

Tychè et Pronoia

La marche du monde selon Plutarque

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THE INTERPLAY OF TEXTUAL REFERENCES IN PLUTARCH'S *LIFE OF PHOCION*

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Abstract

The pair of Phocion and Cato the Younger contains a kind of anticipated *synkrisis*. This anticipation has implications for the author's narrative strategy. Plutarch seems to prefer Phocion, if one might judge from the way he highlights the text with clues that organize the interpretation of the macrotext. This is to be seen in the way he cites models or plays with the same hypotexts differently in the cases of Phocion and Cato, both of them close to Socrates' model. It has already been said that the ostentatiousness of the Socratic model in the reading of *Phaedo* by Cato permits the reader to glimpse a misunderstood appropriation of it. In Phocion's Life, on the other hand, the reader must look for the hypotext and its paradigmatic dimension – either Herodotus (Solon before Croesus' treasure/Phocion before Alexander's treasures) or Plato (*Ap.*, *Phd.*, *Cri.*) – in Phocion's placid and soft attitude in his last moments, where some coincidences of episodes before his death and that of Socrates are to be seen, or in Phocion's behaviour throughout his life. He kept his *constantia* of character, even under hard circumstances, when *Tyche* was adverse to him and caused him to be misunderstood by the people or led to death by the manipulation of demagogues.

Phocion is one of the great examples of longevity and *constantia* of character and behaviour that has lasted from Ancient times to the present. He lived during the turmoil of the 4th century b.C., in an Athens that was defeated and politically weakened and whose identity was badly shaken by a long civil war and by the impending loss of its freedom to the kings of Macedonia, then builders of a new empire.

Although Phocion's political and private conduct was beyond reproach and in the interests of Athens, which both feared and respected him, he was condemned to death by ingestion of hemlock, in 318 b.C. This very same city, or rather, a crowd, manipulated by the representatives of the Macedonian kings, condemned him to death at the age of eighty-four, in an act that could not be further from the genuine democracy of the 5th century. A short time after, his death produced uncomfortable feelings of guilt and weighed heavily on the conscience of the city.

Unlike many of the heroes in Plutarch's biographies, Phocion does not represent the soul and the fate of the political community of the time, through *synecdoche*. On the contrary, he experiences the problems of his time and fights against them as much as he can by intervening and setting trends of collective behaviour regarding political ethics. His effort is consistent and energetic, but in vain, because he is surrounded by traitors, of which he is well aware.

Phocion's attitudes contrast greatly with the typical behaviour of the members of Athenian society at that time: he follows Socrates' model of conduct and his life is inspired by a kind of practical philosophy. Therefore, Plutarch chooses another admirer of Socrates, an even greater enthusiast of Stoicism, in Rome, to pair with him: Cato the Younger, from Utica. Although the link

between the two is sometimes difficult to make and tenuous, which Plutarch himself acknowledges, we witness in both their lives, the Herculean struggle against the course of events and the reigning beliefs of that time, as if it were a struggle against a particularly powerful *Tyche*¹. And they almost defeated it in the echo of themselves which they left behind, after their deaths².

This pair of lives is part of a small group of four pairs without a final *synkrisis*³. However, in the preface to the *Vitae* of Phocion and Cato there is a kind of anticipated *synkrisis* where the author presents his reasons for establishing a comparison between the two.

Plutarch's preference for Phocion is noticeable from the very beginning: Cato's *archaiotropia* appears in a period of corrupt and depraved customs and so, because it is unique, brings him δόξαν μεγάλην καὶ κλέος (3.3). However, his virtue and nobility are historically out of context – the hardness and the scope of his virtue is disproportionate (ἄσύμμετρον) and strange to the needs of the time. He lacks the sense of *kairos* that Plutarch mentions in a part of the text that is full of references to music. This inability to fit into his own historical era, which is revealed in the very way that Cato intervenes in events, distinguishes the Roman hero from the Greek one.

This type of anticipation of the *synkrisis* is much more than a mere process of *variatio* in the presentation of elements in the biographical discourse. On the contrary, it has very specific implications in the interaction between the reader and the text, not only in the way he or she interprets and understands it, but also in his or her comprehension of the profile of the two politicians.

The initial anticipated judgement comparing Phocion to Cato, as well as the general view given about each of the *Vitae*, lead the reader to examine the protagonists' lives for a kind of confirmation of their expectations. The way to that confirmation demands a global strategy which Plutarch performs. He highlights their *Vitae* with various signs through facts and different levels of discourse, like a kind of 'Wegweiser' demanding a macrotextual level of reading.

Thus, the analysis of the text in the *Lives* of Phocion and Cato implies the acknowledgment of various weavings included in it.

¹ This struggle of man against *Tyche*, even if *Tyche* means the circumstances and the historical environment was already analysed by PÉREZ JIMÉNEZ (1973) 103 sqq. This model of hero fighting against a *tyche* is very near to the concept of hero's life by C. Nepos.

² SWAIN (1989) 282 asserts even that "The nations of both men were in a bad plight and it is made clear that their virtue was being rendered ineffectual by fortune". I think, specially in what concerns Phocion, his virtue has a special effect *post mortem*, when the city recognized, with bad conscience, that it judged unjustly this man.

³ The others are those of Themistocles/Camillus, Pyrrhus/Marius, Alexander/Caesar. See Trapp (1999) 487-488. Trapp recognizes, in the case of Phocion/Cato how this strategy rendered the Platonizing analysis so important. 488: "A Platonizing analysis of the relationship between statesman and populace is thus established as central to understanding the resemblance between Plutarch's two subjects, and the figure of Socrates brought, if only hazily so far, into relationship with them".

The first and foremost obvious one is that of the final product: the macrotext which is open to an interpretative reading through the comparison and anticipated judgement established at the beginning between Phocion's and Cato's *Lives*.

The second level - the hypotext - is a diverse one, from which the coherence of the reading is built and shown through the indicators referred to. Moreover, it is the complex game of intertwining hypotexts which helps to establish the connection and the contrast between Phocion and Cato. This effect is primarily due to the use of Platonic dialogues focused on the last moments of Socrates' life, as the *Apology*, *Phaedo*, *Crito*, and some references to *Gorgias* and *The Banquet*. Much weaker is the hypotextual use of Sophoclean tragedy or of Herodotus' *Histories*.

Therefore, the model and example of Socrates' conduct towards death underlies the comparative discourse between Phocion and Cato. Interestingly, in both Plutarch's *Lives*, the more conscious and deliberately acknowledged and displayed this connection is to the Socratic model by those biographed, the more artificial it becomes. Such is the case of Cato.

In Cato's *Life* this model is very strongly coloured by Stoicism. Nevertheless, Cato's obsessive reading of *Phaedo* to his circle of friends in his last dinner contrasts with his behaviour afterwards. His attachment to the book and to theoretical culture are dissonant with the spontaneity of his conduct in real life. Cato's outburst of rage towards the loyal slave who does not bring him the sword reaches a climax when he physically attacks him in a brutal manner. Such behaviour is contrary to the *constantia animi* defended and practised by the Stoics. Cato's first attempt to commit suicide failed due to the weakness of his hand, which he had seriously injured when he attacked the slave, but the second attempt, which proved to be successful, was described by Plutarch with impressive visual effects, so as to convey the brutality with which Cato put an end to his life. Socrates' death, the author suggests, was very different, having been dictated by judges and carried out in a sweet and serene manner. The model was therefore wrongly assimilated, and probably also a reflection of Cato's own inability to adapt to his own time (*Phoc.*3.1.).

The importance of the Socratic-Platonic model to Cato the Younger was already acknowledged in Ancient Rome, as J.Geiger⁴ reminds us. Trapp, and later A. Zadorojny⁵, pointed to and corroborated the thesis that Plutarch presented Cato as misinterpreting his Greek model. The key to this reading lies mainly in the interplay between the readings of *Phaedo* and the last night in the life of the Roman. Zadorojnyi explores the use of another hypotext: Sophocles' *Ajax*⁶. In fact, Cato shouts for his sword, and becomes angry on discovering that it had been hidden to prevent him from carrying out the fate that he had decided on for himself. When he finally held the sword in his

⁴ Geiger (1999) 359-362.

⁵ Trapp (1999) 493-494. This is the guiding thesis of Zadorojny's paper (2007)216-230.

⁶ *Ibid.* This literary resource was already briefly pointed out by Trapp (1999) 498, but Zadorojnyi (2007) analysed it further and derived more extensive conclusions from its use.

hands and could fulfil his wishes, he identified with it saying $\nu\tilde{\nu}\nu$ ἐμός εἰμι (*Cato* 70.2). Such behaviour reminds us of Sophocles' protagonist when he spoke to the entities which he felt were part of his world and of his own fate, whether they were the darkness or his sword⁷.

In fact, the Sophoclean hypotext is not so perceptible in the *Life of Phocion*, since the inadequacy of the lonely Sophoclean protagonist in relation to his own world is not appropriate to suggest the context and the conduct of the Athenian.. I believe, however, that by comparing these two lives Plutarch aimed to appeal to the theatrical culture of the reader. His purpose was to draw the memory of the reader, however weakly, to a tragic Sophoclean theme from another angle which did not focus directly on Phocion. I am referring here to the prohibition on burying Phocion in Athens in an act of demagogical tyranny, and to the courage of his second wife (this passage cannot have any other reading⁸). Although weakened by old age, she took the remains of Phocion's body to her home and the speech, which Plutarch places in her mouth, expresses at the same time her civic courage, the bonds of affection and conjugal devotion, as well as the respect owed to the dead and her ties to her ancestors. She predicts that in a moment of regained *sophrosyne*, perhaps caused by future political misfortune, the city will grant the dead man his right to a proper burial (37.5).

It is very likely that the reader, like us, will remember *Antigone*. The logic behind⁹ the reading allows a retrospective comparison of data, given that it is possible to go back and re-read the text once more. Thus, it seems to me that Ajax's hypotext in the *Life of Cato* strengthens the thesis of the existence of a crossed reference with the blurred hypotext of *Antigone* in the *Life of Phocion*. It is of great significance that Plutarch has used the latter with regards to the strong matrimonial relationship of his wife towards him, as well as the feelings of the City towards him, after his death. On the other side, the hypotext of *Antigone* in the *Life of Phocion*, thanks to the crossed reference with the *Ajax's* hypotext in the *Life of Cato*, gets wider implications. It leads the reader to think on the Sophoclean discussion about Ajax's burial, that the demagogues Agamamnon and Menelaus wanted to deny him. Lastly they had to submit themselves to the will of the gods.

In the first case, we are led to place great importance on the relationship between spouses by the polygraph of Chaeronea and to the acknowledged role of the wife. In fact, at the very beginning of the *Life of Phocion*, Plutarch rebuts Sophocles' words, which are put into the mouth of Ismene and said to Creon, in *Antigone* (vv. 563-564): 'Sir, even innate common sense fades away in the midst of misfortune and succumbs to it'. This weakening of virtue (1.5)

⁷ See Schadewaldt (1966) 55-93 on this connection with Sophocles' hero as a lonely man with his body, his sword and the landscape linked to his fate.

⁸ I agree with the analysis and reasons presented by Flacelière-Chambry for considering *Megarikes* an interpolation (1976) 162.

⁹ I owe this suggestion to the kindness of F. Frazier, to whom I express my gratitude.

in times of misfortune is not recognized by Plutarch in Phocion. The latter will not side with Ismene - and his wife's conduct will prolong the implicit evocation of Antigone's side.

This strategy allowed Plutarch to emphasize the divergence between Phocion and Cato. The moments before Cato's death were hard on his friends, family and slaves because his behaviour did reveal neither sweetness nor temperance (*Cato* 68 sqq), and contrasted with the purpose of his readings during the dinner.

The great force that tested courage, virtue and the coherence of behaviour in relation to the great paradigmatic master/model reference was *Tyche*. Indeed, *Tyche* was an ever-present factor in the life of the protagonists, as well as in the life of each man, whether it was propitious or adverse, in the inglorious struggle waged against it or in the indiscriminate use of its favours. The true character of Plutarch's biographized heroes, their ἦθος, is revealed in their action (πρᾶξις) as their 're-action' to *Tyche*¹⁰.

Tyche was particularly adverse to Phocion and to Cato who 'almost' defeated it, but who, in a twist of fate, ended up losing to it. Their efforts and their *arete* were not duly recognized¹¹. Challenging situations and political crisis often trigger strictness and severity in honourable characters that can easily offend the masses.

There is a subtle difference between Phocion and Cato: historically, the former lived in a time of crisis with no return, and the latter in a crisis of the end of an era. The Roman Republic was close to its end, but Caesar's tyranny would be followed by the Empire. Plutarch compares Cato to an out-of-season fruit (*Phoc.*3.2 τοῖς μὴ καθ' ὥραν καρποῖς). This image would draw the reader's attention to the differences that exist beyond their affinities.

Such a contrast is consolidated, as it was already mentioned, through the perception of the protagonists' different approach to the same paradigm, which is perceptible through the interplay of hypotexts, but it was prepared by the anticipated *synkrisis* of the initial chapters through the combination of two strategies. I am referring to the explicit use of texts, quoted or just briefly mentioned, as a source of credibility (as in the case of Cicero, for example¹²). There are quotations from poets¹³ (Sophocles, Archilochos, Homer) as a more powerful means of suggestion than simple statements, and a remarkable range of imagery reinforces the intended effect.

It is meaningful that this imagery profusion is condensed, mainly, in the initial chapters of the *Lives*, as it is to be seen in the *Life of Phocion*, which will guide our reading like a prelude where the musical theme is presented. Let us see an example: Demades' words are quoted in 1.1 so as to allow Plutarch

¹⁰ See Pérez Jiménez (1973) 101-110.

¹¹ At least in the course of their lives. Thereafter, sooner or later, their qualities and virtues were recognized: see Frazier (1996) 120-121.

¹² E. g. *Phoc.*3.1: Cicero, *Ad Att.*2.1.8.

¹³ *Phoc.*1.3: Soph., *Ant.*563-564; *Phoc.*7. 5: Archilochos, frg. 1 West; *Phoc.* 17.1: *Od.*9. 494 and in *Phoc.* 2.3. an indirect quotation of *Od.*5.165-166 is to be seen.

to distinguish between the two sympathizers of the Macedonian cause. Such words subvert the traditional image of the ship of state and refer to it as shipwreck or the wreckage of one (τὰ ναυάγια). In times of crisis and in times of shipwreck, Demades was himself part of the wreckage. On the other hand, Phocion faced that same shipwreck with an undeniable *arete*, although the adverse *tychai* of the Hellas denied him both glory and recognition.

This misunderstood *arete* in Phocion is justified by the bitterness and impressionability of the crowd in difficult times, which cannot bear to hear harsh words from incorruptible and severe politicians who are little concerned with being liked by the people. And this theme is reinforced through a comparison taken from medical practice: that of the burning sensation that honey causes on wounds while at the same time cleaning them (2.3), and supported by a quotation from Homer (*Od.*5.165-166). Plutarch next focuses his attention on the phenomenon of an Athens that does not welcome the coarse, but well-intentioned, frankness of Phocion. Now, he resorts to a new comparison using the city and drawn from the area of ophthalmology (2.4) – ailing eyes find comfort in the contemplation of dark colours and avoid those that are bright and reflect light, just like a city overcome by adverse fortune can tolerate badly frankness and the pointing out of its mistakes.

The complex comparison that follows presents an initial distribution of elements similar to the previous one. It is taken from the field of astronomy and will extend, drawing near to that of music (2. 6-9). The movement of the sun does not coincide with that of the heavens, but neither is it against it nor does it contradict it. Its trajectory is oblique and curved and its flexibility guarantees universal harmony.

This principle is the beginning of the opportune yielding that ought to govern political practice of those who face the will of the people. The systematic strictness and harshness, which never yield to anything at the right moment, and never learnt sweetness (*praotes*) which creates bonds of reciprocity, are a dangerous path. Severity and kindness represent an alliance of rhythms similar to the divine ruling of the universe.

These words remind us of *Somnium Scipionis* and seem to be tacitly applied to Phocion, and explicitly to Cato. For the latter, Plutarch corroborates them with a passage from Cicero. Moreover, Plutarch, as previously mentioned, sees Cato an out-of-season fruit. With regards to Phocion, Plutarch will show, in the *anecdota* that testify the nature and specificity of the *ethos* and *praxis* of the Greek statesman, up to what point Phocion combined strictness and harshness with a profound *philanthropia* combined with *praotes*, which he exhibited right up to the end of his life¹⁴. *Philanthropia* is indeed a reference word in the characterization of the Athenian.

I will now focus my attention on the relationship between the macrotext, and its anticipated *synkrisis*, and the hermeneutical game between it and the

¹⁴ On the importance of *philanthropia* and *praotes* as character traits that become evident through the action of the biographized heroes, see Martin (1960) 65-73 and Martin (1961)164-175. See also Frazier (1996) 231-239.

hypotexts, which is strengthened by the poetical discourse of the first chapters. The reading leads us to sympathise with Phocion who was a disciple of Plato and Xenocrates. It is never said or insinuated in an anticipated contrast with Cato that Phocion wants to impose himself like a second Platonic Socrates. His conduct incorporates the moral values and the behaviour of the chosen models, in accordance with his nature and the lessons that he took from them. And this seems to happen naturally in the eyes of his fellow citizens.

Phocion is still young and through sobriety and moderation has the power to correct the temperamental excesses of the *strategos* Chabrias. His detachment from material things was manifested in the austere lifestyle that he shared with his wife, which gave him a certain political credibility, since he was perceived as a man of integrity, disinterested in action. According to Plutarch (*Phoc.* 8.1), it was well known that his political conduct was guided by values of peace and tranquility (πρὸς εἰρήνην καὶ ἡσυχίαν), concepts based upon the notion of universal harmony, mentioned in 2.9. Thus, the reader gradually realises that the criticism of intransigence and harshness in the preamble are aimed much more at Cato than at Phocion, whose character is qualified in 5.1 as προσηνέστατος καὶ φιλανθρωπώτατος, something that is difficult to divine from his somewhat austere and unsociable demeanour. Socrates' description of his rather uncouth appearance and satyr-like face in the Platonic dialogues is also misleading, since his harmony of soul and strength to fight for Good are only revealed to those in his closest circle. Even the executioner acknowledges his sweetness (*praotes*) and *arete* in *Phaedo* (116c).

Thus, we get some idea of the imposing personality of this man, who was elected *strategos* forty-five times in Athens during a time of crisis, and who was nicknamed "the Good" ὁ χρηστός (10.4-5). The discrepancy between his appearance, manners and nature is once again underlined with a comparison from the realm of wine: a wine that leaves a lingering aftertaste may be pleasing to the palate, while another, which perhaps seems sweet at first, may become sickly and harmful later on.

Phocion's ability to endure the hardships of winter and face them with minimal protection was proverbial in Athens. On military campaigns, he would wear light garments and fight barefoot, only donning warmer clothing when the cold became unbearable (4. 3-4). As has already been noted, this reference evokes the habits of Socrates, as mentioned by Plato (e. g. *Symp.* 220a-b)¹⁵. This natural proximity with Socrates is not made explicit by Plutarch. However, the passage also evokes the *Life of Cato* (44), who, as elected praetor, is shown going about his duties barefoot, and often without a tunic. Plutarch censures this behaviour, which, he believes, displays scorn and contempt for institutions. We understand that Cato distanced himself ostentatiously, and somewhat arrogantly, from the crowd with this attitude; but we also understand that Plutarch sees this as somewhat forced and out-of-step with reality. The Socratic

¹⁵ See also Aristophanes, *Nu.* 412-428.

paradigm is far from this and poorly assimilated, which is in keeping with the conclusions that may be drawn from the dissonant connection between the final reading of *Phaedo* and the scene with the sword and the two suicide attempts.

According to Plutarch, Phocion's coarseness and inexorability had a practical purpose (10.7), just like the energetic sobriety of his speeches – which Demosthenes described as “axes” that could cut through his opponents whenever he felt that the well-being of Athens was at stake. The definition that Phocion gives of the sycophant, Aristogiton, as “limping and cowardly” (10.3), though not directly quoted from Archilochus, would seem to correspond to a game of critical defilement of the portrait of the ideal general of that poet from Paros (frg. 114 West).

The manoeuvres of Polyperchon, regent of Macedonia, finally created the conditions for the elimination of Phocion (32 sqq.). With the old democratic regime apparently reinstated through a concession from the Macedonians, the Athens Assembly was filled with a crowd of fugitives, foreigners and people deprived of civic rights through *atimia* (33.2). It was these men, manipulated by the Macedonians, who accused old Phocion and his companions of betraying their country, and condemned them to death by hemlock. But there was no opportunity at Phocion's trial for a beautiful speech before attentive judges, of the kind that Socrates had made in Plato's *Apology*. As Plutarch said, “there was no equity” (ἦν δ' οὐδὲν ἴσον 33.10). Polyperchon, the foreign dominator, interrupted Phocion whenever he began to speak, until the latter gave up trying.

For true citizens, the staged trial denounced the farsical democracy that was being acted out, making them aware of danger and demise — the ‘shipwreck’ of the city, in fact. Plutarch plays with the contrasting situations surrounding the deaths of Socrates and Phocion: both trials took place during religious festivals, but while Socrates' execution was postponed, according to *Crito* (43d) or *Phaedo* (58a), until the *theoria* returned to Athens, this did not happen in the case of Phocion. The foreign master and the unscrupulous crowd fixed the date of the execution for the month of *Mounichion*, during the festivities in honour of Zeus (37.1). Like Socrates in *Phaedo*, Phocion only reveals his true nature to those around him at the very last moment – his clarity, sweetness, serenity and *philanthropia*, and the fact that he did not even have enough money to pay for the hemlock that he was supposed to drink. Plutarch creates a tragic and emotional atmosphere that surrounds the description of Phocion's death in order to stir the sympathy of the reader towards Phocion¹⁶ and to emphasize the discreet nobility of the *ethos* of this man, whose political action was misunderstood by a troubled city in a time of

¹⁶ Tritle (1988) 30. Bearzot (1993) 143 talks about “la morte «socratica» di Focione” in Plutarch's *Life* and asserts that Plutarch, such as Diodorus (18.66.4 sqq.), whose sympathy towards Phocion is evident, “trae spunto dalla tradizione favorevole contemporanea per condurre all'estremo la sua esaltazione dello stratego ateniese e per avviare l'edificazione del mito di Focione, mito che, attraverso fase diverse, è giunto fino ai moderni”.

decadence and political intrigues and conspiracies¹⁷. Along his life he always acted in order to preserve the peace or the integrity of Athens, but the course of events and other external factors made of Phocion a man rudely struck by *Tyche*.

In the *Apology*, Socrates foresees the harsh punishment that will befall those that have condemned him – the trial they will undergo, which will be far more relentless than the one they were presiding over at that moment. When the disturbing voice of Socrates was silenced, other voices, even more disturbing and implacable, would be raised against them (*Ap.* 38 d-e). What Socrates foresaw for himself in fact happened to Phocion soon after his death; the city itself was stricken by the guilty conscience that had weighed upon it for a long time. Phocion's memory was rehabilitated. For the city saw its own demise projected onto that condemnation, to some extent like Creon at the end of *Antigone* – with the realisation coming too late, after disaster had befallen him for having left the dead unburied and innocents condemned.

Although the analogy with Socrates gains a certain life in the biography of Phocion through the interplay of hypotexts, Plutarch nevertheless takes steps to ensure that Phocion does not coincide with the figure of a Socrates *daimonios* constructed by tradition. The biography instead leaves us with a perception of Phocion as a somewhat misunderstood figure, a sensible politician and sober man, devoted to the city and rich in *philanthropia*. Phocion remains the politician that lives in accordance with Athens' genuine values and tries to impose a political harmony that he believes might allow them to survive the 'shipwreck'. His efforts were almost rewarded. At least the Athenians retained a sense of guilt with regards to him, were burdened with the weight of remorse and the image of that man of sober speech and gestures that so fitted the profile of the great uncorrupted leaders of the past (such as Solon, who "would rarely remove his hands from inside his cloak" – 4.3¹⁸), and whose values were made clear in the account of his meeting with Croesus, as told in Herodotus¹⁹. A similar difference in perspective between an Athenian and a Barbarian is repeated, on the Solon model at the hypotext level, where we identify the presence of Herodotus, in Alexander's incomprehension at Phocion's unresponsiveness to the treasures that he specially tries to offer him (17-18).

This complex interplay of hypotextual suggestions, of initial images, which lead the comprehensive lecture of the *Vita*, of quotations of poets, that give consistency and life to the narrative or to descriptive passages, also contributes to the final impression that is specially underlined by the Platonic hypotext,

¹⁷ See D. Leão in the final part of his paper "Tyche, kairos et chronos dans le Phocion de Plutarque", published in this volume.

¹⁸ That means: as statesman of ancient times, who used to speak with parsimony of gestures. See Aesch. *Contra Tim.* 25; Demosth. *De legat.* 251.

¹⁹ 1.30-34.

as we have seen, more and more evident and natural when *Phocion's Life* goes near to its end²⁰.

The weight on the Athenian conscience also seems to represent the very burden of conscience of an ancient identity, which, with the death of Phocion, was lost for ever²¹. This was the very punishment suffered by the city after the masquerade of the trial – Phocion's death by drinking the hemlock could not have meant 'punishment' because he was always an *aristos*, a *dikaios*, a *philanthropos*, who took always his political decisions having in account what was the best for the city²².

²⁰ Alcalde Martín (1999) 159-171 shows that this *Vita* is organized in very precise sections and that there it observes a strategy of progressive evidence of similarities between Phocion and Socrates. Geiger (1988) 256: "The last sentence of the *Phocion* draws the parallel between the deaths of Phocion and Socrates".

²¹ Tritle (1988) 30 sqq.: Plutarch has probably obtained in a written tradition this kind of information about the collective reactions after the death of Phocion.

²² F. Frazier, in her paper to be published in this volume – "Le *De sera*, dialogue pythique. Hasard et Providence, Philosophie et Religion dans la pensée de Plutarque" – underlines Plutarch's irony in the chapter 10 of the *De sera*: «...là où le chapitre 10 moquait ceux qui croient que le châtement se confond avec le moment de l'exécution capitale et qu'on est pas puni tant qu'on n'a pas bu la cigüe...». As a matter of fact, in *Phocion's Life*, it was not that one or those who drunk the hemlock that were punished, because they had no guilt – it was the city, in the time that followed the execution, that was punished through the collective feeling of shame and bad conscience.

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