

## [H. North. Sôphrosune. Chapter VII - suite]

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### Références éditoriales

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do any of the other cardinal virtues.<sup>94</sup> It invariably appears as a private, individual excellence, never related to the State except as it is the duty of a ruler to provide his subjects with an example of sophrosyne. Even in this instance the virtue itself remains entirely personal. Thus in the Fragment *That Kings Should Be Philosophers* (VIII), Musonius exhorts the King of Syria to rise above pleasure and self-seeking, to love frugality (*euteleia*) and hate extravagance, to practice *aidôs*, rule his tongue, cultivate order (both *taxis* and *kosmos*), and demonstrate propriety in appearance and action (one of the rare allusions to the *prepon* after Panaetius).<sup>95</sup> Although the allusions to frugality or to *taxis* and *kosmos* may be reminiscent of certain Cynic-Stoic doctrines that constituted an important part of the political philosophy of the Hellenistic and Graeco-Roman eras (especially the philosophy of kingship),<sup>96</sup> most of the Fragment is a tissue of commonplaces, which had been handled and re-handled ever since the *Evagoras* of Isocrates and were destined to become the stock in trade of practitioners of the *basilikos logos* in the Second Sophistic.

<sup>94</sup> The strong emphasis on sophrosyne in all the popular philosophies of the imperial age reflects social conditions of the kind that also produced satire and diatribe and the denunciations of pagan luxury, greed, and sexual immorality by early Christian moralists. For a sketch of the pagan background—religious and philosophical, as well as social—against which the development of Christian asceticism, including sophrosyne, must be seen, consult A. D. Nock, *Early Gentile Christianity and its Hellenistic Background* (New York, 1964).

<sup>95</sup> Cf. also XVIII B, p. 104.

<sup>96</sup> The Stoic doctrines that the wise man, who surpasses his fellows in virtue, therefore has the right to rule over them, and that a world monarchy is justified because it corresponds to the cosmic reign of Zeus (or natural law) gave support to the ruler cult in the Hellenistic age and the Roman Empire. Sophrosyne is concerned in both doctrines, since this excellence is invariably required of the wise man (i.e., the ruler), and in its cosmic form it corresponds to the order that the wise man must create in his own soul. The Fragment of Musonius' advice to the king of Syria typifies Stoic references to sophrosyne in this context, since it takes up this virtue as one of the tetrad and shows how each in turn must be acquired through the study of philosophy. Musonius also refers to the theory that the king is "animate law" (*nomos empsychos*), but does not explain the implications of this phrase, which is usually linked with Neopythagorean theories of kingship (see pp. 235–36). To at least some Neopythagorean theorists, the virtue of a king is different from that of his subjects, but in Stoic writings no such distinction is made; nor does Musonius here seem to imply such a theory, unless it may be extracted from his remark that the king must be *sôphrôn* and *σωφρονίζειν* his subjects, so that he himself may rule *σωφρόνως* and they be ruled *κοσμίως*. There is nothing to support an interpretation that would make sophrosyne the virtue of the king and *kosmiotês* the excellence of his subjects, especially since the effect of sophrosyne on both parties is that they avoid wantonness (*μηδέτεροι τρυφῶσι*). Musonius concludes his discussion of the qualities allied with sophrosyne by saying that they make the ordinary man *semmos* and *sôphrôn* but render the king godlike and worthy of reverence. Here, too, the difference in the two grades of sophrosyne is one of degree, not of kind.

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