towards the aether will carry with it the fire and air it has absorbed in the sublunary realm), Gregoras apparently thinks that what is at issue is whether we ought to believe the Chaldaeans or some other equally authoritative source, such as “the wiser among the Greeks” (55.16), who held a different opinion.<sup>59</sup> Accordingly, he proceeds to set out the Greeks’ opinion in the form of a rationalistic explanation of Athena’s epithet Tritogeneia: Athena (= soul) was originally born, simple and incorporeal, from the head of Zeus (= the upper part of the heavens) and has subsequently accrued, in the course of her descent, her spirited part from the aether and her appetitive part from the moon (55.6–56.1). This looks like a conflation of two accounts reported by John Lydus, *De mensibus* 3.22.1–17. Ironically (especially in view of Gregoras’ anti-Latin tirades in his dialogue *Florentius*),<sup>60</sup> John ascribes the two accounts respectively to the Chaldaeans and the early Roman historian Lucius Cincius Alimentus.

#### 5.4. Aristotle

Yet in order to make good on his promise to note disagreements between Synesius and other ancient philosophers it will perhaps not be sufficient for Gregoras to show that Synesius aligns with the Chaldaeans against the Greeks or vice versa. We expect him also to say something intelligent about

<sup>58</sup> At 35.25–9 Gregoras notes that the ancient Greeks made a distinction between gods and demons, which Synesius sometimes adheres to, sometimes not. At 66.2–9 he points out that Synesius follows the *Oracles*, according to which there are five kinds of demons: aether demons, air demons, earth demons, water demons and subterranean demons. The aether demons are (not unexpectedly) the most veridical.

<sup>59</sup> ταῦτα μὲν οὖν φασιν Ἕλληνας, ἄλλα δὲ Αἰγύπτιοι καὶ Χαλδαῖοι· ἐπεὶ δὲ διαφωνοῦντας οὕτω τούτους ὁ Συνέσιος ὀρθῶς, καὶ ἀπιστεῖν, φησί, ἕξεσσι καὶ πιστεύειν (56.2–4).

<sup>60</sup> On which see BYDÉN 2012.

the most fundamental difference of opinion, namely that concerning the very possibility of divination by dreams, energetically affirmed by Synesius and famously denied by Aristotle.

Our expectations are, however, dashed. Gregoras does explain in his scholion on 135B (ἐῆς ἐνεκάρπισεν) that Aristotle, in contrast to Synesius, denies that dreams are sent by gods. He reports the argument (in *De divinatione per somnum*) that if dreams were sent by gods, the most virtuous and pious people would have all the prophetic dreams, whereas in fact the dreams of wicked and ignorant people are more likely to come true. But he goes on to misquote the passage (463b14–15) in which Aristotle says that dreams are still δαίμονια, inasmuch as nature is δαίμονια, to the effect that “[Aristotle] readily agrees that there is a kind of demonic nature that has the authority over the things that appear in sleep”.<sup>61</sup> In the absence of any indication that Aristotle thinks the belief in prophetic dreams quite generally is both theoretically and empirically ill-founded, this naturally creates the false impression that the only disagreement between him and Synesius is whether or not the divine entities responsible for “impregnating” us while we sleep deserve the name of “gods”.

Apart from this, there is remarkably little Aristotelian material in Gregoras’ commentary. To be sure, the division of soul faculties in 19.6–20 is ultimately inspired by Aristotle (*Eth. Nic.* 1.7.1097b33–1098a7, rather than *De an.* 3.9, as stated in Pietrosanti’s apparatus), but Gregoras is actually relying on John of Damascus, *Exp. fid.* 26.94–104 (or possibly on the fuller exposition in Nemesius, *Nat. hom.* 15–25). Similarly, Synesius’ distinction (149A) between virtue “acquired by wisdom” and virtue “ingrained by habit” is equated with Aristotle’s distinction between intellectual and moral virtue (*Eth. Nic.* 1.13.1103a3–7) with the help of the anonymous commentary on *Nicomachean Ethics* 2 printed in CAG 20.<sup>62</sup> One may wonder, then, to what extent Gregoras was really familiar with Aristotle’s works on dreams. He certainly showed in his *Florentius* (probably written in 1337) that he had no scruples about criticizing the great authority on natural philosophy over matters within the latter’s competence.<sup>63</sup> Of course, it is possible that he had particular motives for playing down the differences between Synesius and Aristotle at the time of composing his commentary (such as Metochites having recently written paraphrases of Aristotle’s works on dreams and maintaining in his *Semeioseis gnomikai* that Synesius was as much an Aristotelian as a Platonist).

<sup>61</sup> εἶναι δ’ οὖν φύσιν τιὰ δαίμόνων τὴν τῶν καθ’ ὕπνου φαινομένων τὴν κυριότητα ἔχουσαν, τοῦτο δὲ συντίθεται ῥαδίως (27.6–8).

<sup>62</sup> Cf. Gregoras, *In De ins.* 86.1–5 with Anonymus, 122.18–123.1. *In De ins.* 86.5–8 seems to show, however, that Gregoras also used the Aristotelian text (1103a19–26).

<sup>63</sup> See BYDÉN 2012.

In his scholion on 146C (ἐνύπνιον) Gregoras takes the opportunity to present an ancient terminology for different types of dream, which, he says, is not consistently adhered to by Synesius (74.8–75.21): (1) ἐνύπνια are reflections of our everyday concerns; (2) φαντάσματα are the visions, frightful or agreeable, that we have in a state in between sleeping and waking; (3) χρηματισμοί are visions of authoritative persons making malevolent or benevolent predictions; (4) ὄράματα are nocturnal previews of unexpected future events; (5) ὀνειράτα are the sort of enigmatic dreams that need the help of art and experience in order to be correctly interpreted. One reason why this division was attractive to Gregoras may have been that it makes it possible to recognize the validity of Aristotle's theory of dreams for ἐνύπνια, while still allowing for the prophetic power of ὀνειράτα. But again, this is mere speculation, since Gregoras does not actually put the division to any such use. Under their Latin names these five types of dreams were well known in the Western Middle Ages, by courtesy of Macrobius' *Commentary on Scipio's Dream*.<sup>64</sup> I will briefly discuss the fairly complicated question of Gregoras' sources for this scholion below.

### 5.5. Magic

According to Greenfield (1995, 125), "Gregoras is (...) important (...) for the way in which he preserves some ancient ideas and provides pieces of contemporary information on both the theory and practice of magic". He refers in particular to the distinction between three kinds of magic (γοητεία, μαγεία, φαρμακεία, 14.21–15.8) and a prolonged discussion of necromancy (82.6–84.21). I suspect that Greenfield's estimate of Gregoras' importance is exaggerated on both counts: practically all the information in Gregoras' commentary derives from significantly older sources and practically all this information is still available in older sources (even if not necessarily always in exactly those used by Gregoras). To exemplify I may mention that the distinction between three kinds of magic is made (as noted by Terzaghi 1904, 197) in very similar terms in the anonymous prolegomena to rhetoric printed in Rabe's *Prolegomenon sylloge* 31.11–32.5.<sup>65</sup>

The discussion of necromancy in connection with *De ins.* 148C (ψυχοπομπῶν) seems to be a somewhat different matter. It includes two and a half lines of an Apolline oracle. This was most probably taken from Eusebius, *Praeparatio evangelica* 4.9, where the whole oracle is quoted from Porphyry's Περὶ τῆς ἐκ λογίων φιλοσοφίας. The surrounding discussion by Gregoras owes a lot not only to Porphyry's exegesis of the oracle

<sup>64</sup> See S. KRUGER, *Dreaming in the Middle Ages*. Cambridge studies in medieval literature 14 (Cambridge 1992) 57–82, esp. 62–3.

<sup>65</sup> This work was previously edited by C. WALZ, *Rhetores graeci* VI, under the name of Joannes Doxopates, hence the attribution in PIETROSANTI'S 1999 apparatus ad loc.

(also quoted by Eusebius), but especially to Eusebius' own explanation, in *Praeparatio evangelica* 5.2–3, of the rise of polytheism through the agency of evil demons. Gregoras explains that the phantoms conjured up by necromancers are not in fact the souls of the dead but fallen demons of varying darkness and thickness, which explains their partiality to different kinds of sacrifice (82.11–26). These demons are employed by necromancers to establish contact with the souls of the dead. Being unable, however, to carry out the task requested, the demons themselves pretend to be these souls. Usually they give some harmful advice and disappear. This must be, surmises Gregoras, the sort of plot contrived against Synesius during his embassy (84.8–21). I think extreme caution must be exercised when using this discussion as evidence for either ancient or Byzantine practices, since it is likely to represent, more than anything else, Gregoras' own imaginative reconstruction of the circumstances in Synesius' lifetime.

## 6. Method

### 6.1. Focus on doctrine rather than argument

I would like to mention Gregoras' scholion on 149B (ὕπαρξεως), since it seems to shed some interesting light upon the limitations of his method. Gregoras starts as it were on a false note, explaining that the wise men (i.e., the Platonists) say that the present world is an image of eternity, and consequently all the things in the present world are images of the things that exist in eternity, before reverting to the matter at hand, namely images flowing from composite things in the present world. What I find particularly illuminating is that Gregoras makes no effort to clarify Synesius' central argument in this passage, which is, in so far as I understand it, that both the form and the matter of composites have to have the same ontological status; but it has been established that matter is always in the process of (generation and) destruction; so it follows that forms are in the same process. Synesius does not explain why this process in the case of forms should entail the effluence of images. But whether or not my understanding of the passage is correct, the fact remains that it is set out as an argument with a conclusion flowing from the acceptance of certain premisses (εἰ γὰρ [...], ὁ λόγος αἰρεῖ [...], ἵνα [...]). Gregoras' approach is to treat the conclusion of the argument as simply another statement in need of a clearer formulation but not of substantiation (87.11–23).

### 6.2. Allegory

At 4.13–5.7 Gregoras expresses his approval of Synesius' view (131B–D) that the works of poets contain a good deal of philosophy that needs to

be uncovered through allegoresis (or ἀναγωγή, cf. 49.19; ἀλληγορέω is used at 55.16). The “sacred accounts” mentioned by Synesius at 140A are declared to be “myths in appearance, but really mystical and more divine”, if only they are understood in a higher sense (49.16–20). Gregoras himself puts this programme into practice by offering fairly predictable allegorical interpretations of the oracles (and also of some of Synesius’ own dicta) in terms of the current Ptolemaic-Aristotelian cosmology as well as Platonist metaphysics, epistemology and ethics (with occasional Christian corrections). In an amplification of 154D–155A he even outlines a general theory of myths, according to which these are ultimately based on dreams — and just as myths have a true moral, so dreams have a true sense (103.9–22).

As an example of Gregoras’ allegoreses, let me single out his comment on *Chaldaean Oracles*, fr. 158 (*De ins.* 140C–D), where he explains that the ἀμφικνεφής χῶρα is the sublunary realm surrounded on both sides by darkness, whereas the lunar sphere is called ἔτεροκνεφής as well as ἔτεροφαής on account of its intermediate location, and the superlunary realm (from the lunar sphere to the outermost sphere), accordingly, ἀμφοφαής (51.19–30; cf. 43.1–5, 54.21–26, 85.1–6).<sup>66</sup> Slightly differently, in his exegesis of fr. 163 (quoted by Synesius at 138C–D) he ascribes three different metonymical senses of ‘Hades’ to the Chaldaeans: (1) this terrestrial world, which is the lowest level of the universe; (2) the whole sublunary realm; (3) the lunar sphere. The ‘gulf’ (βυθός), he says, refers unequivocally to matter (42.26–43.5).

## 7. Sources

It is clear that Gregoras was immensely widely read. As a permanent resident of the Chora monastery, he also had a substantial library at his disposal.<sup>67</sup> Whatever view one takes of his philosophical profundity or acumen, there is no reason to doubt that he worked with a number of sources at his elbow. Most of these were identified by Terzaghi (1904, 184–200); they are, of course, also mentioned in Pietrosanti’s (1999) apparatus fontium.

I will limit myself in this section to discussing a few questions relating to Gregoras’ sources that have aroused particular scholarly interest. There is no need to linger on the six hexameter fragments that Terzaghi (1904, 196) considered to be the most important feature of Gregoras’ commentary, since they are attested also in Eusebius, *Praeparatio evangelica* 5 (where

<sup>66</sup> For the cosmic dualism involved here, see above, p. 175.

<sup>67</sup> For the library of the Chora, see ŠEVČENKO 1975, 35–7.



they are quoted from Porphyry's *Περὶ τῆς ἐκ λογίων φιλοσοφίας*).<sup>68</sup> They were included as *fragmenta dubia* 219–24 in des Places' edition of the *Chaldaean Oracles*, despite the fact that Gregoras takes care to distinguish them from the latter.<sup>69</sup> But I would like to discuss Gregoras' possible dependence on Latin authors, especially Macrobius' *Commentary on Scipio's Dream*, which would have been available to Gregoras in Maximos Planudes' translation.<sup>70</sup> There is also the scholion on 132B (*ἐν ὄρνιθων κλαγγαῖς*), which contains an anecdote about Aemilius Paullus told in Cicero's *De divinatione* 1.46.103 (the work is expressly referred to at 8.6–7). This has attracted some curiosity, for the reason that there is no medieval Greek translation of this Ciceronian work and Gregoras is not supposed to have known Latin.<sup>71</sup>

Let me start, however, with some Greek doxography, which may serve as an illustration of the complexity of the source material employed by Gregoras, and partly also of his strengths and limitations in handling it. This is found in his comment on 137C (*εἰδωλικά*). Gregoras explains that "Synesius follows the opinion of Democritus and Sextus and other Greeks" that there are supernatural things (*δαμόνια*) in the air and on the earth, which have some thickness, cohesion and susceptibility to change, but are invisible to human beings; these are called *εἰδωλα* on account of preserving an image of the angelic and immaterial nature from which they have fallen. They are not easily destroyed, but nor are they imperishable. Some cause harm, others are beneficial. It is said that these *εἰδωλα* approach human beings in their sleep and predict the future to them; the predictions of the beneficial ones are true (or clear: *σαφεῖς*), the others' are the very opposite. Human imagination, on the other hand, does not speak but is like a book written by the external world and read by reason. If the dream is obscure, deliberation on the right course of action will ensue. Reason is dependent

<sup>68</sup> *Praep. evang.* 5.5.5–5.12.1 See DES PLACES 1971, 119. Three of the fragments are also found in Theodoret (and one in Philoponus), but Eusebius is a highly likely source for Gregoras (see above).

<sup>69</sup> See 10.11 (*ἐκ τε χρησμῶν συλλεξάμενοι καὶ Χαλδαϊκῶν παραγγελῶν*) and 12.7–12 (*καὶ ταῦτα μὲν ἐκ τῶν χρησμῶν. οἱ δὲ Χαλδαῖοι [...]*), preceded by frs 222–224 and a snippet on Solomon's wisdom from Josephus' *Antiquitates Judaicae* (8.44–5), and followed by the authentic fr. 149.

<sup>70</sup> Edited by A. MEGAS (ed.), *Maximus Planudes. Macrobian Commentariorum in 'Somnium Scipionis' libri duo in linguam graecam translati. Accedit iuxtappositus eiusdem Macrobiani textus latinus* (Thessaloniki 1995).

<sup>71</sup> It has been suggested (by D. GEANAKOPOLOS, "Byzantium and the Crusades: 1261–1354", in: H. W. HAZARD [ed.], *A History of the Crusades*, vol. 3, *The Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries* [Madison, WI 1975] [27–68] 53) that the reason for appointing Gregoras as the spokesman of the Orthodox in negotiations with two papal emissaries in 1333 was that he knew Latin. This is not, however, borne out by Gregoras' account of the event (*Hist.* 10.8).

on imagination for (a basis on which) to act in the world of coming-to-be (36.5–37.3).

The first half of this scholion is evidently based on Sextus Empiricus, *Against the Physicists* (= *Math.* 9) 19, which purports to set out Democritus' view on the nature of gods. The fact that Gregoras thinks that the view was shared also by Sextus himself may indicate that he relied not on the original work but on a florilegium in which the excerpt was superscribed with the ambiguous possessive genitive τοῦ Σέξτου [sic: 36.6].<sup>72</sup> *Against the Physicists* 19 was also used by Michael of Ephesus in his commentary on Aristotle's *Div. somn.* 464a3–6 (*In Parv. nat.* 83.18–23),<sup>73</sup> but without any reference to Sextus.

Now, Sextus does say that the εἶδωλα are supposed to predict the future, but makes no mention of dreams in this context. Accordingly, the role of εἶδωλα in Democritus' theory of dreams must have been known to Gregoras from other sources. If he actually read *Against the Physicists* in its entirety, he will have seen in chap. 43 that at least Epicurus attributed our conceptions of gods particularly to the appearance of εἶδωλα in dreams. But most probably he knew about Democritus' theory of dreams from the above-mentioned passage in Aristotle's *De divinatione per somnum*, which he may also have drawn upon for his scholion on 152A (διαφανές), on which see below. Democritus' theory of dreams is also mentioned by Plutarch, *Quaest. conv.* 735A, and by several doxographical authors.<sup>74</sup>

Sextus Empiricus was by no means a canonical author in the Greek Middle Ages, but from the mid-fourteenth century there is at least sporadic evidence of acquaintance with his works (especially among the authors engaged in the Hesychast strife).<sup>75</sup> It has been argued that Gregoras' scholion on 152A (διαφανές) is based on Philo's account of Aenesidemus' modes (*Ebr.* 166–205), supplemented by that in Sextus (*Pyrr.* 1.35–163) or that in Diogenes Laertius (9.79–88).<sup>76</sup> In this scholion, Gregoras enumerates five factors corresponding loosely to Synesius' "nature, habit and experience

<sup>72</sup> There is evidence to suggest that the excerpts from Sextus' *Math.* 6 in Gregoras' commonplace book, Cod. Heidelb. Pal. gr. 129, may have been culled from a florilegium. See BYDÉN 2002b, 204 n. 74.

<sup>73</sup> And repeated by Sophonias in his commentary on the same passage (*In Parv. nat.* 43.2–6).

<sup>74</sup> Ps.-Plutarch, *Plac.* 904F and 905F; Ps.-Galen, *Hist. phil.* 106; Ps.-Hippocrates, *Ep.* 10.14–19. Cf. also John Lydus, *De mens.* 4.135.2, and Eustathius, *In Od.* 1.193.5–6 (another work possibly drawn on by Gregoras).

<sup>75</sup> On the fortunes of ancient Scepticism in Byzantium, see BYDÉN 2002b, 196–208. The brief account in L. FLORIDI, "The Rediscovery and Posthumous Influence of Scepticism", in: R. BETT (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Ancient Scepticism* (Cambridge 2010) [267–87] 276–7 is partly based on old misconceptions.

<sup>76</sup> By Γ. Α. Δημητράκοπουλος, *Νικολάου Καβάσιλα Κατὰ Πύρρωνος· Πλατωνικός φιλοσκεπτικισμός και ἀριστοτελικός ἀντισκεπτικισμός στη βυζαντινή διανόηση τοῦ 14ου αἰώνα* (Athens 1999) 88–109.

(φύσει καὶ νόμῳ καὶ πάθεσι)'' that may account for the different (and not seldom false) impressions made by the same things on different perceivers: (1) different temperament; (2) different way of life; (3) different nurture; (4) different point in time (ῥῶρα); (5) different movement of the things represented. His further explanation of the last factor, which may be (as Pietrosanti suggests in his apparatus fontium) inspired by Aristotle, *Div. somn.* 464b7–16, shows that this is intended to correspond to Synesius' analogy with water in different states (152A7–B2).<sup>77</sup> Also the four preceding factors seem to be more closely related to Synesius' text ([1] corresponding to 'nature', [2] to 'habit', [3] and [4], perhaps, to 'experiences') than to any known account of Aenesidemus' (or any other Sceptical) modes. In sum, I can see no reason to postulate the use of either Sextus, Philo or Diogenes for this particular scholion.<sup>78</sup>

What, then, of Gregoras' reliance on Latin authors? To begin with the easy part, his paraphrase of Cicero loses most of its fascination once it is realized that Plutarch tells exactly the same story giving the same reference in his *Aemilius Paullus* 10.6–8.

As for Macrobius, the situation is less clear-cut. We know that Gregoras read Planudes' translation of the *Commentary on Scipio's Dream* later in his life, since a few of his own annotations survive in the margin of Vat. gr. 116, ff. 4–54, dated by watermarks to 1337/1340.<sup>79</sup> The content of Gregoras' scholia on *De insomniis* 146C (ἐνύπνιον), setting out the technical terms for five types of dream, and 147B (διττάς), expanding on the reference to the two gates of dreams in Homer, partly overlaps with Macrobius 1.3.1–10 and 1.3.17–18 respectively. Still (*pace* Terzaghi 1904, 185 and n. 1) there is little in the way of word-to-word correspondence between Gregoras' scholion and Planudes' translation of Macrobius. On the other hand, as both Deubner and Terzaghi noted,<sup>80</sup> there is even less correspondence between Gregoras and Artemidorus, *Oneirocr.* 1.1–2, the only extant ancient Greek source for the fivefold division of dreams. There is always the possibility that, as Deubner assumed (1900, 2), Gregoras and Macrobius drew on the same source. The latter of the two passages cited is reported by Macrobius from Porphyry, in *Commentariis suis*, that is, the *Quaestiones Homericae*; the former was ascribed by Mras to the same work but by Courcelle (and Flamant) to Porphyry's commentary on the *Republic*.<sup>81</sup>

<sup>77</sup> However, the same analogy is used at 32.5–11 to illustrate the perturbances of the *pneuma* resulting from the exhalations of food.

<sup>78</sup> See also BYDÉN 2002b, 207 n. 80.

<sup>79</sup> See BYDÉN 2003, 97–8 n. 146 (where the annotations are erroneously dated to the 1350s) and LEONE 1983, 22–4.

<sup>80</sup> DEUBNER 1900, 2; TERZAGHI 1904, 185 and n. 1.

<sup>81</sup> P. COURCELLE, *Les lettres grecques en occident. De Macrobe à Cassiodore*. Bibliothèque des Écoles Françaises d'Athènes et de Rome 159 (Paris 1948) 24 and n. 2. J. FLAMANT, *Macrobe et le néo-platonisme latin à la fin du IVe siècle*. Études préliminaires aux religions orientales dans

It is not very likely that Gregoras had access to any of these works by Porphyry in their original form. As it turns out, his scholion on 147B (διττάς) is partly very close, both in content and in phrasing, to that of Eustathios of Thessalonike on *Odyssey* 19.562 (2.218.30–219.36). As far as I can make out, he must have used either this commentary or an otherwise unknown source also used by Eustathios. It is an intriguing circumstance that even though Eustathios does not mention the fivefold division of dreams, he refers for part of his exposition to John Italos (*Quaestiones quodlibetales* 43), who does.<sup>82</sup> Since, however, Italos' treatment, too, has less in common with Gregoras' than Planudes' translation of Macrobius does, the latter remains the most likely source of the scholion on 146C (ἐνύπνιον).

Finally, in a long note on 132D (ὕπατην), Gregoras imparts some basic information about the harmonic system which he thinks is presupposed by Synesius' statement that "one who strikes the *hypatē* (i.e., the first and lowest string) sets in motion not the string next to it, the *epogdoos* (i.e., the string at a whole tone's interval), but the *epitritē* (i.e., the string at a fourth's interval) and the *nētē* (i.e., the last and highest string)", namely the octachord. This information has some features in common with that provided in Macrobius, *In Somn. Scip.* 2.1.13–25, but in this case Terzaghi (1904, 185–86) rightly noted that Planudes' translation of Macrobius was "così dissimile da quello che esaminiamo (sc. Gregoras' scholion) da escludere che ne sia la fonte".<sup>83</sup>

Clearly, there was no need for Gregoras to turn to Macrobius' elementary account for the sort of information he leaves in his note on 132D. As an astronomy student of Theodore Metochites' he must have been well versed in the whole quadrivium at a fairly early age. Metochites' own teacher, Manuel Bryennios, was the author of a famous textbook in harmonics.<sup>84</sup> Indeed, Gregoras himself prepared a new edition of Ptolemy's *Harmonics* in

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l'Empire romain 58 (Leiden 1977) 162 agreed that "la plus grande partie du développement est empruntée (...) au *Commentaire sur la République*". A. H. M. KESSELS, "Ancient Systems of Dream-Classification", *Mnemosyne* 22 (1969) [389–424] 411–14, argued against a Porphyrian source and in favour of "some more or less obscure work, probably on the interpretation of dreams" (413).

<sup>82</sup> Italos' text seems to provide the first surviving Greek evidence for a definition of χορηματισμοί (*Quaest. quodl.* 43.7–9: ὄψεις ὑποδεικνύοντα παραινούτων, ὡς τῶν μὲν ἀπέχεσθαι, τὰ δὲ καὶ διαπράττεσθαι διακελευομένων, cf. Macrobius, *In Somn. Scip.* 1.3.8: *quidem cum in somnis parens vel alia sancta gravisve persona seu sacerdos vel etiam deus aperte eventurum quid aut non eventurum, faciendum vitandumve denuntiat*). RICKLIN 1998, 281 suggests that Italos may be directly dependent on the Latin text of Macrobius. An alternative explanation, of course, is that he had access to Macrobius' source (who may or may not have been Porphyry). See now also M. Trizio, "Escaping through the Homeric Gates: John Italos' Neoplatonic Exegesis of *Odyssey* 19.562–567 between Synesius and Proclus", *Documenti e studi sulla tradizione filosofica medievale* 24 (2013) 69–83.

<sup>83</sup> Macrobius still features in PIETROSANTI'S 1999 apparatus fontium.

<sup>84</sup> Edited by G. H. JONKER, *The Harmonics of Manuel Bryennios* (Groningen 1970).

the early 1330s, taking particular pride in supplementing the incompletely preserved Book 3.<sup>85</sup> But in spite of his competence in the field, something seems to have gone amiss when he set out to elucidate Synesius' statement, for he treats the interval between *hypatē* and *nētē* as a seventh (17.1–4). The effect is that the reader of his commentary cannot help but wonder how on earth Synesius could have claimed that the *nētē* will reverberate with the *hypatē*.<sup>86</sup> It seems that Gregoras' initial mistake was to assume that Synesius is referring to an octachord created by two conjunct (κατὰ συναφήν) tetrachords (that is to say, two tetrachords sharing a string between themselves), with an extra string added a whole tone below the *hypatē* (the προσλαμβανομένη, 16.8), rather than to one created by two disjunct (κατὰ διάζευξιν) tetrachords a whole tone apart, like that described by Philolaus (DK 44 B 6.16–24). Thus he explains that the "string next to" the *hypatē* mentioned by Synesius is the προσλαμβανομένη (16.26–17.1).

The reason why Gregoras made this mistake may have been that if the *hypatē* is indeed the lowest string — as it is in Philolaus' octachord — there is no string at a whole tone's interval from it. The string immediately above the *hypatē* (the *parhypatē*) is always at a semitone's interval (in the diatonic and chromatic scales) or even less (in the enharmonic scale). So Gregoras may simply have striven to make sense of one feature of Synesius' text without noticing that this way he made nonsense of another feature. Perhaps he would have done better to think that Synesius is not referring to an octachord at all but to the so-called perfect system (Ptolemy, *Harm.* 2.4–5; cf. Nicomachus, *Harm.* 11) spanning two octaves, and that his *hypatē* is the *hypatē mesōn*, which has the *lichanos hypatōn* a whole tone's interval below itself, whereas his *nētē* is the *nētē diezeugmenōn*, which sounds a full octave above the *hypatē mesōn*, and consequently will reverberate when the *hypatē mesōn* is struck.

## 8. Appendix: the addressee of the preface

As noted above, Ševčenko (1964, 438–45) argued that the identification of the addressee of Gregoras' preface with Theodore Metochites was mistaken. The remark in Vindob. Phil. gr. 273 could be easily dismissed; Gregoras' *Letter* 120, on the other hand, furnished clear evidence that the commentary had been dedicated to John Kantakouzenos. There was no reason to think the commentary was finished before May 1328, since there

<sup>85</sup> See I. DÜRING, *Die Harmonielehre des Klaudios Ptolemaios*. Göteborgs Högskolas årskrift 36,1 (Gothenburg 1930) lxxviii–lxxxviii.

<sup>86</sup> Gregoras' error was pointed out by A. J. H. VINCENT, "Notices sur divers manuscrits grecs relatifs à la musique", in: *Notices et extraits des manuscrits de la bibliothèque du Roi* 16.2 (Paris 1847) 282–9, but, I think, wrongly explained. According to Vincent (288 n. 3), Synesius was referring to the putatively pre-Pythagorean heptachord.

was no way to ascertain which of the two versions of the treatise on the astrolabe it was supposed to have predated. Furthermore, the preface contained, besides flattery of a generic nature, "two details which seem to rule Metochites out as its addressee" (Ševčenko 1964, 439). The first was that the addressee "'does not disdain' to submit his scientific problems to Gregoras rather than to other outstanding 'Hellenes' (would Gregoras have imputed such a humiliating act to Metochites?)" (ibid.). The second was that "the addressee prefers to delve into the depths of ontology rather than to explore τὰ μετέωρα (Metochites, we know, did just the contrary)" (ibid.).

It is difficult to see that Ševčenko's second 'detail' can be anything but a misreading of a passage in which Gregoras flatters his erudite addressee by conflating two Socratic dicta, from Plato's *Republic* 2 (376b) and *Apology* (18b), to the effect that "the lover of learning is a philosopher, since he studies the things in the sky and all the wonderful things that come forth from the earth" (124.2–5).<sup>87</sup> As for the submission of intellectual problems, it is certainly not clear from the letter that Gregoras thought this act was humiliating for the addressee, only that he thought it was honourable for himself. In fact it seems rather unlikely that he would have mentioned it in his otherwise complimentary letter if he had thought it was humiliating for the addressee. So most probably he did not. Still, even if he did, Ševčenko fails to explain why this would make Kantakouzenos (or any other potential benefactor) a more likely addressee than Metochites.

On the other side of the argument, there is at least one detail that speaks decisively against Ševčenko's hypothesis. In *Letter* 120 Gregoras informs Kantakouzenos that he has composed his commentary "in deference to many people's entreaties". He goes on to say that "nevertheless, I have come to the conclusion that I should first present it to you – in the same way that farmers present some firstlings of their crops" (lines 14–17).<sup>88</sup> This strongly suggests that Kantakouzenos had not been among those encouraging Gregoras to compose the commentary. In the preface, on the other hand, the addressee is clearly and repeatedly stated to have proposed the task to him.<sup>89</sup> The way Gregoras speaks of the *De insomniis* is also dif-

<sup>87</sup> Similar criticism in H.-V. BEYER, *Nikephoros Gregoras. Antirrhētika 1. Einleitung, Textausgabe, Übersetzung und Anmerkungen*. Wiener byzantinistische Studien 12 (Vienna 1976) 27. However, Beyer still agrees with Ševčenko that Metochites could not have been the addressee of the preface, since, he thinks, by praising his addressee's *love* of learning Gregoras by implication compared the extent of his learning unfavourably with that of Metochites. As far as I can see, this is a wholly gratuitous argument.

<sup>88</sup> ἡμεῖς δὲ πολλῶν παρακλήσεων εἰξαντες, ὅσον ἐξῆν τῇ ἡμετέρα δυνάμει διελυκάναμεν, σαφεστέραν ἐπενεγκόντες ἐξήγησιν. δεῖν δ' οὖν ὅμως ἐκρίναμεν παραπλησίως τοῖς γεωργοῖς καὶ ἡμεῖς καθάπερ καρπῶν τινὰς ἀπαρχὰς σοὶ πρῶτον τοῦτο προσενεγκεῖν.

<sup>89</sup> ἦν δὲ νῦν ἡμῖν αὐθις ὑπόθεσιν προῦβαλες (...) (124.23–4); φέρε τὴν σὴν ὡς ἐφικτὸν ἐκπεράναμεν αἰτησιν καὶ διὰ τὴν τῶν ἄλλων (...) (125.10–11).

ferent in the two texts. In the preface he mentions details and makes allusions that seem to presuppose some familiarity with the work on the part of the addressee. In *Letter 120*, in contrast, he gives the impression of introducing the work to someone who cannot be expected ever to have heard of it before.

In conclusion, Kantakouzenos cannot have been the original dedicatee of the commentary on the *De insomniis*. There is no reason, therefore, to think that the commentary was not finished until after May 1328. This renders superfluous the far-fetched supposition that when Gregoras says the commentary was composed before the treatise on the astrolabe, what he means is that it was composed after the non-illustrated version of the treatise but before the illustrated one. Additionally, it removes the puzzle as to why Gregoras in *Letter 148* would claim that a more or less contemporary work was “written long ago”.<sup>90</sup>

Most probably the commentary was in fact composed some time before the fall of Andronicus II. It can by no means be excluded that the task was proposed to Gregoras by Metochites. On the contrary, it seems rather likely. As we have seen, Ševčenko may well have underestimated the specificity of the praise bestowed by Gregoras on the addressee of the preface (above, pp. 166–168). As for Gregoras’ decision to rededicate the work to Kantakouzenos, one has to concur with Terzaghi (quoted by Pietrosanti 1999, xxxvii) that even if one does not find it very agreeable, it is anything but new in the history of literature. Nor does it seem particularly odd against the background of Gregoras’ (successful) endeavours to establish a rapport with Andronicus III’s regime from 1330 onwards.

<sup>90</sup> Literally, “I think you know that I am since a long time the author of a book (...)” (εἰδέναι σε οἶμαι, ὡς ἐκ πολλοῦ μοι βιβλίον πεπόνηται [...] *Letter 148*.214–15). When Gregoras uses ἐκ πολλοῦ with a verb in the perfect tense, the prepositional phrase seems invariably to denote the time of completion of the verbal action, as in the following example from the introduction to his second treatise on the astrolabe (213.1–14): [Σ]ὲ δέ, ὦ βέλτιστε, ἤκιστα μοι χρῆναι θαυμάζειν δοκεῖ εἰ βιβλίον ἐκδεδωκόσιν ἡμῖν ἐκ πολλοῦ (...) ἔπειτά σοί (...) λογικάς ἀποδείξεις ἐζητηκῶτι πρὸς τούτοις (...) ἀπόκρισις ἤκιστα πῶ γεγένηται μία μὲν οὐδεμία, ἀλλὰ πολὺν τινα χρόνον σιγῇ θύοντες ἡμεῖς δηγάγομεν. As stated above (n. 1), the date of *Letter 148* accepted by Ševčenko and Beyer 1989 as well as the editor Leone is 1330–32 (with minor revisions after 1351).

## *D. Appendices*





# Bibliography

## 1. Abbreviations

ACO	<i>Acta Conciliorum Oecumenicorum</i>
ANRW	<i>Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt</i>
CAG	<i>Commentaria in Aristotelem Graeca</i>
DK	<i>Die Fragmente der Vorsokratiker</i> , ed. H. DIELS / W. KRANZ
LSJ	<i>A Greek-English Lexicon</i> , ed. H. G. LIDDELL / R. SCOTT / H. S. JONES
OCD	<i>The Oxford Classical Dictionary</i>
PG	<i>Patrologia Graeca</i>
PMG	<i>Poetae Melici Graeci</i>
SVF	<i>Stoicorum Veterum Fragmenta</i>

## 2. Editions, Commentaries, Translations of Ancient Texts

### a. *De insomniis*

FITZGERALD 1930	A. FITZGERALD (trans.) <i>Synesius of Cyrene. The Essays and Himns</i> , 2 vols. (Oxford 1930)
GARZYA 1989	A. GARZYA (ed. / trans.), <i>Opere di Sinesio di Cirene. Epistole, operette, inni</i> (Torino 1989)
KRABINGER 1850	J. G. KRABINGER (ed.), <i>Synesii Cyrenaei orationes et homiliarum fragmenta</i> (Landshut 1850)
LAMOUREUX / AUJOULAT 2004	J. LAMOUREUX / N. AUJOULAT (eds. / trans.), <i>Synésios de Cyrène. vol. 4: Opuscules I</i> (Paris 2004)
LANG 1926	W. LANG (trans.), <i>Das Traumbuch des Synesius von Kyrene. Übersetzung und Analyse der philosophischen Grundlagen. Heidelberger Abhandlungen zur Philosophie und ihrer Geschichte 10</i> (Tübingen 1926)
PETAVIUS 1612	D. PETAVIUS (ed.), <i>Synesii Cyrenensis opera omnia</i> (Paris 1612)
SUSANETTI 1992	D. SUSANETTI (ed. / trans.), <i>Sinesio di Cirene. I sogni</i> (Bari 1992)
TERZAGHI 1944	N. TERZAGHI (ed.), <i>Synesii Cyrenensis opusculae</i> (Rome 1944)

### b. Other Texts

BRISSON 2005	L. BRISSON et al. (eds.), <i>Porphyre. Sentences. Études d'introduction, texte grec et traduction française, commentaire. vol. 2. Histoire des Doctrines de l'Antiquité Classique 33</i> (Paris 2005)
DEL CORNO 1969	D. DEL CORNO (ed.), <i>Graecorum de re onirocritica scriptorum reliquiae</i> (Milano 1969)
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7, 12, 36 (1992); *Plutarch. Selected Essays and Dialogues* (1993); *Libanius. Imaginary Speeches* (1996); *Quintilian. The orator's education*, 5 volumes (2001); *Heraclitus. Homeric Problems* (together with D. Konstan, 2005); *Plutarch. How to Study Poetry* (together with R. Hunter, 2011); *Aeneas of Gaza. Theophrastus, with Zacharias of Mytilene. Ammonius* (together with J. Dillon and S. Gertz, 2012).

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