

# How to Date the Timeless? The Difficult Problem of the Pseudo–Pythagorean Treatises On Kingship

Geert Roskam

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# KTÈMA

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## How to Date the Timeless?

### The Difficult Problem of the Pseudo–Pythagorean Treatises *On Kingship*

RÉSUMÉ–. Cet article propose un examen critique des principaux parallèles entre les traités néopythagoriciens *Sur la royauté* et la pensée politique de Plutarque. Les Néopythagoriciens et Plutarque s'accordent fondamentalement sur l'idée que le bon roi 1) imite Dieu; 2) contrôle ses passions, est gouverné par la raison; 3) est un modèle pour ses sujets; 4) est une «loi animée». Cependant, chaque auteur poursuit un objectif propre et ignorer cette *uoluntas auctoris* pose un problème de méthode. En outre, faire la liste des idées communes ne donne pas d'information certaine pour dater Diotogène, Sthénidas et Ecphante.

MOTS-CLÉS–. Diotogène, Sthénidas, Ecphante, Plutarque, pensée politique

ABSTRACT–. This article provides a critical examination of the main parallels between the pseudo–Pythagorean treatises *On Kingship* and Plutarch's political thinking. The pseudo–Pythagoreans and Plutarch basically agree that the good king (1) imitates God, (2) controls his own passions and is governed by reason, (3) is a model for his subjects and (4) is an 'animate law'. However, every author also had his own agenda, and it is methodologically unsound to ignore the specific *voluntas auctoris*. Merely listing parallel ideas, then, does not provide reliable information for the date of Diotogenes, Sthenidas and Ecphantus.

KEYWORDS–. Diotogenes, Sthenidas, Ecphantus, Plutarch, political thinking

#### I. A PLEA FOR A WELL–CONSIDERED METHODOLOGY

Stobaeus' *Anthology* contains several excerpts from treatises *On Kingship* written by different pseudo–Pythagorean authors.<sup>1</sup> Their names, Diotogenes, Sthenidas and Ecphantus, are just that: mere names with, at best, a Pythagorean ring.<sup>2</sup> Strictly speaking, we do not even know for sure whether they are pseudonyms or whether (some of) these later authors were really named so. Furthermore, it is notoriously difficult to retrieve their backgrounds and milieu, and the fragments contain no information at all that allows for secure conclusions regarding their date. A possible reference to the text of Diotogenes in *PBingen* 3, a papyrus from the end of the first century BC or the beginning of the first century AD, may constitute a *terminus ante quem* for Diotogenes, but the relation between the two texts is not entirely clear, due to the very lacunose state of the

(1) Stobaeus 4,7,61 and 62 (Diotogenes); 4,6,22; 4,7,64, 65 and 66 (Ecphantus); 4,7,63 (Sthenidas). The texts are edited by DELATTE 1942, p. 25–46 and THESLEFF 1965, p. 71–75 (Diotogenes), 79–84 (Ecphantus) and 187–188 (Sthenidas).

(2) In his list of Pythagoreans, Iamblichus refers to a Sthenonidas of Locri and an Ecphantus of Croton (*Vit. Pyth.* 267). Diotogenes is mentioned nowhere else in extant literature and even the name is without parallel (not one single example is listed in the *LGPN* of FRASER, MATTHEWS 1987–2013).

papyrus.<sup>3</sup> Equally unclear is the precise relation between a quotation from Eurysus in Clement of Alexandria<sup>4</sup> and a passage from Ecphantus<sup>5</sup> where the same quotation appears. Any attempt to date these fragments, then, is to a large extent groping in the dark, as is tellingly illustrated by the many different conclusions reached in scholarly literature. Several leading experts support a relatively early date, in the Hellenistic period (third century BC),<sup>6</sup> whereas other, equally distinguished authorities in the field prefer a much later date, around the beginning of our era,<sup>7</sup> or in the imperial age (first or second century AD).<sup>8</sup> The question of the date is an important one, of course, and remains a challenge for further research. As a result, scholars continue to complete or replace old speculations by new ones, without, however, making really significant progress. In view of this intense scholarly debate, the only safe conclusion seems to be a distinct *non liquet*.

This, I think, should be the beginning of every honest discussion of this issue and I am afraid it will not only be the beginning but also the end of my discussion. Yet between this frustrating beginning and end, there is still room for enquiry and—I hope—even for some progress. In my view, perhaps the principal task of any scholar dealing with this issue now is a methodological one. For as a matter of fact, the current debate is repeatedly obfuscated by arguments that are methodologically unsound. When so little compelling evidence is available, scholars usually take their arguments where they can find them. Some of them, however, are no more than hypotheses that cannot even be falsified. The influence of king Juba II of Mauretania, for instance, on the writing of new Pythagorean treatises<sup>9</sup> cannot be proved, nor is it possible to demonstrate the role of (the circle of) Eudorus.<sup>10</sup> This is not to say that such hypotheses are worthless, of course: they are often very interesting indeed, but they should never be given the argumentative force which they do not have. Other arguments prove to be rather subjective, based on personal evaluations or expectations that do not rest on hard facts.<sup>11</sup> What we need, then, is an “argumentative hygiene,” so to say, based on a careful and judicious assessment of the value of every kind of argument. This requires an exercise of Socratic *ἐλεγχος*, unmasking ignorance while looking for more reliable criteria.

Such an elenctic approach soon reveals the principal importance of two arguments. First the linguistic one. Delatte has pointed to several words which are attested relatively late in Greek literature and to a number of syntactical and stylistic characteristics that also seem to suggest a later date.<sup>12</sup> This is an important argument, in that it rests on objective data provided by a painstaking philological analysis. Unfortunately enough, Delatte’s argument has been severely criticised by

(3) The most recent edition of the papyrus can be found in ANDORLINI, LUISELLI 2001. They also discuss the relation between the two texts, arguing that Diotogenes should be the source of the author of *PBingen* 3. However, the correspondence between the two documents rests, after all, to a large extent on a hypothetical text reconstruction. The strongest evidence is the term *θεόμιμον* in line 1, but this results from a correction of the papyrus which reads *-της θεομ{ε}μ*. The editor of the *editio princeps* reads *της ἐσομέν[ης]*; DARIS 2000, p. 16.

(4) *Strom.* 5,5,29,2.

(5) Stobaeus 4,7,64 = 80.2–4 THESL.

(6) See, e.g., GOODENOUGH 1928; THESLEFF 1961; MARTENS 2003, p. 165–174.

(7) ZELLER 1903, p. 123, who opts for the period of the first century BC and the first century AD; cf. also CENTRONE 2014, p. 339. MURRAY 1970, p. 280 thinks of the late hellenistic period.

(8) DELATTE 1942; SQUILLONI 1991; VIRGILIO 2003, p. 64; cf. also CALABI 2008, p. 215.

(9) Olympiodorus, *Prol. et In Cat.* 13.13–19 BUSSE; cf. ZELLER 1903, p. 113 n.1; MURRAY 1970, p. 282; see the comments of THESLEFF 1961, p. 54–55.

(10) Cf. BONAZZI 2013, p. 399–400.

(11) See, e.g., MARTENS 2003, p. 171: “they are not influenced by the syncretistic, philosophical ideas *which one expects* if they are from the first century C.E./first century B.C.E.; and *they give the impression* that they are working with a concept in its infancy and developmental stages, not a fully realized concept which was adopted by them” (my italics).

(12) DELATTE 1942, p. 88–119.

Thesleff. While accepting most of Delatte's results, he considers them to be "more valuable as a collection of material, than as a proof of the date of the writings."<sup>13</sup> Thesleff is right in arguing that the loss of so much Hellenistic literature interferes with such comparative linguistic studies, but the question remains if this suffices to refute Delatte's results altogether.<sup>14</sup> A certain caution is in place, no doubt, yet a meticulous linguistic and stylistic approach yields to my mind the most valuable evidence and thus holds priority over all other arguments. In this matter, then, I would basically side with Delatte against Thesleff.

The second principal argument is derived from a kind of "archaeology of ideas." Many scholars have tried to discover striking parallels between the doctrines of the pseudo-Pythagorean authors and the views of other writers. Such parallels would then enable us to situate the pseudo-Pythagoreans in a certain period when these ideas "were in the air." In the most recent research, it has been argued more than once that the position of the pseudo-Pythagoreans shows some remarkable differences with the Hellenistic ideology of kingship and bears much more similarity with Middle-Platonists such as Philo and Plutarch.<sup>15</sup> This observation also suggests a late date, in the first or second century AD, and thus provides additional support for Delatte's argument from the language and style of the treatises.

In this contribution, I would like to examine the value of this second argument. As this requires a careful and detailed study of the different parallels between the pseudo-Pythagorean treatises and other authors, I here prefer to focus, for methodological reasons, on one author, viz. Plutarch. In what follows, I shall first list the most important parallels and then place them back in the broader framework of Plutarch's political philosophy. This will yield a better insight into the peculiarities of Plutarch's own authorial approach and thus help to assess the precise value of the parallels. Moreover, this study also has a more generic relevance, in that its methodological approach can easily be applied to other authors as well.

## II. STRIKING PARALLELS

The point of departure of our analysis is a series of striking parallels between the pseudo-Pythagorean treatises *On kingship* and Plutarch's political views. Since these parallels have already been discussed more than once in previous scholarly research,<sup>16</sup> there is no need to enter at length into them. I here confine myself to the most conspicuous and essential elements, juxtaposing the pseudo-Pythagorean passages to those of Plutarch.<sup>17</sup>

(13) THESLEFF 1961, p. 65–67.

(14) Cf. MURRAY 1970, p. 248: "the surviving texts in Hellenistic koine constitute a body of prose literature greater in bulk than from any other period of antiquity before the fourth century A.D., and their contents are as varied as could be desired. Linguistic arguments drawn from an analysis of works of such enormous length as Polybius, the Septuagint, Diodorus, Dionysius of Halicarnassus and Strabo, and also the numerous and varied inscriptions, are likely to be correct."

(15) For a discussion and evaluation of the parallels between Philo and the pseudo-Pythagorean treatises, see, e.g., BRÉHIER 1907, p. 18–23; GOODENOUGH 1938, p. 90–100; MARTENS 2003, p. 169–171; CALABI 2008, p. 185–215. The parallels between Plutarch and the pseudo-Pythagoreans are discussed by SQUILLONI 1991. Cf. also CENTRONE 2005.

(16) See, e.g., GOODENOUGH 1928, p. 94–98; DELATTE 1942, p. 150 and *passim*; SQUILLONI 1991, *passim*.

(17) The translations of the pseudo-Pythagorean texts in this article are those of GOODENOUGH 1928; those of Plutarch are taken from the *LCL*.

a) Firstly, the pseudo-Pythagoreans and Plutarch agree that the king should imitate God:

Pseudo-Pythagorean treatises <i>On Kingship</i>	Plutarch
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In judging and in distributing justice [...], it is right for the king to act as does God in his leadership and command of the universe (Diotogenes, fr. 1, p. 72.9–11 THESL.)</li> <li>• In all these respects [viz. in his majesty, graciousness and ability to inspire fear], it must be borne in mind, royalty is an imitation of divinity (θεόμιμον πρᾶγμα) (Diotogenes, fr. 2, p. 75.15–16 THESL.)</li> <li>• The king must be a wise man, for so he will be a copy and imitator (ἀντίμιμος καὶ ζηλωτάς) of the first God (Sthenidas, p. 187.10–11 THESL.)</li> <li>• He who is both king and wise will be a lawful imitator (μιματάς) and servant of God (Sthenidas, p. 188.12–13 THESL.)</li> <li>• [The king should know] how much more divine than he is are those others [the gods] by likening (ἀπεικάζων) himself to whom he would do the best for himself and his subjects (Ecphantus, fr. 2, p. 80.19–21 THESL.)</li> <li>• For its beauty is revealed straightway if the one [the king] who imitates (ὁ μιμασόμενος) [God] in his virtue is beloved at once by him whom he is imitating (ὄν μεμίμαται) and by his subjects (Ecphantus, fr. 2, p. 81.3–5 THESL.)</li> <li>• In making himself like (ἀπεικάζων) God he would make himself like (ἂν ἀπεικάσειε) the Most Powerful (Ecphantus, fr. 3, p. 82.26–27 THESL.)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The ruler is the image of God (εἰκὼν θεοῦ) who orders all things. Such a ruler needs no Pheidias nor Polycleitus nor Myron to model him, but by his virtue he forms himself in the likeness of God (εἰς ὁμοίότητα θεῷ) and thus creates a statue most delightful of all to behold and most worthy of divinity (θεοπρεπέστατον) (<i>Ad princ. iner.</i> 780EF)</li> <li>• Just as in the heavens God has established as a most beautiful image of himself the sun and the moon, so in states a ruler “who in God’s likeness righteous decisions upholds,” that is to say, one who, possessing God’s wisdom, establishes, as his likeness and luminary, intelligence in place of sceptre or thunderbolt or trident,... (<i>Ad princ. iner.</i> 780F)</li> </ul>

b) In their view, the king should take care of his own character and bring his passions under the control of reason. In other words, a man who wants to rule over others should first be able to rule over himself:

Pseudo-Pythagorean treatises <i>On Kingship</i>	Plutarch
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• At the same time it is proper that one who desires to rule over others should first be able to rule over his own passions (Diotogenes, fr. 2, p. 72.28–29 THESL.)</li> <li>• Knowing that the harmony of the multitude whose leadership God has given him ought to be attuned to himself, the king would begin by fixing in his own life the most just limitations and order of law (Diotogenes, fr. 2, p. 73.16–19 THESL.)</li> <li>• Without wisdom and understanding it is impossible to be either a king or ruler (Sthenidas, p. 188.11–12 THESL.)</li> <li>• Nor could the king without intelligence have these virtues: I mean justice, continence, communion, and their sisters (Ecphantus, fr. 4, p. 84.6–8 THESL.; the whole of fragment 4 deals with the virtues of the ideal king)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The sovereign must first gain command of himself, must regulate his own soul and establish his own character, then make his subjects fit his pattern. For one who is falling cannot hold others up, nor can one who is ignorant teach, nor the uncultivated impart culture, nor the disorderly make order, nor can he rule who is under no rule (<i>Ad princ. iner.</i> 780BC)</li> </ul>

- c) Having reached virtue, the king can act as a good example for his subjects, benefitting them and making them better:

Pseudo-Pythagorean treatises <i>On Kingship</i>	Plutarch
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• [Through his dignified behaviour, the king will] succeed in putting into order those who look upon him, amazed at his majesty, at his self-control, and his fitness for distinction. For to look upon the good king ought to affect the souls of those who see him no less than a flute or harmony (Diotogenes, fr. 2, 74.15–19 THESL.)</li> <li>• And in the case of ordinary men, if they sin, their most holy purification is to make themselves like the rulers (ἐξομοιωθῆμεν τοῖς ἀρχόντεσσιν) (Ecphantus, fr. 2, 80.22–23 THESL.)</li> <li>• For whatever things can by their own nature use the beautiful, have no occasion for obedience, as they have no fear of necessity. The king alone is capable of putting this good into human nature so that by imitation (διὰ μιμᾶσιν) of him, their Better, they will follow in the way they should go (Ecphantus, fr. 3, p. 83.7–10 THESL.)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• But just as a rule, if it is made rigid and inflexible, makes other things straight when they are fitted to it and laid alongside it, in like manner the sovereign must first gain command of himself, must regulate his own soul and establish his own character, then make his subjects fit his pattern (<i>Ad princ. iner.</i> 780B)</li> </ul>

- d) Finally, the pseudo-Pythagoreans and Plutarch point out that the virtuous king can be considered as an ‘animate law’ (νόμος ἔμψυχος):

Pseudo-Pythagorean treatises <i>On Kingship</i>	Plutarch
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• But the king is Animate Law, or is a legal ruler (Diotogenes, fr. 1, p. 71.21–22 THESL.)</li> <li>• ...the king who has an absolute rulership, and is himself Animate Law (Diotogenes, fr. 1, p. 72.23 THESL.)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Who, then, shall rule the ruler? The “Law, the king of all, both mortals and immortals,” as Pindar says – not law written outside him in books or on wooden tablets or the like, but reason endowed with life within him (ἔμψυχος ὦν ἐν αὐτῷ λόγος) (<i>Ad princ. iner.</i> 780C)</li> </ul>

These parallels are quite clear and concern central aspects of the political thinking of the pseudo-Pythagoreans and Plutarch. That is to say, we are not dealing with trivial details or matters of secondary importance. The parallels thus show that on a fundamental level, Plutarch and the pseudo-Pythagoreans endorse the same position.

This observation, however, should not lead to overhasty conclusions. It is not the end of the story, but only the starting point for further investigation, as it raises at least as many questions as it answers. Do all these parallels simply reflect a one-to-one relation? Do these unmistakable parallels perhaps also conceal differences between the authors, and if yes, how important are these differences? And last but not least, what do all these parallels ultimately tell us about the respective date of the Pseudo-Pythagorean treatises *On Kingship*? Several scholars have unquestioningly regarded the striking parallels as an important argument in support of a later date,<sup>18</sup> but this conclusion is not obvious as such. In fact, scholars like Goodenough who favour a much earlier date are no less familiar with these parallels, but interpret them differently. In their view, they merely

(18) For instance DELATTE 1942 and SQUILLONI 1991.



show that Plutarch was familiar with, and depended on the earlier pseudo-Pythagorean tradition.<sup>19</sup> Such a conclusion, of course, is no less rash, yet it is not implausible a priori. For even while it is true that Plutarch nowhere mentions any of these pseudo-Pythagoreans by name, there can be no doubt about his exceptional erudition, as is illustrated time and again by his frequent quotations from so many authors – both famous writers and authors of secondary importance.<sup>20</sup>

This brings us to the heart of the whole problem. In order to be able to decide on the precise value of these parallels, we need a better insight into the peculiarity of the different authors involved. To that purpose, an analysis of the mutual differences is often equally interesting (if not more) as a mere listing of salient thematic correspondences. In this respect, the current methodology of contemporary research still contains significant lacunae. Our focus should not only be on what these authors all have in common but also on their own specific characteristics. In other words, a correct interpretation of the κοινόν presupposes a careful understanding of the ἴδιον.

### III. THE PECULIARITY OF PLUTARCH'S POSITION

III.1. In previous scholarly research on the date of the pseudo-Pythagorean treatises *On Kingship*, the peculiarity of Plutarch's political thinking has often been unduly ignored. The above list of correspondences already shows that excessive attention has been given to one short treatise, that is, *Ad principem ineruditum*. For at least two reasons, however, this exclusive focus entails a biased misrepresentation of Plutarch's political thinking.

Firstly, the quotations from the treatise are isolated from their context, so that *Ad principem ineruditum* is broken up into a series of unconnected ideas. Such a fragmentation based on external criteria of course fails to do justice to the overall perspective of the work. The treatise should be understood in light of Plutarch's Platonic political philosophy.<sup>21</sup> It reflects Plutarch's own version of the ideal of the Platonic philosopher-king, adapted to the contemporary context of Plutarch's time.<sup>22</sup> Moreover, it constitutes a kind of diptych with another short work, viz. *Maxime cum principibus philosopho esse disserendum*, where Plutarch tries to convince the philosopher to engage himself in politics in order to educate the ruler, contribute to his moral progress, and thus maximise his own usefulness by benefitting the whole community through the person of the ruler.<sup>23</sup> In *Maxime cum principibus*, Plutarch addresses the philosopher, in *Ad principem ineruditum*, he focuses on the ruler, but twice the same political ideal is elaborated. If this general picture is unduly neglected, we end up in a 'parallelomania'<sup>24</sup> that is fundamentally not so different from traditional *Quellenforschung* (even if it aims at another purpose).

Secondly, *Ad principem ineruditum* is erroneously isolated from the rest of Plutarch's voluminous oeuvre. It receives excessive attention, although it only contains one aspect of Plutarch's political

(19) GOODENOUGH 1928, p. 97: "If any possible doubt could have existed as to Plutarch's intention before, that has been made clear by this passage [sc. *Ad princ. iner.* 781F–782A] which certainly presupposes the Diotogenes–Ephantalus philosophy." Cf. also THESLEFF 1961, p. 67.

(20) See the impressive list of HELMBOLD, O'NEIL 1959.

(21) See for general discussions of this work esp. BARIGAZZI 1982 and TIRELLI 2005, p. 7–35; cf. also SQUILLONI 1989 and more general overviews of Plutarch's political thought, as AALDERS 1982a and several articles in GALLO, SCARDIGLI 1995.

(22) According to ZECCHINI 2002, the treatise reflects Plutarch's willingness to associate with the new emperor Trajan. Cf. also CUVIGNY 1984, p. 5–6 and ROSKAM 2002. On Plutarch's reception of the ideal of the philosopher king, see BOULET 2014.

(23) See esp. ROSKAM 2009, p. 71–144.

(24) Cf. SANDMELL 1961 for a sound discussion of this approach in the field of studies of early Christianity and Judaism.



philosophy. SQUILLONI, for instance, regards this treatise as the text which contains Plutarch's political ideal.<sup>25</sup> It is probably more correct to say that it contains *one essential aspect* of his political ideal, and that there are other aspects as well that, moreover, are no less significant.<sup>26</sup> We may distinguish at least three components, which appear in different works.

- In the already mentioned diptych *Ad principem ineruditum* and *Maxime cum principibus philosopho esse disserendum*, Plutarch deals with politics from a theoretical, Platonic perspective.
- In *An seni res publica gerenda sit* and especially in the *Praecepta gerendae reipublicae*, Plutarch applies this Platonic political philosophy to the concrete context of everyday municipal politics.<sup>27</sup>
- In the *Parallel Lives*, finally, he focuses on the platform of history which provides an interesting criterion for his political thinking. The achievements of the great statesmen of the past can be used as a kind of mirror for contemporary statesmen.<sup>28</sup>

This is a much broader panorama than what can be read in the *Ad principem ineruditum*.<sup>29</sup> The question is what all this implies for a better assessment of the above established parallels between Plutarch's thinking and that of the pseudo-Pythagoreans.

III.2. An answer to that question obviously requires a more systematic and detailed analysis of these parallels than has been done in previous research. We thus have to return to the four central ideas listed above and place them back into the overall framework of Plutarch's political thinking.

- a) *The king should imitate God*. The traditional Platonic ideal of 'likeness to God' (as far as possible; ὁμοίωσις θεῷ κατὰ τὸ δυνατόν) is indeed adopted by Plutarch.<sup>30</sup> He points out that God offers himself to everyone as a paradigm of every excellence. From such a perspective, human virtue can be regarded as an assimilation (ἐξομοίωσις) to God, within reach for everyone who is able to 'follow God.'<sup>31</sup> This passage, then, shows that Plutarch fully endorses the famous Platonic *telos* of ὁμοίωσις θεῷ and even sees no problem in combining it with the Pythagorean one of 'following God.'<sup>32</sup> The above quoted section from *Ad principem ineruditum* about the ruler who forms himself in the likeness of God (εἰς ὁμοιότητα θεῷ) can in this respect be understood as an application of this traditional ideal to the sphere of politics. So far so good. What is, however, concealed by this parallel is the simple fact that this idea occurs almost nowhere in Plutarch's political thinking. The passage from *Ad principem ineruditum* is the exception rather than the rule! For in Plutarch's other political treatises, the politician is, at best, considered a servant or worshipper of the gods.<sup>33</sup> Nowhere does Plutarch develop or even mention the idea that the politician actually *imitates* God by establishing harmony or concord

(25) SQUILLONI 1991, p. 57.

(26) This implies that even a reconstruction of Plutarch's view of the ideal king should rest on much more relevant material than only the treatise *Ad principem ineruditum*. Exemplary in that respect is PÉREZ JIMÉNEZ 1988.

(27) On this much discussed topic, see, e.g., the seminal contributions of RENOIRTE 1951; CARRIÈRE 1977 and 1984; DESIDERI 1986 and 2011; PELLING 2014 and the collections of essays in GALLO, SCARDIGLI 1995; DE BLOIS *et al.* 2004 and 2005.

(28) That the *Lives* are supposed to be relevant for statesmen already appears from the dedicatee of the work, viz. the influential Roman politician Sosius Senecio. On the intended readership of the *Lives*, see esp. STADTER 1988, p. 292–293, and 2015, p. 45–58 and *passim*. On the critical approach which Plutarch expects from his readers, see DUFF 2011.

(29) I here leave the short and incomplete *De unius in republica dominatione* aside; on the problem of its authenticity, see, e.g., AALDERS 1982b; CAIAZZA 1995.

(30) See esp. BECCHI 1996; cf. also, e.g., DILLON 1977, p. 192–193; VALGIGLIO 1988, p. 75–77.

(31) *De sera num.* 550D; cf. also *De Is. et Os.* 351C (with ROSKAM 2014a, p. 217); *De an. procr.* 1014B and 1015B.

(32) On the Pythagorean *telos*, see esp. Stobaeus, 2,7,3f; cf. Plutarch, *De superst.* 169E; Philo of Alexandria, *Migr.* 173 and *Decal.* 100; Clement of Alexandria, *Strom.* 2,15,70,1; Apuleius, *De Plat.* 2.23, 253; Iamblich, *VP* 86.

(33) *An seni* 789D and 792F; *Praec. ger. reip.* 801E; 802B; 823F; cf. also 819F (on the orator's platform as a sanctuary common to Zeus the Counsellor and the Protector of Cities, to Themis and to Justice).

in his city. The same holds true for the *Parallel Lives*.<sup>34</sup> Especially illustrative is Plutarch's attitude towards Pericles' surname 'Olympian.' When he first mentions it, he connects it with Pericles' loftiness of thought, which derived from his familiarity with natural philosophy.<sup>35</sup> At the very end of the *Life*, he returns to the issue and proposes a different interpretation. The surname 'Olympian,' which sounds so puerile and pompous, makes sense because of Pericles' reasonable and mild political approach, "inasmuch as we do firmly hold that the divine rulers and kings of the universe are capable only of good, and incapable of evil."<sup>36</sup> This is the closest we get to the idea of ὁμοίως θεῷ in this *Life*. A retrospective overview of Pericles' political career shows that his rule bears resemblance to that of God. This idea, however, is not a leading motif throughout the *Life of Pericles* nor does it appear in the concluding *Comparison of Pericles and Fabius Maximus*. It rather stands on itself as a concluding encomium, based on an *a posteriori* philosophical reinterpretation of Pericles' surname.

All this suggests that the high-minded theoretical ideal of assimilation to God is only of secondary importance in the field of concrete politics. In that respect, Plutarch was as a rule much more pragmatic than Ecphantus. He would never say that the good ruler is "an alien and foreign thing which has come down from heaven to man,"<sup>37</sup> but would rather insist that the politician lives with the people and wants to be a man among men (ὁμοδημεῖν καὶ συνανθρωπεῖν).<sup>38</sup> If that is true, we may conclude that the passage in *Ad principem ineruditum* where Plutarch refers to the idea of the ruler's assimilation to God is strongly conditioned by the specific theoretical perspective of the treatise. It is one of the doctrines that Plutarch probably inherited from the previous tradition,<sup>39</sup> but that were not crucial for his self-understanding as a political thinker.

- b) *The ruler should control his own passions and be governed by reason.* This is an idea that is part and parcel of Plutarch's own political convictions. It is not only an important leitmotif in *Ad principem ineruditum* and its counterpart *Maxime cum principibus*, but proves no less valid in the context of provincial politics. Plutarch begins his *Praecepta gerendae reipublicae* with a few reflections on the politician's own person: his decision to enter the political scene should be based on a well-considered choice (προαίρεσις)<sup>40</sup> and he should put his own character in order, since the people knows the character of its rulers and refuses to obey or trust ill-reputed politicians.<sup>41</sup> A politician who wishes to influence the character of his fellow citizens, then, has no choice but to be himself as virtuous as possible.

This ideal, however, is by no means easy to reach. As a matter of fact, the pseudo-Pythagorean authors show a remarkable confidence on this point. They confine themselves to stressing that the king *should* be virtuous or they even straightforwardly presume that he *is* virtuous.<sup>42</sup> The former, normative view returns in Plutarch's *Ad principem ineruditum* and elsewhere, whereas

(34) See esp. *Num.* 6,2 (the work of a king is a service rendered to God).

(35) *Per.* 8,1–3. As alternative explanations, he then mentions Pericles' great building policies and his general abilities as a statesman and a general, and concludes that all of this may well have played a part. Added to that, finally, is the explanation of the comic poets, who apparently connect Pericles' surname with his rhetorical speaking (*Per.* 8,3–4). All this can be traced back to an earlier tradition (STADTER 1989, p. 103), but there is no trace here of the ideal of ὁμοίως θεῷ.

(36) *Per.* 39,2.

(37) Thus Ecphantus, fr. 2, p. 81.11–12 THESL.

(38) *Praec. ger. reip.* 823B.

(39) VAN DER STOCKT 2004 points to the importance of Plato's *Laws* 716a in this context. His detailed analysis shows that the passage from *Ad principem ineruditum* can be traced back to one of Plutarch's *hypomnemata*.

(40) *Praec. ger. reip.* 798C–799F. Later in the treatise, Plutarch comes back to this topic; cf. ROSKAM 2004/5.

(41) *Praec. ger. reip.* 800A–801C.

(42) See, e.g., Diotogenes, fr. 1, p. 71.21–23 THESL.; Ecphantus, fr. 2, p. 80.1–7 and 81.9–13 THESL.

the latter, descriptive perspective is usually rejected. Even a quick look at the *Parallel Lives* shows that political reality is much more complex than political ideals.<sup>43</sup> The illustrious statesmen of the past all had a lot of talents and virtues, but all of them had their failings as well. Even if these may be regarded as “shortcomings in some virtue” rather than as utter wickedness,<sup>44</sup> it remains true that perfection cannot easily be reached.<sup>45</sup> Accordingly, Plutarch advises Menemachus in the *Praecepta gerendae reipublicae* to remove at any rate his most conspicuous faults, if it is not easy wholly to banish evil from the soul.<sup>46</sup> If seen from this light, the high ideals of *Ad principem ineruditum* suddenly appear far less evident. Plutarch adopts the ideal, no doubt, but also complemented it by a fair dose of common sense and sober-mindedness.

- c) *The ruler is a model for his subjects.* Again, this core idea is of paramount importance in Plutarch’s political philosophy. Indeed, it is perfectly in line with his Platonic conception of the ideal ruler who educates his subjects to virtue. This ideal comes to the fore in theoretical essays such as *Ad principem ineruditum*, but is no less prominent in the practically oriented political treatises and can also be found in the *Lives* (though seldom *expressis verbis*). Lysurgus, for instance, succeeded in turning Sparta into a πόλις φιλοσοφοῦσα through his legislation, and Numa managed to make the Romans more peaceful.<sup>47</sup> Examples can easily be multiplied: as a matter of fact, most of Plutarch’s heroes in one way or another contributed to the well-being of their state and many of them even were, as a military commander or as an influential but affable politician, a source of inspiration for their fellow citizens.

On closer inspection, however, the matter is more complicated than suggested so far. The famous statesmen of the past may, at best, have educated their fellow citizens to virtue, but it is not always clear to what extent they did so by providing themselves directly as exemplary models of correct moral behaviour. The proems of the *Parallel Lives* suggest that the heroes should indeed be regarded as moral examples. Their brilliant accomplishments implant in those who study them an eagerness which leads to imitation.<sup>48</sup> But such an imitation is not tantamount to slavishly repeating or copying the hero’s behaviour. If the statesman is a model, then only in the sense that his deeds are worth reflecting upon. He is a source of inspiration, we can learn from his decisions and actions, but we have to follow our own course, taking into account the different circumstances. We may wonder what Themistocles or Pericles would have done in our situation, but then go on to make our own choice. Plutarch’s account, then, is ultimately much more problematizing than that of the pseudo-Pythagoreans.

- d) *The ruler is an animate law.* This is a well-known idea that has its roots in the political thinking of the fourth century.<sup>49</sup> When Plutarch alludes to this doctrine, he thus echoes an age-long philosophical tradition. Yet Plutarch also gives this tradition an interesting twist. Rather than straightforwardly regarding the ruler as an animate law, he argues that the ruler should be

(43) Cf. also TRAPP 2004.

(44) *Life of Cimon* (2,5); cf. DUFF 1999, p. 59–61.

(45) See, e.g., *An virt. doc.* 439B; BABUT 1969, p. 301–304.

(46) *Praec. ger. reip.* 800B.

(47) *Lyc.* 31,3 and *Num.* 8,1–3; cf. 20,1–7; 23(1),9. Both statesmen thus created their own (partial) version of Plato’s ideal state; cf. BOULET 2005.

(48) *Per.* 1,4; the proem to the *Life of Pericles* is analysed by DUFF 1999, p. 34–45 and 2001; cf. also STADTER 1989, p. 53–62. A similar perspective also occurs in *De prof. in virt.* 84B–85B; ROSKAM 2005, p. 332–335.

(49) See, e.g., AALDERS 1969; MURRAY 1970, p. 251–252 and 273–278; SQUILLONI 1991, p. 107–136; MARTENS 2003, p. 31–66. Musonius Rufus already speaks of it as an old doctrine; Stobaeus, 4,7,67 = fr. 8 HENSE. On Philo’s reception of the doctrine, see RICHARSON 1957; GOODENOUGH 1938, p. 107–108; MARTENS 2003, p. 90–95. A more general survey is to be found in CHESNUT 1978.

governed by the inner law of animate reason (ἔμψυχος λόγος). This is a crucial difference.<sup>50</sup> For Plutarch realized the possible dangers of the traditional doctrine very well. In his *Life of Alexander*, he relates how the philosopher Anaxarchus tried to comfort Alexander after the murder of Cleitus by pointing out that the king should himself be a law and measure of justice for his subjects. This idea, so Plutarch adds, indeed mitigated Alexander's grief, but at the same time rendered him more lawless.<sup>51</sup> By replacing the concept of 'animate law' with that of 'animate reason,' Plutarch subtly corrects the traditional idea and prevents its potential excesses or misuse. A ruler who is governed by animate reason can indeed be regarded as the embodiment of the law, for his decisions will always rest on a sound philosophical basis.<sup>52</sup> In this case, then, the parallel between Plutarch and the pseudo-Pythagoreans is not as clear as is often presumed. Plutarch's position is much more sophisticated than that of Diotogenes, since he reorients the traditional doctrine in light of his philosophical perspective.

This brief survey may help us to assess the above listed parallels more correctly. The thematic correspondences between Plutarch and the pseudo-Pythagoreans usually suggest that both share a common intellectual tradition. This tradition is introduced by Plutarch into the broader framework of his own Platonic political thinking and at the same time projected back into the distant past. His treatise *Ad principem ineruditum* should be interpreted along the same lines. It should not be read in a reductionist fashion through the lens of the pseudo-Pythagorean treatises *On kingship* but should be understood from the perspective of Plutarch's own political philosophy (including his creative appropriation of traditional ideas). In this light, the striking parallels between some passages from the treatise and other works *Περὶ βασιλείας* should never be taken at face value but need careful contextualisation. It is important to realise indeed that Plutarch in his treatise *Ad principem ineruditum* does not primarily address kings. Terms like αὐτοκράτωρ or καίσαρ, which unambiguously refer to the emperor, are not used. By far the most frequent term to refer to the ruler throughout the whole treatise is ἄρχων,<sup>53</sup> which suggests that Plutarch is primarily thinking of local rulers, of the πρῶτοι who administer their own cities and perhaps of Roman officials like proconsuls and procurators. It is true that he also refers to examples from kings and tyrants, but this need not imply that he also has real kings or Roman emperors in mind as the addressees of his treatise, since similar examples can also be found in *An seni res publica gerenda sit* and *Praecepta gerendae reipublicae*.<sup>54</sup> And even if it cannot be ruled out that Plutarch was, at least in principle, willing to associate with the Roman emperor himself,<sup>55</sup> his primary focus was probably on the level of municipal politics. He thus adopts traditional ideals about kings and adapts them to lower levels. Every politician can in his own way and according to his own capacities try to imitate God, follow

(50) Pace MARTENS 2003, p. 54–55: “This phrase [sc. ἔμψυχος λόγος] becomes synonymous with the living law and has the same significance: one is either ruled by the written law or the king.”

(51) *Alex.* 52,4–7; the same negative evaluation returns in *Ad princ. iner.* 781AB. Cf. also Arrian, *An.* 4,9,7–8.

(52) That need not imply that such a ruler will always obey the laws. In *Praec. ger. reip.* 817DE, Plutarch argues that “the law always gives the first rank in government to him who does right and recognizes what is advantageous.” This implies that the ruler is indeed allowed to break the law if he does so for an honourable purpose. See further NIKOLAIDIS 1995 and FRAZIER 2016, p. 217–224, on Plutarch's attitude towards the question as to whether the end justifies the means.

(53) See *Ad princ. iner.* 779E; 779F; 780B; 780C; 780D; 780E; 780F; 781C; 781D; 782D. Cf. also τῶν βασιλέων καὶ ἀρχόντων in 779F. In 780B, Plutarch refers to στρατηγοὶ καὶ ἡγεμόνες. The title is Πρὸς ἡγεμόνα ἀπαίδευτον, but it is uncertain whether this can be traced back to Plutarch himself; see TIRELLI 2005, p. 101–102, for further discussion.

(54) Examples from kings: 779EF; 780C; 781AB; 782AB; from tyrants: 781DE; 782C. Similar examples in the other political treatises: *An seni* 783D; 784D; 784EF; 790AB; 791E; 791F–792A; 792AB; 792C; 793EF; 794BC; 795F; 797BC; *Praec. ger. reip.* 801D; 805F; 806B; 807E–808A; 809B; 810A; 814D; 816E; 817A; 817F–818A; 818BC; 821D; 821EF; 823CD.

(55) On the difficult question of the relation between Plutarch and Trajan, see, e.g., JONES 1971, p. 28–32; STADTER, VAN DER STOCKT 2002; STADTER 2015, p. 165–187. Much depends on the authenticity of the preface to the *Regum et imperatorum apophthegmata*; see on this FLACELIÈRE 1976, p. 100–103; BECK 2002; ROSKAM 2014b, p. 190–191.

animate reason, control his passions and benefit his fellow citizens. *Ad principem ineruditum*, in short, is not only relevant for Trajan but contains a message for all the politicians of Plutarch's day.

It may be added in passing that this conclusion has a more generic value, as it can easily be applied to many other works that have been related to the *Περὶ βασιλείας* literature: Seneca's *De clementia* or Pliny's *Panegyricus*, for instance, which directly address an emperor; Dio of Prusa's *Kingship orations*, which contain an elaborate image of the ideal emperor;<sup>56</sup> or several of Themistius' *Orations*.<sup>57</sup> In all of these works, analogous ideas and ideals can be found, but every author has his own agenda, which should never be neglected. In all of these cases, the same methodological principle holds true: striking parallels can only be judged on the basis of a painstaking analysis that does full justice to the peculiar *voluntas auctoris* of every author.

III.3. It has been shown by now that a better understanding of Plutarch's own perspective contributes to a more correct assessment of the parallels between his political thinking and that of the pseudo-Pythagoreans. In some cases, the parallels are less close than is frequently assumed, and in all cases, they are far too general to allow any philosophical influence between the authors to be determined. We can perhaps take this conclusion one step further by adopting at this point a complementary approach and examine how Plutarch himself regarded Pythagorean philosophy and especially Pythagorean political thinking.

His works contain little information regarding the existence of Neopythagorean circles in his days. He interestingly distinguishes between the ancient Pythagoreans and those of his own time<sup>58</sup> but mentions only a few friends who were practising a Pythagorean way of life<sup>59</sup> and nowhere suggests that there existed something like an official Neopythagorean school.<sup>60</sup> Nor does he refer to political achievements of contemporary Neopythagoreans: for Plutarch, Pythagorean involvement in politics was mainly a thing of the past.

This does not imply, however, that this involvement had become irrelevant for his own day. We here come across the same three domains of Plutarch's political thinking as discussed above (*supra*, III.1). In *Maxime cum principibus philosopho esse disserendum*, Pythagoras' association with the Italiote Greeks is mentioned as an illustration of Plutarch's conviction that the philosopher can benefit many through one.<sup>61</sup> Pythagoras can thus be used as an authoritative example in support of the realizability of Plutarch's Platonic political ideal. Pythagoras' political ideals can also be projected back into the past, as appears from Plutarch's *Life of Numa*, where the Roman king is connected with the Greek philosopher in spite of chronological difficulties of which Plutarch himself was aware.<sup>62</sup> No less interesting is the dialogue *De genio Socratis*, in which Plutarch relates the history of the delivery of Thebes from Spartan rule in 379BC. Several Pythagoreans are involved

(56) For general discussions of the *Kingship Orations*, see, e.g., JONES 1978, p. 115–123; DESIDERI 1978, p. 287–318; MOLES 1990; cf. also the seminal article of MOLES 1983 on *Oratio* 4, and SWAIN 1996, p. 192–206. On the relation between Dio and Trajan, see, e.g., GANGLOFF 2009 and 2016; AMATO 2014, p. 97–118.

(57) For an excellent recent overview of political thinking about the good ruler in imperial literature, see GANGLOFF 2019.

(58) *Quaest. conv.* 728D (τῶν παλαιῶν Πυθαγορικῶν versus καθ' ἡμᾶς). Cf. TEODORSSON 1996, p. 241: "Our passage is important evidence showing that the distinction between the ancient Pythagoreans and the contemporary ones, the Neo-Pythagoreans, was already made in Plutarch's time."

(59) The evidence is collected and analysed by HERSHBELL 1984. On (Neo-)Pythagorean influences on Plutarch, see also the seminal study of MÉAUTIS 1922 and the short discussion in DILLON 2010.

(60) He mentions the pupils (μαθηταῖς) of the Pythagorean Alexicrates in *Quaest. conv.* 728D and introduces Lucius as a pupil of Moderatus the Pythagorean (*Quaest. conv.* 727B). See further CENTRONE 2000.

(61) *Maxime cum principibus* 777A; ROSKAM 2009, p. 94.

(62) *Num.* 1,3–6; 8,5–21; 14,4–7; 22,5 ("we may well be indulgent with those who are eager to prove, on the basis of so many resemblances between them, that Numa was acquainted with Pythagoras").



in the discussions<sup>63</sup> and are characterised as men of the world. While it is not surprising that Theanor, being an outsider and foreigner, does not take part in the conspiracy, it is much more remarkable that Epameinondas likewise prefers to stand aloof. Donini has argued convincingly that Epameinondas' decision is not based on his Pythagorean principles (nor on Academic considerations) but on his sharp political insight.<sup>64</sup> And this indeed reflects the characteristic dynamics and openness of Plutarch's political thinking. Plutarch always shows a keen interest into the philosophical education of the great statesmen of the past,<sup>65</sup> but he is broad-minded enough not to reduce every single detail of their political decisions to the influence of their philosophical training.

In general, then, we may conclude that Plutarch's view of Pythagoras' political philosophy is perfectly in line with his own political thinking, which shows a well-balanced combination of high-minded Platonic ideals and sober pragmatism. Such appropriation of Pythagoras' thought builds on a previous tradition in Platonic circles that may, *mutatis mutandis*, be traced back to the early days of the Academy.<sup>66</sup>

#### IV. THE PECULIARITY OF THE PSEUDO-PYTHAGOREAN TREATISES ON *KINGSHIP*

We have seen that the insistence on the parallels between Plutarch's political philosophy and the pseudo-Pythagorean treatises *On Kingship* often unduly neglected the peculiarity of Plutarch's thinking. The same holds true for the pseudo-Pythagoreans. The individual agenda of these authors should be respected too, and we should avoid reading them through the lens of Middle-Platonists like Philo of Alexandria or Plutarch. To a certain extent, however, this is far more difficult, since we have less material at our disposal. We are very well informed about the specific *Sitz im Leben* of Plutarch's thinking and a confrontation with contemporary literary<sup>67</sup> and epigraphic sources sheds further light on the meaning, relevance and scope of his political views. Moreover, the addressees of his works suggest a specific kind of readership, viz. politically influential *pepaideumenoí*. All this facilitates our understanding and evaluation of Plutarch's position. In the case of the pseudo-Pythagoreans, on the contrary, all such information is lacking. We know nothing about intended readers or political background, but only have a few excerpts, containing rather straightforward doctrines with relatively little literary embellishment.

An important question that is too seldom asked concerns the influence of Stobaeus. How reliable is his account? We know that he sometimes did not refrain from modifying, abridging or rewriting his sources<sup>68</sup> and that he was able to condense a more elaborate literary text into the kind of schematic line of reasoning we get here. Stobaeus' strategies as an excerptor urgently need further study. For the time being, we have to bear in mind that the argument from the pseudo-

(63) Theanor of Croton is introduced by Epameinondas as a philosopher who "reflects no dishonour on the great fame of Pythagoras" (*De gen. Socr.* 582E). Epameinondas himself is repeatedly characterised as a pupil of the Pythagorean Lysis (584B and 586A; cf. also 592F; more material can be found in GEORGIADOU 1997, p. 74). Simmias took lessons from the Pythagorean philosopher Philolaus (Plato, *Phd.* 61d6-7) but is in *De genio Socratis* only regarded as a pupil of Socrates; BABUT 2007, p. 87.

(64) DONINI 2007, p. 116 (with reference to *De gen. Socr.* 594BC).

(65) See, e.g., PELLING 1989 and 2000; SWAIN 1990 and 1996, p. 139-145. For the importance of the theme in Plutarch, see now the study of XENOPHONTOS 2016.

(66) See, e.g., KAHN 2001, p. 63-71; BONAZZI 2013, p. 389-390; DILLON 2014, p. 251-260.

(67) Esp. the speeches of Dio of Prusa; cf., e.g., QUET 1978 and 1981; DESIDERI 1986; SWAIN 1996, p. 135-241.

(68) See, e.g., PICCIONE 1998 on Stobaeus' excerpts from Plutarch.

Pythagoreans may have been abbreviated, although it is perhaps unlikely that Stobaeus significantly changed the core of their philosophical views.

No less important is the demand to acknowledge the differences between the three pseudo-Pythagorean treatises *On Kingship*.<sup>69</sup> Scholars who focus on the *Περὶ βασιλείας* literature are often more interested in what the three authors have in common than in their individual ideas, and at best point to a few general differences.<sup>70</sup> An attempt has even been made to reconstruct a systematic pseudo-Pythagorean political doctrine by combining ideas from different treatises.<sup>71</sup> Although such a reconstruction indeed throws some light on the basic ideas of pseudo-Pythagorean political thinking as a whole, it remains largely artificial and especially lays bare the latter's traditional, Platonic, Aristotelian and Academic inspiration. Against the background of this tradition, every author lays his own accents, and these are more than once unparalleled. The three tasks of the king, and his three qualities, which Diotogenes mentions and which he indeed elaborates in detail<sup>72</sup> have no parallel in Ecphantus and Sthenidas. The latter's reference to the "first God" (presupposing a second one?)<sup>73</sup> stands alone, and Ecphantus' reference to the light of royalty or to the king's self-sufficiency<sup>74</sup> are again absent from the extant fragments from Diotogenes and Sthenidas. All this would definitely repay further study, but falls outside the scope of the present article.

#### CONCLUSION

The main purpose of this article was a methodological one, that is, a critical examination of the parallels between the pseudo-Pythagorean treatises *On Kingship* and Plutarch's political thinking, in order to judge whether these parallels provide any reliable information for the date of Diotogenes, Sthenidas and Ecphantus. The principal conclusion is, unfortunately, a negative one. Some of the parallels that have been established in previous scholarly research are quite close indeed, others are less convincing, but all of them are ultimately rooted in the same previous philosophical tradition. All authors took over ideas from fourth-century political thinking and refigured them according to their own insights. This also implies that there is no need of a common source hypothesis: it is not unlikely indeed that Plutarch and the pseudo-Pythagoreans developed analogous positions independently from one another because they were both heirs of the same philosophical tradition.

The parallels between Plutarch and the pseudo-Pythagoreans thus primarily underscore the timeless character of the material. We are dealing with basic ideas that every Platonist could accept<sup>75</sup> and that fundamentally remained the same over the centuries.<sup>76</sup> If that is true, the parallels prove worthless as a criterion for the dating of the pseudo-Pythagorean treatises. We thus end up in a frustrating *ἀπορία*. The principle fruit of our exercise in Socratic *ἐλεγχος* is indeed that we have

(69) Cf. BONAZZI 2013, p. 385.

(70) Such as the judgement that Ecphantus is "more mystical" than Diotogenes or Sthenidas – whatever that may mean; see, e.g., DELATTE 1942, p. 290; MURRAY 1970, p. 266; SQUILLONI 1991, p. 72 and *passim*; *contra* THESLEFF 1961, p. 70.

(71) See CENTRONE 2014; cf. also CENTRONE 2005, p. 570–575.

(72) Diotogenes, fr. 1, p. 71.23–72.23 THESL. on the *τρία ἔργα βασιλέως* and fr. 2, p. 73.23–75.16 THESL. on the three qualities of *σεμνότης*, *χρησιότης* and *δεινότης*. I deal with Diotogenes' view in more detail in ROSKAM 2020.

(73) Sthenidas, p. 187.11 THESL.

(74) Ecphantus, fr. 2, p. 80.6–11 THESL. on the light of royalty (cf. the discussions of GOODENOUGH 1928, p. 78–83 and DELATTE 1942, p. 196–203); fr. 3, p. 82.7–27 and fr. 4, p. 83.25–84.6 THESL. on self-sufficiency; cf. SQUILLONI 1991, p. 137–183.

(75) The pseudo-Pythagoreans shared the same Platonic tradition. It has even repeatedly been argued, on good grounds, that they should be regarded as Platonists. See, e.g., RIEDWEG 2005, p. 124–125; BONAZZI 2013, p. 400; CENTRONE 2014, p. 337 (cf. 2005, p. 569 and 575); DILLON 2014, p. 250.

(76) Cf. already ZELLER 1903, p. 159.



to slink off, confronted with our utter ignorance. The hope remains, though, that, similar to every good conversation with Socrates, this analysis will also constitute a point of departure for further research, that its plea for a renewed study of the peculiarity of the different authors involved will lead to new insights, and that, once all ignorance has been done away with, the outlines of a purified knowledge will gradually take shape.

Geert ROSKAM  
KU Leuven

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