

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

**Auteur : Foucault, Michel**

### Présentation de la fiche

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### Références éditoriales

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to endow sophrosyne with an ascetical cast, and there are indeed traces of this view in the *Didaskalos*. The philosopher, Albinus says, must resist pleasure if he is to become like God, and this resistance is made the task of sophrosyne (1). Yet the doctrine of the virtues in chapters 29 and 30 is for the most part merely the familiar conflation of Peripatetic, Stoic, and Academic commonplaces,<sup>104</sup> according to which sophrosyne is defined as the perfection of the appetitive part of the soul and is described as an orderly arrangement (*taxis*) of the appetites and impulses, and their obedience to the *hégemonikon*.<sup>105</sup> The natural consequences of the doctrine of the *ὁμοίωσις θεῷ* were not, in fact, recognized by Albinus. They are more apparent in Apuleius' *De Platone*, especially in the biographical chapters which describe Plato's effort to imitate the Pythagorean *continentia* and *castitas* (1. 3),<sup>106</sup> and in certain treatises of Maximus of Tyre,<sup>107</sup> who was strongly affected by Neopythagorean mysticism; but it remained for Plotinus to define the function of sophrosyne in the purification that is a necessary prelude to the *ὁμοίωσις θεῷ*.

The Neopythagoreans wrote extensively on the subject of sophrosyne, and while the extant works tend to show special interest in the effect of

<sup>104</sup> E.g., the distinction between dianoetic and ethical virtue; the doctrine of the tripartite soul; the inseparability of the virtues when they are perfect; the existence also of imperfect virtues that are not inseparable; the conception of virtue as a mean, in the sense that it lies between two vices, and as an extreme, in so far as it is perfect. As Hippolytus puts it (*Philosophoumena* 569. 4 ff. Diels), the virtues are extremes *kata timên* (so far as value is concerned), but means *kata ousian* (according to their nature). Cf. Apuleius *De Platone* 2. 5 on the virtues as *medietates* and *summitates*. The vice of excess in the case of sophrosyne is always *akolasia*; but the vice of defect is given various names, doubtless because the Aristotelian *anaisthêsia* did not represent a familiar type: *misadonia* ("hatred of pleasure") by Theages the Neopythagorean, *skaiotês* ("gaucherie") by Hippolytus, *êlithiotês* ("foolishness") by Ammonius. See R. E. Witt, *op. cit.*, chaps. VI and VII, for an analysis of Albinus' debt to Antiochus and Poseidonius by way of the *Epitome* of the Stoic Areius Didymus; and consult J. H. Loenen, *Mnemosyne*, Ser. 4, 9 (1956), 296-319, and 10 (1957) 35-36, for a defense of Albinus against the charge of eclecticism.

<sup>105</sup> It is typical of post-Platonic philosophy to assign sophrosyne to the appetitive faculty of the tripartite soul, rather than to all three parts. As a result, one of the Platonic functions of sophrosyne is transferred to justice, now defined as the agreement of all the parts of the soul (*symphônîa*, *Didask.* 29). Cf. Apuleius *De Platone* 2. 4 (the vice of the third part of the soul is *luxuria*) and 2. 6 (its virtue is *abstinentia*); Theages (Stobaeus III, 117, p. 78); Plotinus *Enn.* 1. 2. 1; Sallustius, Chap. VIII Nock. Proclus (*In Rempub.* p. 212. 12 ff. Kroll) seeks to reconcile Plato's view with that of the later schools.

<sup>106</sup> The Latin equivalents that Apuleius favors for sophrosyne do not include the Ciceronian *temperantia*. In *De Platone* 2. 1 the moral virtues are listed as *prudentia*, *iustitia*, *pudicitia*, and *fortitudo*; the most important is said to be *prudentia*, the next *continentia* (cf. 2. 9). In 2. 6, sophrosyne is also rendered by *abstinentia*. In the *Golden Ass*, Venus refers to her worst enemy as *Sobrietas* (*Metam.* 5, p. 127 Helm).

<sup>107</sup> See especially the discourses on demonology (VIII, IX, XIII).

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