

KNIR Symposium: The Theology of a Pagan Philosopher. Religion and Philosophy in Plutarch

Participants:

Prof. Dr. Rainer Hirsch-Luipold (Theology, University of Bern)

Prof. Dr. Samuel Vollenweider (Theology and Philosophy, University of Zurich)

PD Dr. Fritz Heinrich (Religious Studies, University of Göttingen)

Dr. Fabio Tanga (Greek Language and Literature, University of Salerno)

Program:

11.7. Welcome Dinner

12.7.

10-12: *Samuel Vollenweider* (Zurich): Christ and Alexander the Great. Philippians 2 compared with Plutarch's *De Alexandri magni fortuna aut virtute*

14-15: *Fritz Heinrich* (Göttingen): Plutarch among the 'Religious Intellectuals'? Search for Clues in History of Religions

15-16: *Fabio Tanga* (Salerno): Plutarch on Dreams and Plutarch's Dream

17-19: *Rainer Hirsch-Luipold* (Bern/KNIR) The Theology of a Pagan Philosopher. An Outline of Plutarch's Thought on Religion and God

13.7. Excursion Rome

14.7. Departure

Flyer conference

Topic of this workshop is the religious philosophy of one of the most widely read and translated authors of all time. With his enticing literary style and his encyclopedic interests, Plutarch, the Greek intellectual and priest of Apollo in Delphi (ca. 45-120AD), inspired creative minds such as Shakespeare, Montaigne, Schiller, and Beethoven. Amyot's French translation of Plutarch's *Lives of Illustrious Greeks and Romans* had a similarly formative effect on the development of modern French as Luther's translation of the Bible had on modern German. Plutarch's works served as a main source not only for history and philosophy, but also for Egyptology, archaeology, musicology, not to mention the history of religion.

Plutarch's religious and theological interests are present throughout his enormous oeuvre of miscellaneous writings (traditionally called *Moralia*) and his *Vitae*, the corpus of biographies of famous Greeks and Romans.

At the conference, various parts of Plutarch's "theology" will be discussed in an interdisciplinary setting (Prof. Dr. Samuel Vollenweider/Zurich; PD Dr. Fritz Heinrich/Göttingen; Dr. Fabio Tanga/Rome). At the evening lecture, Prof. Hirsch-Luipold's project pursued during his research stay at the KNIR, which will lead to a monograph entitled "The Theology of a Platonist Philosopher. Religion and God in Plutarch" to be published next year with Cambridge University Press, will be presented and discussed.

Flyer evening lecture

With his enticing literary style and his encyclopedic interests, Plutarch of Chaeronea, the Greek intellectual and priest of Apollo in Delphi (ca. 45-120AD), inspired creative minds such as Shakespeare, Montaigne, Schiller, and Beethoven. Plutarch's miscellaneous philosophical works (*Moralia*) and his biographies of famous Greeks and Romans (*Vitae*) served as a main source not only for history and philosophy, but also for Egyptology, archaeology, musicology, not to mention the history of religion.

In the evening lecture, Prof. Hirsch-Luipold will give an introduction to and overview of the religio-philosophical system of this fascinating pagan-religious philosopher who wrote at the time when the New Testament was being composed. Part of the project pursued by Prof. Hirsch-Luipold during his research stay at the KNIR, this will be the outline of a monograph entitled "The Theology of a Platonist Philosopher. Religion and God in Plutarch" to be published next year with Cambridge University Press.

Short responses by specialist from theology, philosophy, history of religion and philology (Prof. Dr. Samuel Vollenweider/Zurich; PD Dr. Fritz Heinrich/Göttingen; Dr. Fabio Tanga/Rome) will lead into the discussion.

Project presentation on Website:

At the conference, we will discuss parts of the project I am pursuing during my research stay at the KNIR: a monograph entitled “The Theology of a Platonist Philosopher. Religion and God in Plutarch”, to be published next year with Cambridge University Press. Plutarch’s philosophical theology which has informed the Church Fathers and through them Western philosophical and ethical traditions, will be placed into perspective in an interdisciplinary discussion of specialist from history of religion and theology, classics and history.

Topic of this special edition of a KNIR-dialogue is the religious philosophy of one of the most widely read and translated authors of all time. With his enticing literary style and his encyclopedic interests, Plutarch, the Greek intellectual and priest of Apollo in Delphi, inspired creative minds such as Shakespeare, Montaigne, Schiller, and Beethoven are just a few examples of creative minds. Amyot’s French translation of Plutarch’s *Lives of Illustrious Greeks and Romans* had a similarly formative effect on the development of modern French as Luther’s translation of the Bible had on modern German. Plutarch’s works served as a main source not only for history and philosophy, but also for Egyptology, archaeology, musicology, not to mention the history of religion. The book will cover the whole range of Plutarch’s enormous œuvre spanning both the *Moralia* (with a focus on issues of religions and theology) and *Vitae* (especially Plutarch’s view of God’s involvement in history as expressed in some of his Roman lives (*Romulus, Numa, Cicero*)).

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