
This book is a considerable achievement, being the first truly comprehensive synthesis of the Platonist concept of the *daimon* from Plato himself through to Late Antiquity—that is to say, at least to Proclus (Damascius is largely ignored, it must be said). It is a considerable work, consisting of an introduction, six chapters, covering in turn every aspect of the theory of daemons, and a conclusion. There is a most useful bibliography, and indices of passages quoted, topics covered, and key words employed.

In his introduction, Timotin (hereafter T.) notes first the rather ‘fuzzy’ nature of the term *daimon*, until Plato took it up and gave it the more precise connotation of an intermediate and mediating divine being, especially in the famous passage of the *Symposium* (202e). He states his intention to approach the subject from both an historical and a thematic perspective, specifying the following topics: 1. The relation between daemonology and cosmology; 2. The role of daemonology in the interpretation of religious practice; and 3. The theory of the personal daemon, its nature and functions. He then goes on to give an historiographic survey of previous authorities in the field—such figures as Detienne, Robin, Soury, Heinze, Wilamowitz, and more recently Brenk, Donini, Moreschini, Rodriguez Moreno, and myself. It is interesting, though, that the last general synthesis on the theory of daemons there appears to have been is that of Joseph-Antoine Hild in 1881.

In the second chapter, ‘La notion de daimon dans la littérature grecque jusqu’à Platon’, he surveys the various senses in which the term is used in pre-Platonic sources, beginning with its etymology from the root *dai-* (signifying ‘distribute’, ‘apportion’, presumably in the sense of ‘apportioner of destinies’. As he notes, *daimon* can often signify an impersonal divine force, or a divinized destiny, and sometimes even a vengeful spirit. For Hesiod, certain souls, such as those of the Golden Race, can become *daimones*, and Empedocles and the Pythagoreans envisaged *daimones* that were powerful spirits inferior to gods, benign or otherwise. Making good use of such authorities as Gernet and Detienne, he sees the term as always signifying the apportionment of destiny, even in the case of minor or personal daemons.

Hesiod may have made the former Golden Race, as *daimones*, ‘guardians of mortal men’, but T. wishes to identify Plato (particularly in *Symp. 203c-e*) as the

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formulator of the idea of daemons as mediators between gods and men, as well as the idea that our *nous* could be our *daemon*, as propounded in *Tim*. 90ab. This is the subject of the third chapter, along with a discussion of the *daimonion* of Socrates.

In chapter 4, T. embarks on a survey of the various developments in demonology that occurred throughout the later Platonist tradition, from the Old Academy (Philip of Opus—in the *Epinomis*—and Xenocrates, in particular), through such figures as Philo of Alexandria, Alcinous, Apuleius and Calcidius, to the Neoplatonists Iamblichus, Syrianus and Proclus. He shows how much of the doctrine was constructed on the basis of a scholastic exegesis of the Platonic dialogues, not having regard to the various literary modes and contexts in which Plato presents his material, but with the purpose, above all, of establishing a consistent Platonic doctrine. One major development at the outset, of course, was the *Epinomis’* reinterpretation of Plato’s apportionment of living creatures to the various elements at *Tim*. 39e-40a, inserting daemons into the intermediate levels of the cosmos in place of birds and fish—while also adding the aether as a fifth element beneath celestial fire! Xenocrates then proceeds to insert daemons into the middle of a proportionately graded universe, and to interpret many traditional religious practices as the propitiation of irascible or malevolent daemons, and we are on our way a comprehensive Platonist demonology.

In the later period (beginning with Philo, who in fact, as so often in other cases, constitutes useful evidence for Platonist doctrine on daemons), T. identifies a number of guiding tendencies that run through the sources: first, a renewed concern to people each level of the universe with beings proper to it, all those between the heavens and the earth being the domain of various classes of daemon; and a tension between ‘static’ and ‘dynamic’ theories of daemons, according to the former of which daemons have their fixed place between gods and mortals, while according to the latter, all (or at least some) of them are in fact souls of various degrees of purity on their way up or down, from or to embodiment.

All these features and more are characteristic of the daemonology of Plutarch, who gets a chapter (largely) to himself in Chapter 5, devoted to ‘Daemonology and Religion in Greco-Roman World’. Plutarch presents a wide variety of theories, helped by his use of myth, which enables him (like Plato before him) to entertain various theories that he does not necessarily wish to stand over entirely. T. focuses in particular on his relating of daemonology to the practices of civic religion, not least in relation to Delphi, of which Plutarch was a priest and to which he was devoted, but also his interest in the myth of Isis and in mystery religions generally—reminding us in the process of Plutarch’s extensive debts to Xenocrates in this connection. T. also brings in views of Maximus of Tyre, Apuleius, Porphyry, Iamblichus and Proclus, to broaden the base of his discussion. For Iamblichus, of
course, religion involves theurgy, and in that process knowing your daemons is of vital importance, if only for the purpose of avoiding them, and connecting directly with the gods!

The sixth chapter concerns the personal daemon, which is of course closely tied in with the identification of the daemon of Socrates, a subject on which there are important contributions from Plutarch, Apuleius, Plotinus (who has not so far figured much in the narrative), and lastly Iamblichus and Proclus, all of which are dealt with very thoroughly by T. There were a number of questions to settle, such as whether everyone has a guardian daemon, or only certain select sages, and then whether such a daemon is to be regarded as external, or really the highest part of the individual soul, as suggested in Tim. 90a-c—or, as it emerges in Plutarch (in the myth of the De Genio), both at once.

The book ends with a short Conclusion, summing up his findings. As he sees it, his work has followed three trajectories: (1) a study of the cosmological dimension of daemonology, and its relation with theories of providence; (2) the place of daemonology in the hermeneutics of religion; and (3) the concept of the personal daemon and its role in the definition of philosophy and the philosophic life. It seems to me that T. has achieved all these aims admirably, and that he has a fair claim now to be regarded as a major authority in this field.

John Dillon
Trinity College, Dublin
jmdillon@eircom.net