Marrying Stoicism with Platonism? Pseudo-Plutarch's Use of the Circe Episode

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MARRYING STOICISM WITH PLATONISM? PSEUDO-PLUTARCH'S USE OF THE CIRCE EPISODE

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Abstract: The present paper discusses the account of Circe that was put forward by an unknown author in the treatise *De Homero*. When analyzing how the enchantress transmogrifies from an allegory of pleasure into an allegory of metempsychosis, this article shows that Pseudo-Plutarch utilizes various Pythagorean, Platonic and Stoic views, as he moves from a Platonizing account of the story (Odysseus personifies renunciation of the flesh, Circe symbolizes reincarnation) to a Stoicizing one (the hero represents the self-sufficiency of virtue, the sorceress stands for pleasure). The study argues that Pseudo-Plutarch's goal is more rhetorical than philosophical and that his approach is better characterized as "encomiastic" rather than "syncretic" or "eclectic."

THE TEXT COMMONLY REFERRED TO as *De vita et poesi Homeri* (Περὶ τοῦ βίου καὶ τῆς ποιήσεως τοῦ Ὁμήρου) or *De Homero* (Περὶ Ὁμήρου) was written by an unknown author, who lived in the late 2nd century C.E.[1] Apart from Homer's life and works, the tract deals also with the poet's "diction" (dialects, tropes, and figures), his three "discourses" (historical, theoretical and political) as well as his medicine, divination, tragedy, comedy, epigram and painting.[2] Of special philosophical importance is the θεωρητικὸς λόγος (92–160), which contains numerous ingenious interpretations that derive all knowledge from Homer. Among the various interpretations offered by Pseudo-Plutarch, one of the most difficult to classify is that of the Circe episode (126 and 136).

In his classic work on Pythagorean literature, Armand Delatte hailed Pseudo-Plutarch's account as evidence of not only the Homeric belief

[1] For an overview of the conventional titles, see, e.g., Wehrli 1928, 3 n. 1; Buffière 1956, 72 n. 17; Hillgruber 1994, 2 n. 8 and Lamberton 1996, 1–2 n. 5. For the dating, see, e.g., Buffière 1956, 77, 516; Lamberton 1986, 40; Hillgruber 1994, 75 and Lamberton 1996, 9, 29. In the ensuing discussion, the text is that of Kindstrand 1990 and the translation (at times modified) is that of Keaney and Lamberton 1996.

[2] As outlined in chapter 6, the work divides into two major parts: the first covers Homer's πολυφωνία (7–73) and the second—his πολυμάθεια (74–217). See further the analytic tables of contents in Hillgruber 1994, 35–6 or Keaney and Lamberton 1996, 45–53.

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in metempsychosis but also of the Pythagorean roots of the allegorical interpretation of the Circe episode.[3] Both these assertions have been seriously impugned. First of all, Pseudo-Plutarch's reliability leaves much to be desired given the grandiose purpose of his treatise.[4] Against Delatte, Félix Buffière argued, then, that Pseudo-Plutarch's interpretation is only marginally Pythagorean.[5] Secondly, one may very well point to the Stoic origins of Pseudo-Plutarch's allegoresis in light of his numerous references to the philosophy of the Porch. This line of interpretation has been pursued by, among others, Fritz Wehrli,[6] Ansgar Josef Friedl[7] and—though to a lesser degree—Jean Pépin.[8] This view, however, has been vehemently repudiated by Sibylle Tochtermann, who insisted that Pseudo-Plutarch's allegoresis of the Circe episode is not Stoic but Middle- or Neoplatonist-Neopythagorean.[9] The most recent study on Circe interpretations by Judith Yarnall does not address this issue explicitly, but highlights Pseudo-Plutarch's connections to Neoplatonism.[10]

While these different assessments result, at least to some extent, from different foci on Pseudo-Plutarch's text,[11] the purpose of this article is to undertake a detailed analysis of Pseudo-Plutarch's account of the

[3] According to Delatte 1915, 128, chapter 125 "apporte d'autres preuves encore d'une croyance homérique à la métempsycose," whereas chapter 126 "montre que l'exégèse pythagoricienne . . . avait inventé une interprétation allégorique du personnage de Circé et des mythes qui s'y rapportent." This view was taken up by Detienne 1962.

[4] As cautioned by Kaiser 1964, 206 with n. 29 (who also explicitly rejects the accounts of Delatte and Detienne). For a recent discussion of the first Pythagoreans' influence on the development of allegorical tradition, see Lamberton 1986, 31–43, who surveys the relevant literature on the topic (especially Delatte and Detienne) and, tellingly, finds the evidence for the early Pythagorean allegoresis of Homer to be "slim at best" (43).

[5] Thus, Buffière 1956, 517, stresses: "seule l'idée première du passage des âmes en des corps de bêtes rapelle le pythagorisme."

[6] Wehrli 1928, 39, takes Pseudo-Plutarch's (126) interpretation of Hermes as evidence that "er tatsächlich eine ihm vorliegende stoische Deutung veränderte" (see also below n. 62).

[7] Also, Friedl 1936, 23, classifies chapter 126 as one of the cases "wo stoische Grundlagen überbaut und umgeformt werden für pythagoreische Elemente."

[8] In his monumental work, Pépin 1976 devotes surprisingly little attention to Pseudo-Plutarch's treatise and mentions him only once in the context of authors who "poursuivent la tradition du Portique" (167).

[9] Thus, Tochtermann 1992, 65, emphasizes: "Nicht stoische Lehre, sondern mittel- bzw. neuplatonisch-neupythagoreisches Gedankengut bildet die Grundlage der vorliegenden Interpretation."

[10] Yarnall 1994, 76, observes that in his interpretation of Circe Pseudo-Plutarch "looks ahead to Porphyry and the Neo-Platonists."

[11] E.g., Wehrli 1928, 39, points to chapters 126 and 136, whereas Tochtermann 1992, 58–65, disregards the latter.

Circe episode and to discuss its originality.[12] When analyzing how Pseudo-Plutarch has the enchantress transmogrify from an allegory of pleasure into an allegory of metempsychosis, this article will demonstrate that Pseudo-Plutarch takes advantage of various Pythagorean, Platonic and Stoic views, as he moves from a Platonizing account of the story (Odysseus personifies renunciation of the flesh, Circe symbolizes reincarnation) to a Stoicizing one (the hero represents the self-sufficiency of virtue, the sorceress stands for pleasure). Also, it will be argued that Pseudo-Plutarch's account of the Circe episode shows that his goal is more rhetorical than philosophical and that his approach is better characterized as "encomiastic" rather than "syncretic" or "eclectic."

I. PSEUDO-PLUTARCH'S AIMS

Pseudo-Plutarch bends over backwards to demonstrate that Homer is the source of absolutely all knowledge (theology, psychology, physics, ethics, politics, rhetoric, dialectic, history, medicine, etc.). What is of special importance is that Pseudo-Plutarch's inflated assumption makes him find contradictory doctrines in the poet. Indeed, if Homer is to be the seed of Greek wisdom in its entirety, then all (including opposite and conflicting) views must originate from him. It is for this reason that Pseudo-Plutarch's work may at times strike us as fraught with numerous contradictions.[13] For the purpose of the present discussion, we should note the following: chapter 127 derives from Homer the Stoic materialist account of the soul as πνεῦμα and ἀναθυμίασις, whereas chapter 128 attributes to him the "Platonic-Aristotelian" view that the soul is ἀσώματος; chapter 134 extracts from the poet the Stoic ideal of eradicating all passions (ἀπάθεια), while chapter 135 discovers in him the Peripatetic ideal of moderating

[12] When examining Pseudo-Plutarch's allegoresis, scholars usually only gesture to his interpretation of the Circe episode (e.g., Wehrli 1928, 39; Friedl 1936, 23; Blönnigen 1992, 54). Those who do analyze Pseudo-Plutarch's account of the sorceress focus generally on chapter 126 and ignore his use of Circe in chapter 136 (e.g., Lamberton 1986, 40–2; Tochtermann 1992, 58–65; Yarnall 1994, 75–6). Finally, those who take into account Pseudo-Plutarch's references to the enchantress in both chapters do not attempt to fully reconstruct their philosophical background (e.g., Kaiser 1964, 206–7 with n. 31; Lamberton 1996, 23–6; Ramelli and Lucchetta 2004, 386–7). There are, however, two works that offer extensive treatment of the relevant context: Buffière 1956 and Hillgruber 1999. The present paper is often indebted to these excellent discussions.

[13] Thus, for example, Ramelli and Lucchetta 2004, 385, note that the author of *De vita* "non teme di contraddirsi nel citare Omero a suffragio di due tesi opposte, dovute a due scuole diverse, a proposito della medesima questione."

them (μετριοπάθεια); chapter 136 culls from Homer the Stoic doctrine that virtue is "sufficient for happiness" (αὐτάρκη . . . πρὸς εὐδαιμονίαν), chapter 141 the Peripatetic doctrine that "virtue alone is not sufficient for happiness" (οὐκ ἔστιν αὐτάρκης ἡ ἀρετὴ μόνη πρὸς εὐδαιμονίαν), and so on. When moving from one doctrine to another, Pseudo-Plutarch suggests that Homer is responsible for various ideas either directly or indirectly.[14] Occasionally, he also indicates that the poet has been misunderstood.[15] But ultimately all human views have (clearly demonstrable) Homeric roots.

At first glance, it may seem natural to characterize Pseudo-Plutarch's approach as *syncretic* or *eclectic*. This, however, has the unsavory consequence of denigrating his work for philosophical confusion.[16] A closer reading reveals that Pseudo-Plutarch's goal is *not* to reconcile the various views he traces to Homer. The purpose of *De Homero* is more rhetorical than philosophical. Pseudo-Plutarch does not aim to bring into harmony the various mutually exclusive views he unearths from Homer. Instead, he praises the poet precisely for being the seed of such divergent doctrines: that contradictory views can be derived from Homer attests only to the richness of his poetry. It appears, then, that Plutarch's approach could be characterized as *encomiastic*.[17] Such a characterization has the merit that it enables us to treat Pseudo-Plutarch's work more sympathetically rather than dismiss it as riddled with contradictions. Thus, in what follows it will be suggested that when approached from the perspective of the handbooks of rhetoric, Pseudo-Plutarch's treatise in general and his account of the Circe episode in particular can be perceived as containing some elements of encomium.[18] Let us begin, however, with two important caveats.

[14] E.g., in chapter 126 Homer "hints enigmatically" (αἰνίττεται) at an idea, whereas in chapter 136 the poet's concept is an "antecedent" (ἐνδόσιμον) of an idea (see below in the main text).

[15] E.g., chapter 150 makes it clear that Epicurus was "misled" (παραχθείς) by *Od*. 9.5–11 (cf. also below n. 30).

[16] Dillon, 1988, 111–12, has persuasively argued that characterizing Plutarch's position as "eclecticism" is scarcely useful. This same—I would like to argue—applies to Pseudo-Plutarch's *De Homero*.

[17] For scholars who have pointed to the correct assessment of *De Homero* as an encomium, see, e.g., Lamberton 2002, 196 or, more recently, Knudsen 2014, 25. The present paper will support this general assessment with a discussion of Pseudo-Plutarch's account of the Circe episode.

[18] Of course, various rhetorical influences in Pseudo-Plutarch's work have been acknowledged for a long time. While these are particularly manifest in the parts that deal with the poet's πολυφωνία and his πολιτικὸς λόγος, already Volkmann 1869, 120, pointed here to the "Schule des Hermogenes" (extensive discussions of these and other cases are to be found in Hillgruber 1994 and 1999). In what follows, the editions of the progymnasmata

First, we need to stress that while encomium and epideictic oratory underwent various significant transformations over the centuries, an exhaustive survey of all these changes and variations would vastly exceed the scope of the present article.[19] Second, it should also be emphasized that this study will not examine the entire *De Homero* with a view to ascertaining the extent to which the treatise fits into the category of an encomium.[20] Given that the focus of this paper is on the encomiastic aspects of Pseudo-Plutarch's account of the Circe episode, the ensuing discussion of encomium will have to be brief and selective: the following references to ancient treatments of encomium will serve as illustrations of certain general trends and principles that can be discerned in the relevant passages of *De Homero*.

Most broadly, an encomium can be characterized as a laudatory composition that praises its subject. Very frequently, it is a person that an encomium extols. Thus, for example, Theon (109.20–2) defines it as "speech revealing the greatness of virtuous actions and other good qualities belonging to a particular person" (λόγος ἐμφανίζων τὸ μέγεθος τῶν κατ' ἀρετὴν πράξεων καὶ τῶν ἄλλων ἀγαθῶν περί τι ὡρισμένον πρόσωπον).[21] In his elaborate treatment of epideictic speech, Menander Rhetor recognizes (332.20–30) various kinds of encomia, but also notes that as his account is "about man" (περὶ τὸν ἄνθρωπον), it embraces other types.[22] While different rhetorical handbooks give somewhat different lists of encomiastic topics, two of these are of particular interest for the present considerations: being wise and being first. The former highlights the quality of the mind: wisdom is one of the most obvious virtues that a person can be praised for.[23] The latter, on the other hand, is connected

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are those of Patillon and Bolognesi 1997 and Rabe 1913, whereas the translation (at times modified) is that of Kennedy 2003.

[19] For useful overviews, see, e.g., Burgess 1902; Buchheit 1960; Kennedy 1963; Eisenhut 1974; Russell and Wilson 1981, xi–xlvi; Pernot 2005; Penella 2011 and Pepe 2013 with further references.

[20] Although a rhetorical reading of *De Homero* sits well with the facts that 1) numerous chapters of this work show telling parallels with various handbooks of rhetoric (for an overview see Hillgruber 1994, 60–72 with references) and 2) *De Homero* is one of the most important sources of information on ancient claims about Homer's rhetoric (see, e.g., Kennedy 1957, 23 or Knudsen 2014, 22).

[21] Theon has traditionally been placed in the 1st century C.E. and his treatise is customarily regarded as the "earliest extended account of compositional exercises" (Kennedy 2003, xii). However, Heath 2002–3, 129–60, argues for a 5th-century date for Theon.

[22] The text along with translation (at times modified) is that of Russell and Wilson 1981.

[23] See, e.g., Pseudo-Hermogenes 7.32: σοφός or Theon 110.8: φρόνιμος. Aristotle's list of praiseworthy virtues includes (*Rhet.* 1366b2–3) both φρόνησις and σοφία. For specific

with the actions of the person extolled: being the first in a field is also an undeniably laudable accomplishment.[24] The idea that Homer was the ultimate sage who laid the foundations for all human achievements permeates the entire *De Homero*. Suffice it to quote here chapter 6, where Pseudo-Plutarch famously suggests that an appropriate reading of Homer reveals that the poet:

> πάσης λογικῆς ἐπιστήμης καὶ τέχνης ἐντὸς γενόμενος καὶ πολλὰς ἀφορμὰς καί οἱονεὶ σπέρματα λόγων καὶ πράξεων παντοδαπῶν τοῖς μετ' αὐτὸν παρεσχημένος, καὶ οὐ τοῖς ποιηταῖς μόνον ἀλλὰ καὶ τοῖς πεζῶν λόγων συνθέταις ἱστορικῶν τε καὶ θεωρηματικῶν.
>
> was adept at every kind of wisdom[25] and skill and provides the starting points and so to speak the seeds of all kinds of discourse and action for those who come after him, not only for the poets but for writers of prose as well, both historical and speculative.

The passage shows that Pseudo-Plutarch makes use of the two aforementioned topics adapted for the purpose of extolling the poet: Homer is omniscient and antecedent to all human accomplishments. This, however, is not the only encomiastic feature of *De Homero*.

Pseudo-Plutarch's treatise is in many aspects similar to the work customarily referred to as *Quaestiones Homericae* (Ὁμηρικὰ προβλήματα) by Heraclitus the Allegorist from the end of the 1st century C.E.[26] To begin with, Heraclitus also considers (34.8) Homer to be the "originator of all wisdom" (ἀρχηγὸς πάσης σοφίας), whose authority on all the arts and sciences is second to none. Furthermore, both authors put forward numerous

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examples, we may cite Isocrates, who in his *Busiris* praises the Egyptian king for the cultivation of φρόνησις (21) or Menander Rhetor, who in his encomium of the emperor (the βασιλικὸς λόγος) offers considerable attention to the emperor's φρόνησις (e.g., 373.5–25, 376.13–20), mentioning also his ἐπιστήμη (374.2) and σύνεσις (376.18).

[24] See, e.g., Theon 110.22: πρῶτος. Already Aristotle recommends (*Rhet*. 1368a10–11) that amplification be achieved by, among other techniques, praising the subject for being the "first" (πρῶτος) to have done something. For a specific use of this topic, see, e.g., Isocrates *Busiris* 10: Λιβύης . . . ἣν φασι πρώτην . . . (on the ambiguity of πρώτην, see Livingstone 2001, 122, who aptly notes that this ambiguity is unimportant for the encomiastic effect).

[25] The original ἐπιστήμη could also be translated as "science" (thus, e.g., Hillgruber 1994, 96: "Wissenschaft"), but "wisdom" is appropriate given that Pseudo-Plutarch praises Homer's πολυμάθεια (6). Incidentally, Keaney and Lamberton 1996, 303, render the term as "science" in chapter 213, where ἐπιστήμη is used as the discussion passes from Homer's knowledge of divination to his being a source of inspiration for all of Greek tragedy.

[26] The text along with translation (at times modified) is that of Russell and Konstan 2005.

highly comparable interpretations of Homer's poetry.[27] Finally, the two interpreters of Homer side with the poet rather than with any particular philosophical school: although Heraclitus and Pseudo-Plutarch frequently discuss various views of the Platonists, Peripatetics, Epicureans and Stoics, they espouse none of these specific doctrines. It is evident from every page of their tracts that their loyalty lies with Homer. Notwithstanding all these similarities, there is also a very important difference between the two authors: Pseudo-Plutarch's approach is decidedly less apologetic.[28]

Heraclitus devotes a considerable portion of his treatise to rebutting Plato's (76.6–79.1) and Epicurus' (79.2–11) criticisms of Homer, accusing both philosophers (Plato in particular) of having plagiarized the poet (4.1–4, 17.4–18.1). While Heraclitus' tract is basically a passionate apology that seeks to exempt Homer from all charges leveled at the poet by the philosophers, Pseudo-Plutarch disregards the "ancient quarrel" (παλαιὰ διαφορά) between philosophy and poetry (Pl. *Rsp*. 607b5–6).[29] He offers a brief justification (5) as to why Homer depicts the "vices of the soul" (κακίας ψυχῆς) or the "gods associating with men" (θεοὺς τοῖς ἀνθρώποις ὁμιλοῦντας), but comes nowhere near Heraclitus' hostile stance.[30] Assuming that *De Homero* fulfills first and foremost an encomiastic function seems useful when trying to make sense of this difference between the two authors.

The distinction between an encomium and an apology was well established in antiquity. Thus, for example, Isocrates puts it in no uncertain terms (*Helen* 14–15) that an ἐγκώμιον does not assume the defensive tone that is characteristic of an ἀπολογία. Crucially, this is cited approvingly by Theon (112.10–15), who recommends that accusations not be dwelt on lest one produce a defense in lieu of an encomium. Finally, we may also note that Menander Rhetor (368.3–8), in a similar vein, stresses that

[27] Struck 2004, 159 provides a short but useful overview. Wehrli 1928, 27–33 and Hillgruber 1994, 41–50 extensively discuss various parallels and the possibility of their common sources.

[28] As has been stressed by, for example, Wehrli 1928, 25–6; Buffière 1956, 73; Hillgruber 1994, 50; Lamberton 1996, 10; Ramelli 2003, 86; Ramelli and Lucchetta 2004, 380–1, 389–90; Struck 2004, 160 (cf. also below n. 31).

[29] In his excellent introduction, Lamberton 1996, 10, rightly observes that Pseudo-Plutarch "writes as if the conflict between the poet and the philosopher were a matter of complete indifference to him" (cf. also Lamberton 2002, 197).

[30] For example, while Pseudo-Plutarch merely observes (150) that Epicurus misunderstood Odysseus' praise of feasting (see above n. 15), Heraclitus castigates (79.2) the "Phaeacian philosopher" (Φαίαξ φιλόσοφος) for his "having shamefully and ignorantly stolen from Homer" (αἰσχρῶς ἀγνοήσας παρ' Ὁμήρου κέκλοφεν).

an encomium of the emperor allows nothing "ambivalent or disputed" (ἀμφίβολον καὶ ἀμφισβητούμενον). This point is very important, for while an apology necessarily admits that the subject of defense has been challenged (whether fairly or not), an encomium makes no such concession: it presupposes that the subject of praise is universally recognized as admirable and the task consists merely in amplifying the recognition. It seems, then, that this difference between an encomium and an apology throws some light on the distinct tone of the two treatises: Heraclitus is an apologist, who primarily *defends* Homer, whereas Pseudo-Plutarch is an encomiast, who primarily *praises* the poet. If this is right, then Pseudo-Plutarch might be perceived as observing the rhetorical rule for encomia that all criticisms of the subject be suppressed as far as possible.[31]

In conclusion here, it needs to be emphasized that although *De Homero* clearly displays certain encomiastic features, it does not assume the form of an encomium. Rather, the treatise assimilates several encomiastic topics for the purpose of glorifying the poet. This is hardly surprising. Such forms of *progymnasmata* as encomia exerted a powerful influence on literary composition, as they were regularly adopted and adapted to fit various agendas.[32] An important example could be the visible impact of encomium on biography and political history.[33] While the pervasiveness of encomium was due to the fact that its basic pattern and/or its various topics could easily be accommodated to suit diverse occasions (as is testified by the treatises attributed to Menander), the present paper will suggest that a rhetorical reading of *De Homero* helps us to better understand the treatise: more specifically, this article will argue that a great deal of the controversy over how to categorize Pseudo-Plutarch's account of the Circe episode results from scholars' not recognizing the encomiastic nature of *De Homero*. Prior to discussing Pseudo-Plutarch's original account, we should, however, briefly cover the earlier interpre-

[31] That Pseudo-Plutarch does not mention Plato's attack on Homer has been explained very differently. Hillgruber 1994, 74, for example, takes this as indicative of a clear Platonic influence, since "nur die Platoniker waren bei der Zurückweisung der Homerkritik ihres Meisters so vorsichtig, daß sie seinen Namen nicht einmal zu nennen wagten." Lamberton 1996, 10, on the other hand, reaches the opposite conclusion: Pseudo-Plutarch "did not set himself in the Platonic tradition," for "it would have been impossible for a Platonist to discuss Homer at length without coming to terms with the *Republic*." Assuming that *De Homero* fulfills primarily an encomiastic function allows us to look at the problem from a new perspective.

[32] In connection with this process, Kennedy 1999, 3, aptly speaks of the *letteraturizzazione* of rhetoric, i.e., "the tendency of rhetoric to shift focus from persuasion to narration, from civic to personal contexts, and from speech to literature."

[33] On which, see Momigliano 1971, 82–3.

tations of the Circe episode, as they are relevant for understanding the novelty of Pseudo-Plutarch's proposal.

II. PRE-PSEUDO-PLUTARCHEAN ACCOUNTS

The Circe episode was frequently adduced for making various doctrinal points. Thus, for example, Socrates is reported (Xen. *Mem*. 1.3.7) to have humorously inferred that Circe turned men into pigs by exploiting their immoderate indulgence in "dining" (δειπνίζουσαν), whereas Odysseus was saved from this fate not only by Hermes' "counsel" (ὑποθημοσύνη), but also by his own "self-control and abstinence" (ἐγκρατῆ ὄντα καὶ ἀποσχόμενον).[34] Antisthenes, a disciple of Socrates and a forerunner of Cynicism, wrote a whole treatise entitled Περὶ Κίρκης (DL 6.18 = *SSR* V A 41), where he also might have touched upon the theme of Odysseus overcoming the sorceress' spells, possibly likewise praising the hero's self-restraint and temperance in pleasure. This can be surmised on the basis of what we know about Antisthenes' most famous student. Dio Chrysostom relates (8.20–5 = *SSR* V B 584) that Diogenes of Sinope identified Circe with "pleasure" (ἡδονή) which treacherously enslaves the souls of men, illustrating, thereby, the difficulties that every person must surmount in their battle against pleasure. This Socratic-Cynic account of the enchantress was embraced and further developed by the Stoics. Apollonius Sophistes recounts (*Lex. Homer*. 114 = *SVF* 1.526) that Cleanthes "allegorically" (ἀλληγορικῶς) equated the mysterious herb μῶλυ at *Od.* 10.305 with *logos* so as to argue that "the impulses and passions" (αἱ ὁρμαὶ καὶ τὰ πάθη) which Circe cunningly exploits "are relaxed" (μωλύονται) by reason to Odysseus' rescue. This would suggest that Cleanthes' interpreted the transformation of the hero's comrades as signifying that they followed their impulses and passions rather than reason.

In connection with Apollonius' testimony, it should be observed though that it anachronistically ascribes to Cleanthes the use of the term ἀλληγορικῶς. Plutarch makes it clear (*De aud. poet.* 19e–f) that it is only "now" (νῦν) that ἀλληγορία superseded what "long ago" (πάλαι) used to be called ὑπόνοια.[35] Although in the classical period the latter term does occur occasionally in the relevant sense (e.g., Xen. *Smp*. 3.6; Pl. *Rsp*. 378d6–7), it has been well established in research on the history

[34] Where no English reference is provided, the translation is my own.

[35] For good discussions of the relation between the earlier term ὑπόνοια and its later equivalent ἀλληγορία, see, e.g., Buffière 1956, 45–8; Pépin 1976, 85–92; Whitman 1987, 263–8; Blönnigen 1992, 11–19 and Tochtermann 1992, 19–21. Cf. also Domaradzki 2017, 303.

of allegorical interpretation that the term most frequently employed by the early allegorists was neither ὑπόνοια (which is rare) nor ἀλληγορία (which is late), but rather αἴνιγμα (and its cognates).[36] Tellingly, Pseudo-Plutarch uses precisely this term (126) in his interpretation of the Circe episode (see below for details).

The most important interpretation that has to be discussed here is the one put forward by Heraclitus the Allegorist, who offers a fairly traditional but quite extensive interpretation of the Circe episode. Thus, the enchantress' κυκεών is interpreted (72.2–3) as a "vessel of pleasure" (ἡδονῆς ἀγγεῖον) by drinking which the "intemperate" (ἀκόλαστοι) fall victim to "gluttony" (γαστριμαργία) and come to "live a life more wretched than that of pigs" (συῶν ἀθλιώτερον βίον ζῶσι); Odysseus' "wisdom" (φρόνησις) represents (72.3) the virtue which enables the hero to prevail over "the luxury of Circe's dwelling" (τὴν παρὰ Κίρκῃ τρυφήν); Hermes stands for (72.4) the "wise" (ἔμφρων) *logos*,[37] and—consequently—the gift of μῶλυ symbolizes (73.8–13) the gaining of "wisdom" (φρόνησις) and "reasoning power" (λογισμός), which make it possible for Odysseus to restrain his "impulse" (ὁρμή) and, thus, to "overcome Circe's drugs" (τὰ Κίρκης νενίκηκε φάρμακα). The hidden meaning that Heraclitus excavates from underneath the Circe episode is that wisdom suffices to resist the temptations of pleasure symbolized by the sorceress. Odysseus is interpreted as a paradigm of a sage and his companions as the very opposite. The hero represents rational self-control, for he is able to overcome Circe's poison by virtue of his long and difficult training under the supervision of reason personified by Hermes. As Odysseus lives in accordance with reason (i.e., virtuously), he is happy. His comrades, on the other hand, give in to passion and end miserably.

While Heraclitus should not be rashly classified as a Stoic,[38] his interpretation of the Circe episode is unequivocally Stoic. First of all, Heraclitus' interpretation is consistent with the one put forward by Cleanthes,

[36] See especially Struck 2004, 39–50 and 171–9. Cf. also De Lacy 1948, 260–1; Buffière 1956, 48–9; Ford 2002, 72–6, 85–7; Naddaf 2009, 112 and Obbink 2010, 16.

[37] While the term λόγος is notoriously ambiguous, two of its meanings are of special importance for the present analysis: "reason" and "speech." When ancient authors allegorize Hermes as λόγος, both these senses are often intertwined (see below in the main text). The close connection between reason and speech explains the gradual coalescence of both interpretations of the god. Thus, for example, Seneca associates (*Benef.* 1.3.7 = *SVF* 2.1082) Mercury with both *ratio* and *oratio* (see also Buffière 1956, 289–96; Kaiser 1964, 208 n. 33; Hillgruber 1999, 230 and Ramelli 2003, 331–2 n. 83).

[38] See especially Buffière 1962, xxxviii–xxxix. This view is generally accepted (see, e.g., Dawson 1992, 263 n. 43; Long 1992, 47; Tochtermann 1992, 38, 48; Hillgruber 1994, 31

since both allegorists agree that μῶλυ is an intellectual faculty (λόγος or φρόνησις/λογισμός) that comes to Odysseus' rescue and protects the hero from a destructive "impulse" (ὁρμή). The most interesting difference is that Cleanthes—as we have seen—derives (*SVF* 1.526) μῶλυ from μωλύω (μῶλυ helps to "relax" Circe's impulses and passions), whereas Heraclitus associates (73.10) μῶλυ with μόνος and μόλις (μῶλυ comes "only" to humans and "with difficulty"). Secondly, Heraclitus' interpretation accords with what we find in the Stoic Cornutus, who was Heraclitus' contemporary and whose *Greek Theology* contains numerous parallels with Heraclitus' treatise.[39] Thus, for example, both thinkers etymologize the same epithets in a highly comparable manner,[40] both thinkers agree as to why Hermes is presented as "a square figure" (τετράγωνος),[41] both thinkers associate the god with peace[42] and both thinkers ascribe the tongue as the sacrifice to him.[43] Finally, and most importantly, both Heraclitus and Cornutus interpret Hermes as the personification of Stoic *logos*.[44]

Cornutus identifies (20.18–20) Hermes with *logos* which "the gods have sent to us from heaven" (ἀπέστειλαν πρὸς ἡμᾶς ἐξ οὐρανοῦ οἱ θεοί). Heraclitus likewise equates (72.4) Hermes with *logos*, upon which he differentiates (72.14–18) between its two kinds: chthonic or *endiathetos*, on the one hand, and heavenly or *prophorikos*, on the other.[45] While this differentiation builds on Hermes' being both the emissary of the gods and the conductor of the souls of the dead, it is a clear reference to the Stoics, who are reported (SE *Adv. math.* 8.275 = *SVF* 2.223) to have distinguished between man and irrational animals not on the basis of *prophorikos logos* (since crows, parrots and jays also utter articulate sounds) but on the basis of *endiathetos logos*.[46] In line with this, Heraclitus

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with n. 117; Ramelli and Lucchetta 2004, 337, 435; Struck 2004, 142, 151), but see Dörrie 1969, 5; Bernard 1990, 15–21, 93–4 and Gourinat 2005, 10 n. 1.

[39] The text is that of Lang 1881. In my translations I have consulted Hays 1983 and Boys-Stones 2018.

[40] ἀργειφόντης (Heraclitus 72.10; Cornutus 21.11), ἐριούνιος (Heraclitus 72.12; Cornutus 21.4), σῶκος (Heraclitus 72.12; Cornutus 21.6), ἀκάκητα (Heraclitus 72.12; Cornutus 21.8), χρυσόρραπις (Heraclitus 73.3; Cornutus 21.15).

[41] Heraclitus 72.6; Cornutus 23.12.

[42] Heraclitus 72.8; Cornutus 23.2.

[43] Heraclitus 72.19; Cornutus 21.4.

[44] See also Diogenes of Babylon *SVF* 3.90.

[45] Cornutus also makes reference to *prophorikos logos* as he explains (25.1–2) that the practice of heaping up stones beside Herms is a symbol that "*prophorikos logos* consists of small parts" (ἐκ μικρῶν μερῶν συνεστάναι τὸν προφορικὸν λόγον).

[46] SE *Adv. math.* 8.275 = *SVF* 2.223: ἄνθρωπος οὐχὶ τῷ προφορικῷ λόγῳ διαφέρει τῶν ἀλόγων ζῴων . . . ἀλλὰ τῷ ἐνδιαθέτῳ. The technical terms προφορικὸς λόγος and ἐνδιάθετος

attributes (72.17) *endiathetos logos* to the gods, who, "lacking nothing, are, therefore, content with the use of voice within themselves" (μηδενὸς γὰρ ὄντες ἐνδεεῖς τῆς φωνῆς τὴν χρείαν ἐν αὐτοῖς στέργουσι). The picture that emerges from these testimonies is that animals can only have *prophorikos logos*,[47] gods make exclusive use of *endiathetos logos*[48] and men avail themselves of both, occupying, thus, a position between animals and gods. Hence, it is a specific human situation that men need to harmonize the internal *logos* (reason/thought) and the overt one (speech).

The Stoic distinction between the two kinds of *logos* allows Heraclitus to interpret Odysseus' encounter with Hermes as the hero's inner conversation with himself. Thus, Heraclitus quotes (73.8) Hermes' words (*Od.* 10.281–2), which, however, in his account (73.9) Odysseus "says to himself" (πρὸς αὐτὸν ἐλάλησεν), as he curbs his "impulse" (ὁρμή). According to Heraclitus (73.8–9), the hero is, then, having a discussion with his "reasoning power" (λογισμός) as he ponders whether or not to choose pleasure. The choice is obvious and Odysseus follows wisdom rather than irrational passion, for he knows that to succumb to pleasure would be to betray Hermes.

Finally, we should also mention an interesting interpretation by Heraclitus the Paradoxographer, an obscure mythographer from the end of the 1st or beginning of the 2nd century C.E., who authored the work entitled *De incredibilibus* (Περὶ Ἀπίστων).[49] Heraclitus offers a succinct interpretation of the Circe episode. Thus, he equates the enchantress (16) with a "courtesan" (ἑταίρα) who:

> κατακηλοῦσα τοὺς ξένους τὸ πρῶτον ἀρεσκείᾳ παντοδαπῇ ἐπεσπᾶτο πρὸς εὔνοιαν, γενομένους δὲ ἐν προσπαθείᾳ κατεῖχε ταῖς ἐπιθυμίαις ἀλογίστως φερομένους πρὸς τὰς ἡδονάς.
>
> charming her guests at first with every sort of willingness to please, led them on to be well-disposed toward her, but when their passion for her grew, she controlled them through their lusts, as they were thoughtlessly carried along in their pleasures.

λόγος have been translated very differently. Thus, for example, "uttered speech" and "internal speech" by Long and Sedley 1987, 317 or "verbalized reason" and "internal reason" by Inwood and Gerson 1997, 128.

[47] According to Galen's testimony (*In Hippoc. Epidem.* 17a757 = *SVF* 2.144), animals have φωνή but not αὐδή.

[48] Though certain divinities, says Galen (*In Hippoc. Epidem.* 17a757 = *SVF* 2.144), use human speech. For Circe as αὐδήεσσα, see *Od.* 10.136, 11.8, 12.150; for Calypso, see *Od.* 12.449.

[49] The text along with translation (at times modified) is that of Stern 2003.

While Circe is a hetaera, Odysseus' unwise companions are her seduced customers, whom she has enticed and subjugated. They illustrate, thereby, the fate of the intemperate. Odysseus, on the other hand, is the self-restrained hero who "defeated" (ἥττησε) the "desires" (ἐπιθυμίαι) and "pleasures" (ἡδοναί) personified by Circe (16). This moralizing interpretation is surely reminiscent of Heraclitus' allegoresis, but there are two important differences. First of all, Heraclitus the Paradoxographer rationalizes the Circe story by reducing its characters to real and concrete individuals (the sorceress is a prostitute, Odysseus' comrades are her clients, etc.). Thus, his interpretation has a decisively rationalizing dimension that is absent from the interpretation put forward by Heraclitus the Allegorist.[50] Secondly, Heraclitus the Paradoxographer strongly emphasizes the sexual aspect of the Circe episode.[51] It is "gluttony" (γαστριμαργία) that Heraclitus the Allegorist has the intemperate fall victim to (see above). Heraclitus the Paradoxographer, on the other hand, has them fall victim to "sexual desire" or "lust" (ἐπιθυμία).

Still, when we look at the Pre-Pseudo-Plutarchean accounts of the Circe episode, we can see a remarkable consistency. According to all the aforementioned interpretations, Circe is a personification of a pleasure (whether gastric or sexual) that turns immoderate individuals into irrational animals. Odysseus, on the other hand, is saved by his rational self-control and self-restraint, as an intellectual faculty (λόγος, φρόνησις, λογισμός) comes to the hero's rescue and makes it easy for him to overcome the enchantress' spells. Thus, Odysseus is a sage who shows that to live virtuously is to act rationally. While all the above accounts have it that reason and wisdom suffice to withstand the temptations of pleasure symbolized by Circe, Pseudo-Plutarch's interpretation marks a departure from the established tradition.

[50] Curiously enough, Stern 2003, 68–9 and 71, classifies this as an instance of allegorical interpretation rather than rationalization. I side with those scholars who categorize this as a case of rationalization and not allegoresis precisely on the grounds that the characters are deciphered as actual persons rather than abstract concepts (see especially Tochtermann 1992, 54; cf. also Buffière 1956, 237 and Kaiser 1964, 122, 201). I wholeheartedly agree, however, with Stern 2003 that not every rationalizing interpretation is to be identified with allegoresis (see further Steinmetz 1986, 19 and Konstan 2005, xvii; cf. also Domaradzki 2015 and 2019).

[51] As stressed by, for example, Tochtermann 1992, 55.

III. PSEUDO-PLUTARCH'S ACCOUNT

Pseudo-Plutarch makes use of various Pythagorean, Platonic, Aristotelian and Stoic views, as he marries a Stoicizing interpretation of the Circe episode (Odysseus represents the self-sufficiency of virtue, the sorceress stands for pleasure) with a Platonizing one (the hero personifies renunciation of the flesh, Circe symbolizes metempsychosis). Thus, Pseudo-Plutarch utilizes two philosophical doctrines: on the one hand, the Circe episode is interpreted as an illustration of the Stoic ideal of autarchy, and, on the other, it is taken to be hinting enigmatically at Platonic anti-hedonism and the Pythagorean theory of reincarnation. When moving from one account to another, Pseudo-Plutarch takes advantage of the aforementioned topics of encomium.

Pseudo-Plutarch's Platonizing account of the Circe episode builds on three assumptions: that the soul is immortal (122), that the body is its prison (124) and that the souls of the dead enter various bodies (125). While the last claim is particularly important for Pseudo-Plutarch's allegoresis of the Circe episode (see below), in all three cases Homer is explicitly hailed as the originator of the relevant views, and specific lines from his epics are adduced to corroborate the claim. Thus, with regard to the soul's immortality Pseudo-Plutarch asks (122) "who first expressed this except Homer" (τίς οὖν τοῦτο πρῶτον ἀνεφώνησεν ἢ ῞Ομηρος), while with regard to the soul's entrapment in the body Pseudo-Plutarch asserts (124) that "it was Homer who first revealed this" (τοῦτο δὲ ῞Ομηρος πρῶτος ἐδήλωσε) and with regard to the soul's reincarnation Pseudo-Plutarch reassures (125) that "neither was this beyond Homer's understanding" (οὐδὲ τοῦτο τῆς ῾Ομήρου διανοίας ἐκτός ἐστιν). These assertions show clearly that Pseudo-Plutarch's goal is to elicit admiration for the all-knowing poet, who was the first to have articulated all these different views. Let us now examine how this encomiastic purpose determines Pseudo-Plutarch's allegoresis of the Circe episode.

In chapter 125, Pseudo-Plutarch discusses Pythagoras' doctrine that "the souls of the dead enter bodies of other sorts" (μεταβαίνειν τὰς ψυχὰς τῶν τελευτησάντων εἰς ἕτερα σωμάτων εἴδη). Pythagoras' doctrine of metempsychosis is well-attested.[52] The earliest and most important testimony comes from Xenophanes (DK 21 B 7 = DL 8.36), but the doctrine is also confirmed (albeit to a varying degree) by Herodotus (2.123 = DK

[52] Burkert 1972, 120, hails it as "the one most certain fact in the history of early Pythagoreanism."

14 A 1), Heraclides of Pontus (DK 14 A 8 = DL 8.4–5), Aristotle (*De an.* 407b20–3 = DK 58 B 39), Porphyry (*VP* 19) and Iamblichus (*VP* 173).[53] Yet Pseudo-Plutarch, rather unsurprisingly, argues that this ostensibly Pythagorean theory in fact originates with Homer. To demonstrate that the doctrine of transmigration was not "beyond Homer's understanding" (see above), Pseudo-Plutarch alludes (125) to such scenes in the poet as Hector (*Il.* 8.185–97) and Antilochus (*Il.* 23.403–16) talking to their horses, Achilles conversing with his horses (*Il.* 19.400–23) and Odysseus' old dog recognizing him (*Od.* 17.291–303). Pseudo-Plutarch takes (125) these scenes as indicative of "the commonality of *logos* and the kinship of soul between men and other animals" (τὴν κοινωνίαν τοῦ λόγου καὶ συγγένειαν τῆς ψυχῆς τῶν ἀνθρώπων καὶ τῶν ἄλλων ζῴων).[54] While this view is consistent with the Pythagorean theory,[55] it also shows that Pseudo-Plutarch incorporates Stoic doctrine into his account.

The commonality of *logos* is a fundamental Stoic tenet. Suffice it to quote Cleanthes, who in his hymn famously says (*SVF* 1.537 = Stob. 1.1.12) that Zeus directs the "common *logos*" (κοινὸν λόγον) that "runs through all things" (διὰ πάντων φοιτᾷ). However, Pseudo-Plutarch's coalescence of Pythagorean and Stoic views is also testified to by the Stoic phrase φύσις ζωτική (e.g., *SVF* 2.945 = Alex. Aphr. *De fato* 191.31–2), which appears at the end of this chapter.[56] Pseudo-Plutarch interprets (125) the destruction of Odysseus' comrades for their slaughtering of Helios' cattle (*Od.* 12.352–419) as signifying that all creatures are honored by the gods, since they all "participate in the same animate nature" (τῆς αὐτῆς φύσεως ζωτικῆς μετέχοντα). This mixture of Pythagorean and Stoic assumptions not only proves Homer's omniscience but also paves the way for a sophisticated allegoresis.

In the next chapter, the Circe episode is interpreted as an allegory of the round of reincarnation, which Odysseus manages to free himself

[53] For extensive discussions of the sources, see Burkert 1972, 120–36 or, more recently, Zhmud 2012, 221–38 with further references.

[54] Keaney and Lamberton 1996, 197, render the sentence differently: "the souls of men and animals share the capacity for rational discourse and are related." Yet, translating λόγος as "rational discourse" seems to me slightly problematic. I take Pseudo-Plutarch's κοινωνία τοῦ λόγου to be a reference to the Stoics' κοινὸς λόγος (see below in the main text). But even if the Stoics are disregarded, it is "reason" that Pseudo-Plutarch has in mind here (thus, e.g., "raison" in Buffière 1956, 501), for "rational discourse" would not protect Odysseus from metempsychosis (see the ensuing discussion of chapter 126).

[55] See, e.g., Porphyry *VP* 19: πάντα τὰ γινόμενα ἔμψυχα ὁμογενῆ. For a very good discussion of the affinity between "âme humaine et âme animale," see Buffière 1956, 501–6.

[56] Hillgruber 1999, 276.

from by means of *logos* and *apatheia*. Pseudo-Plutarch begins with an observation (126) that the "transformation" (μεταβάλλειν) of Odysseus' companions into pigs (*Od.* 10.233–43) and other "such animals"[57] in fact "hints enigmatically" (αἰνίττεται) that:

> τῶν ἀφρόνων ἀνθρώπων αἱ ψυχαὶ μεταλλάττουσιν εἰς εἴδη σωμάτων θηριωδῶν, ἐμπεσοῦσαι εἰς τὴν τοῦ παντὸς ἐγκύκλιον περιφοράν, ἣν Κίρκην προσαγορεύει καὶ κατὰ τὸ εἰκὸς ῾Ηλίου παῖδα ὑποτίθεται, οἰκοῦσαν ἐν τῇ Αἰαίῃ νήσῳ.
>
> the souls of foolish men are transferred into bestial sorts of bodies as they fall into the circular rotation of the universe, which he calls Circe and appropriately makes a child of Helios, living in the island of Aiaia.

Pseudo-Plutarch's allegoresis builds on the distinction between wise and unwise individuals: it is only the souls of the latter that transmigrate into the bodies of beasts. However, what Pseudo-Plutarch proposes here is somewhat difficult to reconcile with what he suggested in the previous chapter. That the souls of Odysseus' comrades take on the form of animal bodies is clearly an undesirable predicament. This is hardly a Pythagorean view.[58] Rather, Pseudo-Plutarch must be alluding here to Plato's account of metempsychosis as expounded, for example, in *Phaedo* 81e2–82b9, where the souls of individuals are said to be reborn in the bodies of animals whose natures reflect their conduct in their previous life: the gluttonous become asses, the unjust and tyrant pass into wolves, hawks or kites, and the unphilosophically virtuous are reincarnated as bees, wasps, ants or even as humans (see also *Tim.* 91d6–92c3, *Rsp*. 619e6–620d5, *Phdr*. 249b3–5).

The question that arises at this point is whether the view of reincarnation as some sort of retribution can be squared with the aforementioned claim about the commonality of *logos* and the kinship of soul between men and animals. Clearly, what befell Odysseus' crew is unnatural and disadvantageous from a perspective that views the soul's entering the body of an irrational animal as a punishment, but not necessarily so from a perspective that takes all creatures to be related and endowed with

[57] The τοιαῦτα ζῷα could be the bewitched wolves and lions that appear at *Od*. 10.212–13, but other options include dogs (see, e.g., Hor. *Epist*. 1.2.26) and asses (see, e.g., Plut. *De comm. not.* 1064a). Kaiser 1964, 202 n. 19 points to the important connection between the latter option and Plato's *Phaedo* 81e6.

[58] As Zhmud 2012, 230 rightly stresses: "In none of the early *testimonia* on Pythagoras or the Pythagoreans do we find any evidence that transmigration of souls was seen as a punishment for any previous sins." See also Buffière 1956, 501 with n. 3; Deuse 1983, 142, 147 and Hillgruber 1999, 277.

the common *logos*. Does this mean that certain souls somehow lose the common *logos* and the kinship between men and other animals is then severed? The Stoics have an answer here. On the one hand, they distinguish man from irrational animals on the basis of ἐνδιάθετος λόγος and, on the other, they believe in the κοινωνία τοῦ λόγου that Pseudo-Plutarch refers to (see above). Thus, that man is different from irrational animals by virtue of ἐνδιάθετος λόγος does not contradict the Stoic view that all creatures partake of the same κοινὸς λόγος or φύσις ζωτική. Pseudo-Plutarch, however, does not address the issue that triggered so many controversies over the doctrine of transmigration in the later Platonist tradition.[59] As his agenda is rhetorical (commending the omniscient Homer) and not philosophical (reconciling the different doctrines), he simply turns the Circe episode into an allegory of metempsychosis.

According to Pseudo-Plutarch's allegoresis, Circe does not symbolize pleasure but rather a cosmic power that is—as Judith Yarnall aptly puts it—"the turner of the wheel of incarnation."[60] This interpretation is supported by an etymological explanation that associates (126) the name Κίρκη with the adjective ἐγκύκλιος (i.e., "circular" or "round"), upon which the poet is praised for making (*Od*. 10.134–8) the enchantress a daughter of the Sun, dwelling on the island Αἰαία, whose name is derived from αἰάζειν (i.e., "wailing").[61] While Pseudo-Plutarch interprets Circe as

[59] For good discussions, see, e.g., Dörrie 1957, 414–35; Smith 1984, 276–84 and, especially, Deuse 1983.

[60] Yarnall 1994, 76.

[61] This etymology is rather straightforward given that κίρκος means (among other things) "circle" or "ring" (see, e.g., Buffière 1956, 509 with n. 43; Kaiser 1964, 205 n. 25; Tochtermann 1992, 63; Yarnall 1994, 76 and Hillgruber 1999, 277). However, scholars remain deeply divided about the relation between Pseudo-Plutarch's interpretation and that of Porphyry, a 3rd-century C.E. Neoplatonist philosopher, whose elaborate allegoresis of the Circe episode has been preserved by Stobaeus (1.49.60). Porphyry's interpretation of Circe corresponds to Pseudo-Plutarch's in three crucial aspects: 1) Porphyry equates the sorceress with ἡ ἐν κύκλῳ περίοδος καὶ περιφορὰ παλιγγενεσίας (which is an elaboration of Pseudo-Plutarch's ἡ τοῦ παντὸς ἐγκύκλιος περιφορά), both allegorists agree that 2) Circe is Ἡλίου παῖς ruling the island of the dead and 3) that the name of the island stems from "wailing" (though Porphyry has ὀλοφύρεσθαι, whereas Pseudo-Plutarch has αἰάζειν καὶ ὀδύρεσθαι). Thus, at the general level there is an undeniable correspondence between Pseudo-Plutarch's and Porphyry's allegoresis of the Circe episode: for both interpreters Homer's depiction of how Odysseus' comrades transform into pigs "hints enigmatically" (αἰνίττεται in Pseudo-Plutarch and αἴνιγμα in Porphyry) that the souls of unwise individuals are reborn as beasts. The devil, however, is in the details and the debate, is, at least to some extent, a matter of emphasis (e.g., Buffière 1956, 516, stresses the "notables divergences" between Pseudo-Plutarch and Porphyry, whereas Tochtermann 1992, 64 n. 26, points to the "Nähe" of the two texts). Clearly, the two accounts are too similar to be completely independent of each other. At

governing the cyclical transit of every soul's rebirth from one body to another, Odysseus is interpreted as prevailing over metempsychosis. The hero, a "wise man" (ἔμφρων ἀνήρ), is said (126) "not to have suffered this kind of transformation" (οὐκ ἔπαθε τὴν τοιαύτην μεταβολήν) that his companions underwent, for "he received *apatheia*" (τὸ ἀπαθὲς λαβών) from Hermes, whom Pseudo-Plutarch identifies with *logos*. It is noteworthy that this allegoresis amalgamates Platonic and Stoic terminology, as both *logos* and *apatheia* liberate Odysseus from the cycle of reincarnation.

Pseudo-Plutarch's identification of Hermes with *logos* can be characterized as Platonic and/or Stoic.[62] The equation occurs in *Cratylus* 407e5–408b2 and—as we have seen—in Heraclitus the Allegorist (72.4),[63] as well as in Cornutus (20.18–19).[64] Pseudo-Plutarch thus follows a well-established tradition when he explains (126) that Odysseus remains impervious to Circe's charms (*Od*. 10.316–35) because Hermes-Logos bestows upon the hero *apatheia*. It is noteworthy, however, that the latter concept can also be found in Platonic and Stoic philosophy. Plato generally speaks of being ἀπαθής (e.g., *Phlb*. 21e2, *Phdr*. 250c2, *Leg.* 647d7) and also specifically characterizes the soul as ἀπαθής (e.g., *Phlb*. 33d4, 33e10). Nevertheless, the concept of *apatheia* (τὸ ἀπαθές, ἀπάθεια) can also be traced to Aristotle (e.g., *APo*. 97b23, *Top*. 125b23, *EN* 1104b24, *Rhet*. 1383a28), the Cynics (e.g., DL 6.2, 15), the Stoics (e.g., *SVF* 3.144, 201, 448 = DL 7.117) and even the Sceptics (e.g., DL 9.108). Which tradition does Pseudo-Plutarch avail himself of here?

Although this question cannot be answered definitely, it seems that Pseudo-Plutarch's *apatheia* represents the "Stoicizing Platonism" that is characteristic of the period.[65] As far as Plato's *apatheia* is concerned, the

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the same time, one has to acknowledge that it cannot be ascertained whether Porphyry was influenced by (an author who summarized) Pseudo-Plutarch's treatise or whether there was a common source that both Pseudo-Plutarch and Porphyry drew on. Be that as it may, the issue lies beyond the scope of the present inquiry (see further Buffière 1956, 516 n. 73; Deuse 1983, 145–7 and Hillgruber 1999, 276–7).

[62] *Pace* Wehrli 1928, 39, who sees this as proof that Pseudo-Plutarch "eine ihm vorliegende stoische Deutung veränderte" (see above n. 6). The interpretation Ἑρμῆς = λόγος may go back to Theagenes of Rhegium (DK 8.2), but the testimony is indirect and late, which is why its reliability can be easily called into question (see Domaradzki 2017 for a recent discussion).

[63] Heraclitus interprets Hermes as λόγος two more times in his treatise: at 28.2 and at 55.1.

[64] See also Diogenes of Babylon *SVF* 3.90.

[65] See Dillon 1996, 392. Hillgruber 1994, 53, suggests that chapters 122–35 are of "mittelplatonischen Ursprung."

most relevant account is given in the *Philebus*. When discussing the "life of thought and wisdom" (τοῦ νοεῖν καὶ φρονεῖν βίος), Socrates suggests (33b3–7) that such a life "is the most divine of all lives" (πάντων τῶν βίων ἐστὶ θειότατος). In the course of the ensuing discussion, Socrates has Protarchus assume that:

> τῶν περὶ τὸ σῶμα ἡμῶν ἑκάστοτε παθημάτων τὰ μὲν ἐν τῷ σώματι κατασβεννύμενα πρὶν ἐπὶ τὴν ψυχὴν διεξελθεῖν ἀπαθῆ ἐκείνην ἐάσαντα.
>
> some of the affections of our body are extinguished in the body before they reach the soul, leaving the soul unaffected.[66]

That this *apatheia* signifies primarily "freedom from bodily affections" is also clear from 33e10–11, where ἀπαθής means precisely that the soul is unaffected by "the agitations of the body" (σεισμῶν τῶν τοῦ σώματος). While Socrates characterizes (34a1) this state as "lack of sensation" or "insensibility" (ἀναισθησία), Pseudo-Plutarch conflates Plato's "lack of sensation" with the Stoics' "lack of passion."

Indeed, there are quite compelling arguments in favor of a Stoic influence on Pseudo-Plutarch's *apatheia*. First of all, the aforementioned interpretation by Cleanthes makes this more than likely. Let us recall that according to Cleanthes (*SVF* 1.526) μῶλυ is *logos* which neutralizes "the impulses and passions" (αἱ ὁρμαὶ καὶ τὰ πάθη) that Circe insidiously exploits. Pseudo-Plutarch could not have identified μῶλυ with *logos*, for he had already equated *logos* with Hermes. Thus, he interprets the plant which the hero obtains from the god (*Od*. 10.287–306) as an allegory of ἀπάθεια. That he has the *Stoic* concept in mind can be inferred from his aforementioned references to Stoic philosophy (φύσις ζωτική and κοινὸς λόγος) and from chapters 134–6. In chapter 134, Pseudo-Plutarch explicitly attributes ἀπάθεια to the Stoics; in chapter 135, on the other hand, he ascribes μετριοπάθεια to the Peripatetics (which rules out the Aristotelian provenance of the term *apatheia*) and, finally, in chapter 136, he resumes his discussion of the Stoic ideal of virtue (see below). All this suggests that Pseudo-Plutarch's *apatheia* is another case where the allegorist weds Platonism with Stoicism rather than any other school.

Thus, Pseudo-Plutarch has Odysseus metamorphose from a Homeric hero to a philosopher who succeeds in liberating himself from the cycle of metempsychosis by virtue of *logos* and *apatheia*. According to Pseudo-Plutarch's allegoresis, Hermes is reason which renders Odysseus

[66] Pl. *Phlb*. 33d2–4. Translation by Fowler 1925.

passionless. Odysseus is, then, a sage who eradicates all affections (in particular he cleanses himself of all destructive emotions) so as to attain dispassionate inner peace and tranquility. As the hero remains unaffected by passions, he escapes reincarnation. His companions, on the other hand, yield to their passions and degenerate into brute beasts.

At the end of chapter 126, Pseudo-Plutarch clearly allegorizes Odysseus into the Platonic denial of the carnal and material, as he interprets the hero's descent to Hades (*Od*. 10.490–5) as the soul's detachment from the body: that Odysseus "goes down to Hades" (εἰς ῎Αιδου κάτεισιν) signifies for Pseudo-Plutarch that it is possible to "separate the soul from the body" (χωρίζειν τὴν ψυχὴν ἀπὸ τοῦ σώματος).[67] Plato's impact on Pseudo-Plutarch is here unquestionable. Suffice it to quote the *Phaedo*, where, first (67c5–7), purification is said to consist in "separating the soul from the body as far as possible" (χωρίζειν ὅτι μάλιστα ἀπὸ τοῦ σώματος τὴν ψυχήν), and then (67d4–5) death is famously defined as "a release and separation of the soul from the body" (λύσις καὶ χωρισμὸς ψυχῆς ἀπὸ σώματος).[68] This means that while Odysseus' unwise companions undergo the transmigration of the souls, the wise hero avoids this fate, for he has freed his soul from the sensual and corporeal. Thus, Odysseus descends to the underworld and contemplates both good and evil souls (126).

Although Pseudo-Plutarch's debt to Plato is indisputable, we may note that the Stoics, for all their criticism of Plato's metaphysics, employed, nevertheless, the same terminology. Nemesius reports (*De nat. hom.* 2 = *SVF* 2.790) that Chrysippus likewise defined death as "a separation of the soul from the body" (ψυχῆς χωρισμὸς ἀπὸ σώματος).[69] Also, μεταβάλλειν, the technical term for transformation, which Pseudo-Plutarch uses in this chapter, is to be found both in Plato[70] and in the Stoics.[71] Of course, parallels do not prove influence. Yet, in light of his numerous aforementioned references to both Plato and the Stoics, we may risk the hypothesis that

[67] The text is somewhat problematic: αὐτὸς δὲ οὗτος (sc. Ὀδυσσεύς) καὶ εἰς Ἅιδου κάτεισιν, ὥσπερ εἶναι λέγων (Kindstrand 1990 followed by Keaney and Lamberton 1996). Can Odysseus say something through his descent to the underworld? Accordingly, Hillgruber, 1999, 279, has suggested ὡσπερεὶ μελετῶν in lieu of ὥσπερ εἶναι λέγων ("Odysseus goes down to Hades, practicing, as it were, the separation of the soul from the body").

[68] See also Pl. *Rsp*. 609d6–7: ἕως ἂν εἰς θάνατον ἀγαγοῦσα τοῦ σώματος χωρίσῃ.

[69] See also Plut. *De Stoic. repugn.* 1052c = *SVF* 2.604: ὁ θάνατος μέν ἐστι ψυχῆς χωρισμὸς ἀπὸ τοῦ σώματος.

[70] See, e.g., *Tim.* 92c3: μεταβαλλόμενα or *Rsp*. 620a7 and 620d5: μεταβάλλοντα.

[71] Thus, for example, the Stoics are reported (Euseb. *Praep*. *ev*. 15.20.6 = *SVF* 2.809) to have said that souls "separated from the body transform into a lesser substance of the soul" (τοῦ σώματος χωρισθέντες καὶ εἰς ἐλάττω μεταβαλόντες οὐσίαν τὴν τῆς ψυχῆς).

other similarities in nomenclature (such as χωρισμός or μεταβάλλειν) might have created additional premises for Pseudo-Plutarch's attempt to find both Stoic materialist psychology and the Pythagorean-Platonic theory of metempsychosis in Homer's poetry, especially in light of the fact that such an attempt is undertaken in the next chapters.

Again, the aforementioned topics of encomium dominate the discussion. Suffice it to say that in chapter 127 the Stoics are shown to "follow Homer" (Ὁμήρῳ ἀκολουθήσαντες) in their account of the soul as πνεῦμα and ἀναθυμίασις,[72] whereas in chapter 128 the "Platonic-Aristotelian" view of the soul as ἀσώματος[73] is likewise found in the poet, who—as Pseudo-Plutarch points out—employs the term "body" (σῶμα) only in relation to "that which is deprived of soul" (τὸ ἐστερημένον ψυχῆς).[74] In line with his encomiastic agenda, Pseudo-Plutarch not only conflates Plato's doctrine of the soul with that of Aristotle,[75] but also has Homer inspire both a materialist[76] and an immaterialist[77] psychology. Hence, one can clearly see that Pseudo-Plutarch's purpose is not philosophical (to bring into harmony these mutually exclusive views) but rather rhetorical (to demonstrate their Homeric roots and extoll the poet's omniscience). The encomiastic spirit of his work is manifest precisely in Pseudo-Plutarch's not devoting much time to the issue of internal consistency: his rhetoric

[72] For good discussions, see, e.g., Buffière 1956, 260–2; Tieleman 1996, 239–41 and Hillgruber 1999, 279–82.

[73] Keaney and Lamberton 1996, 201, render the original ἀσώματος as "nonmaterial," but it seems that "immaterial/nonmaterial" correspond rather to the later terms ἄϋλος/ἄνυλος.

[74] The idea that Homer uses the term σῶμα only with reference to a body "that has lost the soul" (τὸ ἀποβεβληκὸς τὴν ψυχήν) appears already in chapter 124, where Pseudo-Plutarch cites *Il.* 7.79 = 22.342, *Od.* 24.187, 11.53 in support of his claim (cf. also Buffière 1956, 460 with n. 3 and Hillgruber 1999, 273). In both chapters, however, Pseudo-Plutarch suggests that the poet's use of the word σῶμα to designate a corpse shows that he does not regard the soul as corporeal.

[75] Suffice it to mention here Aristotle's rejection of metempsychosis: the Stagirite flatly dismisses (*De an.* 407b21–3) the "Pythagorean myths" (Πυθαγορικοὺς μύθους) which allow "any chance soul to clothe itself in any chance body" (τὴν τυχοῦσαν ψυχὴν εἰς τὸ τυχὸν ἐνδύεσθαι σῶμα). For a good discussion, see Polansky 2007, 100–1, whose translation I follow. Cf. also Renehan 1980, 136.

[76] The Stoics were clear on this. Nemesius (*De nat. hom.* 2), for example, relates that both Cleanthes (= *SVF* 1.518) and Chrysippus (= *SVF* 2.790) regarded the soul as a "body" (σῶμα). As far as Zeno is concerned, we may cite Tertulian *De an.* 5.3 = *SVF* 1.137: *corpus est anima*.

[77] Although Plato does not explicitly use the term ἀσώματος with regard to the soul, at *Soph.* 247b1–d1, for example, the soul is counted among the ἀσώματα (on which, see Renehan 1980, 130 n. 65 with references).

of praise abstracts from philosophical exactitude. Also, as is characteristic of an encomium, Pseudo-Plutarch does not defend Homer in any way.

Both Pseudo-Plutarch (129) and Heraclitus the Allegorist (17) regard the story about Athena seizing Achilles by the hair (*Il.* 1.188–200) as a prefiguration of Plato's psychology.[78] While there are, of course, various differences between the two accounts,[79] the most important one for our considerations is that Heraclitus' apologetic approach compels him to fiercely attack all detractors of Homer. Thus, Heraclitus spitefully observes that the "ungrateful" (ἀχάριστος) Plato has simply "stolen" (νοσφισάμενος) the poet's doctrine of the soul (17.4) and used it only to "water" (μετήρδευσεν) his own dialogues (18.1).[80] Pseudo-Plutarch, on the other hand, neither accuses Plato of plagiarism nor attempts to defend Homer: ignoring the feud between philosophy and poetry, he concentrates his efforts solely on glorifying the poet.

Thus, Pseudo-Plutarch cites (129) Plato's tripartite division of the soul (see *Rsp.* 439d4–441c7; cf. also *Tim.* 69c5–72d3) and contents himself with showing its Homeric antecedents. Obviously, he begins his discussion (129) with the question whether "Homer was not the first to see this difference" (οὐ πρότερος Ὅμηρος εἶδε τὴν τούτου διαφοράν) between the rational and the irrational parts of the soul. Subsequently, when explaining the famous verse at *Il.* 1.193, where Achilles ponders whether or not to attack "in his mind" (κατὰ φρένα) and "in his soul" (κατὰ θυμόν), Pseudo-Plutarch interprets the passage (129) as signifying that "passionate anger" (θυμικὴ ὀργή) is overcome by "wisdom" (φρόνησις).[81] When identifying Athena with φρόνησις, Pseudo-Plutarch follows a well-established Stoic tradition: Chrysippus (*SVF* 2.908, 910), Diogenes of Babylon (*SVF* 3.33, 90), Cornutus (33.10, 35.15, 36.13, 37.22) and Heraclitus (19.7, 20.1, 20.5, 28.1, 30.4, 54.2, 75.9) equate the goddess with wisdom.[82] Pseudo-Plutarch's argument aims to show that *Il.* 1.193 proves that Homer was perfectly aware of the conflict between our θυμός (i.e., the seat of passions) and

[78] While Pseudo-Plutarch refers (129) to *Il.* 1.193, Heraclitus refers (17.1) to *Il.* 1.194–200. In both cases, however, the Homeric passage is interpreted as an anticipation of Plato's psychology.

[79] See Hillgruber 1994, 50 with n. 176 and 1999, 283–9.

[80] For Heraclitus' scathing criticism of Epicurus, see above n. 30.

[81] Keaney and Lamberton 1996, 203, translate the original φρόνησις as "rational thought."

[82] The identification of Athena with φρόνησις goes back at least to Democritus (DK 68 B 2). It might date to Theagenes (DK 8.2), but the reliability of the testimony can be doubted (see above n. 62). One should also note that in *Cratylus* 407b2 the goddess is interpreted as νοῦς and διάνοια. For a recent discussion of Democritus' and Plato's interpretation of Athena, see Domaradzki 2019 with further references.

our φρήν (i.e., the seat of thought). In support of this, Pseudo-Plutarch quotes various passages from Homer (129) which illustrate how the rational element "advises" (παραινοῦντα) and "commands" (κελεύοντα) the passionate one (*Od.* 20.18), how various passions "obey" (πείθεται) the rational part (*Od*. 20.22–3 and *Il*. 18.112–13 = 19.65–6), how the passionate element "overcomes" (περιγινόμενον) the rational one (*Il*. 9.108–11, 645–7), and how reason "stands aside" (ἐξίσταται) because of a passion (*Il*. 22.129–30) or "gives way" (ἀναχωρεῖ) to it (*Il*. 22.136–7).

Subsequently, Pseudo-Plutarch uses Plato's tripartite psychology as a point of reference for analyzing the Stoic account of the soul. Thus, in chapter 130, he argues that the Stoics owe to Homer the idea that the various "passions" (πάθη) and "the ruling principle" (τὸ ἡγεμονικόν) are located "in the region of the heart" (περὶ καρδίαν), whereas "the appetitive part" (τὸ ἐπιθυμητικόν) of the soul is "in the region of the stomach" (περὶ γαστέρα). In the next 5 chapters, Pseudo-Plutarch shows that Homer's psychology has inspired Aristotle (131–3), the Stoics (134) and the Peripatetics (135). In the course of his discussion, Pseudo-Plutarch fuses Homeric, Platonic, Aristotelian and Stoic terminologies (e.g., θυμός = θυμούμενον = θυμοειδές = πάθη = παθητικόν) and—consistently with his encomiastic purposes—never dwells on such problems as, for example, reconciling the materialistic account of Homer and/or the Stoics with that of Plato and/or Aristotle.

Pseudo-Plutarch's rhetorical agenda becomes spectacularly visible when he finally hails (136) Odysseus, the "most knowledgeable and wisest" (σοφώτατον καὶ φρονιμώτατον) of men, as an "antecedent" (ἐνδόσιμον) of the Stoic ideal of "virtue" (ἀρετή) as "sufficient for happiness" (αὐτάρκη . . . πρὸς εὐδαιμονίαν). The Stoics' belief in the adequacy or autarchy of virtue is well attested. The most important corroboration comes from Diogenes Laertius (7.127), who reports in exactly the same terms that Zeno (= *SVF* 1.187) and Chrysippus (= *SVF* 3.49) considered virtue to be αὐτάρκη . . . πρὸς εὐδαιμονίαν.[83] While Pseudo-Plutarch illustrates (136) Odysseus' virtue with the hero's "disdain for toil [endured] for the sake of fame" (εὐκλείας πόνου καταφρονοῦντα) and his "contempt for pleasure" (ἡδονῆς ὑπερορῶντα), the former quality is represented by *Od*. 4.242, 244–6 and the latter by *Od*. 9.29, 31–3. The second reference is of special importance for our considerations because it conflates Calypso (*Od*. 9.29) with Circe (*Od*. 9.31–3) as symbolizing pleasure.[84]

[83] See further the various testimonies that von Arnim collected under the title *Virtutem sufficere ad vitam beatam* (*SVF* 1.187–9 and 3.49–67). Cf. also Buffière 1956, 376.

[84] On the "Vermischung und Verwechslung" of Circe and Calypso, see Kaiser 1964, 198–9.

To understand the specificity of Pseudo-Plutarch's second use of the sorceress, let us briefly look at a similar coalescence of Circe and Calypso that appears in the interpretation put forward by the founder of Neoplatonism.[85] In his treatise Περὶ τοῦ καλοῦ (*Enn*. 1.6), Plotinus takes the story of how Odysseus was rescued from "Circe or Calypso" (Κίρκης . . . ἢ Καλυψοῦς) as "hinting enigmatically" (αἰνιττόμενος) at the prerequisite of overcoming the spell of various material beauties in order to reach the true beauty:

> Φεύγωμεν δὴ φίλην ἐς πατρίδα, ἀληθέστερον ἄν τις παρακελεύοιτο· τίς οὖν ἡ φυγή; καὶ πῶς ἀναξόμεθα; οἷον ἀπὸ μάγου Κίρκης φησὶν ἢ Καλυψοῦς Ὀδυσσεὺς αἰνιττόμενος, δοκεῖ μοι, μεῖναι οὐκ ἀρεσθείς, καίτοι ἔχων ἡδονὰς δι' ὀμμάτων καὶ κάλλει πολλῷ αἰσθητῷ συνών. Πατρὶς δὴ ἡμῖν, ὅθεν παρήλθομεν, καὶ πατὴρ ἐκεῖ. (*Enn*. 1.6.8.16–21)
>
> "Let us fly to the beloved fatherland," one may advise more truly. What is, then, this flight? And how shall we set out? As Odysseus says [he did], from the enchantress Circe or Calypso, hinting enigmatically—I think—that he was not content to stay, though [there] he had visual pleasures and was in the presence of great sensual beauty. Our fatherland from which we came and our father are there.

Plotinus alludes to *Il*. 2.140, 9.27 and *Od*. 9.29–31, 10.483–6 as he makes his point that every soul should renounce the material world for the sake of its noetic fatherland. Thus, Plotinus' interpretation of Odysseus is thoroughly Platonic: the hero is the paradigm of denying the sensual, carnal and temporal delights in favor of the intelligible, spiritual and eternal beauty. While Odysseus is a wandering soul that returns to its true, noetic home, Plotinus' interpretation of Circe/Calypso is fairly traditional: the sorceress is equated with "visual pleasures" (ἡδοναὶ δι' ὀμμάτων) and "sensual beauty" (αἰσθητὸν κάλλος), which the hero remains immune to. The conventionality of Plotinus' allegoresis of the enchantress (Κίρκη = ἡδονή) highlights the originality of Pseudo-Plutarch's use of the Circe episode.[86] Plotinus is a philosopher embracing one interpretation of the

[85] For various discussions of this passage, see, e.g., Friedl 1936, 32; Buffière 1956, 417; Kaiser 1964, 207; Pépin 1976, 199–200; Lamberton 1986, 106–7; Tochtermann 1992, 74–7 and Brisson 1996, 113.

[86] As Kaiser 1964, 207 n. 31, observes: "Ein eigentlich neuer Ansatz liegt bei Plotin nicht vor: er stützt sich auf die vorausgehende ethisch-allegorische Homerdeutung, . . . die Verse ι 29–33 dienen bei Ps. Plut. *Hom*. 136 dem Nachweis, daß die Stoiker ihr *ἡδονῆς ὑπερορᾶν* an dem Verhalten des Odysseus gegenüber Kalypso und Kirke gelernt hätten!" On Plotinus' appropriation of various Stoic interpretations, see Pépin 1976, 207–9.

sorceress for the purpose of illustrating his doctrine. Pseudo-Plutarch, on the other hand, ingeniously utilizes two divergent accounts as he moves from a Platonizing account of the story (Odysseus personifies renunciation of the flesh, Circe symbolizes reincarnation) to a Stoicizing one (the hero represents the self-sufficiency of virtue, the enchantress stands for pleasure). This is consistent with his encomiastic aims: the all-knowing Homer is the seed of all doctrines.

Also, while both Pseudo-Plutarch and Plotinus make explicit references to Homer, it is only in the latter case that a hidden meaning is extracted from the Circe episode. In chapter 136, Pseudo-Plutarch does not unravel any ὑπόνοια (tellingly, he employs no term from the allegorical nomenclature). Thus, Pseudo-Plutarch's use of Homer in chapter 136 is different from his approach to the poet in chapter 126 (where he proves that Homer αἰνίττεται). In chapter 136, Pseudo-Plutarch makes references to Circe/Calypso to show that Odysseus is an ἐνδόσιμον of the Stoic doctrine that virtue is sufficient for happiness. Such an appeal to poetry should not be hastily categorized as allegoresis.[87] Clearly, it is one thing to take a Homeric episode as a *prefiguration* of a belief, and quite another to take it as an *allegory* of a belief. In chapter 136, Pseudo-Plutarch adduces the Circe episode to demonstrate that it anticipates the Stoic conviction about the adequacy or autarchy of virtue. In chapter 126, he reads into the episode Homer's secret doctrine of the transmigration of souls. Both chapters, however, serve as an encomium of the poet's πολυμάθεια.

IV. CONCLUSION

Let us briefly recapitulate. This paper has analyzed to what extent the conventional interpretation of the Circe episode (the sorceress symbolizes pleasure, Odysseus represents reason) appears in *De Homero*. It has been ascertained that while the standard (Socratic-Cynic-Stoic) account of the Circe episode does appear in chapter 136, Pseudo-Plutarch also deviates from the established tradition, for in chapter 126 he interprets the enchantress as an allegory of metempsychosis and the hero—as a personification of philosophical *apatheia*. The present study has argued that Pseudo-Plutarch's goal is more rhetorical than philosophical, for the

[87] Konstan 2005, xv, aptly notes that invoking passages from Homer in support of a notion is not the same as deciphering the poet's words according to a symbolic code. In a somewhat similar vein, Wehrli 1928, 71, cautions: "Irgendeine Geschichte kann auch als bloßer Vergleich herangezogen werden, ohne daß man von einer Umdeutung eigentlich sprechen kann."

author of *De Homero* does not try to reconcile the different views he finds in Homer, but instead aims to prove that the poet is their underlying source. Thus, it has been suggested that Pseudo-Plutarch's approach is better characterized as "encomiastic" rather than "syncretic" or "eclectic," for such a characterization helps to explain why Pseudo-Plutarch marries various philosophical doctrines (as he glides from a Platonizing account of the Circe story to a Stoicizing one) and various approaches to poetry (as he reveals either a ὑπόνοια or an ἐνδόσιμον in Homer). His goal, though, is always the same: to show that the poet is a treasure trove of all knowledge and wisdom.[88]

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