

**Tempering Heaven: A Commentary on the first
chapter of Marsilio Ficino's *De vita coelitus
comparanda***

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Introduction

For the Neoplatonists the commentary form was their major vehicle of teaching and a central part of their work. It arose in the schools of philosophy from the reading of texts and would sometimes be taken up by subsequent interpreters and used in different contexts.¹ Ficino himself wrote several, particularly on Plato's dialogues, and I have drawn a good deal on his *Phaedrus* and *Symposium* commentaries for my own commentary.² I originally proposed to write a commentary on the whole of *Dvcc* but soon realised this would be impossible and have restricted it to the first chapter.³ This chapter lays out much of what Ficino will develop in subsequent chapters, and I have relied a great deal on this later material for my commentary. I have included the whole text of the first chapter as an appendix.⁴

The literature that focuses exclusively on *Dvcc* is not very large although it features strongly in quite a few books and articles, particularly those that discuss Ficino's astrology. Firstly, I should say that Caske and Clarke's introduction and notes in their translation and critical edition provide a wealth of information on Ficino's sources and influences.⁵ Thomas Moore's *The Planets Within* is the only book I am aware of that is devoted solely to *Dvcc*; it places the work within an archetypal psychology perspective.⁶ Melissa Meriam Bullard's article in the *Renaissance Quarterly* comes from a similar standpoint.⁷ Works that are often cited in connection with it are D.P. Walker's *Spiritual and Demonic Magic: from Ficino to Campanella*, which places *Dvcc* within a historical perspective,⁸ Eugenio Garin's *Astrology in the Renaissance: The Zodiac of Life* which is useful for showing its connections with the *Picatrix*;⁹ and Frances Yates' *Gordiano Bruno and the Hermetic Tradition* which stresses the importance of the hermetic tradition on *Dvcc*, particularly the hermetic text *Asclepius*.¹⁰ Brian Copenhaver's article in the *Renaissance Quarterly* discusses *Dvcc* within the context of scholastic philosophy and renaissance magic.¹¹ More recent authors who are particularly concerned with Ficino's astrology are Angela Voss, whose book in the Western Esoteric Masters Series has selected writings on Ficino, including *Dvcc*, with a brief but enlightening overview of the whole book.¹² The same author's *The Power of a Melancholy Humour*¹³ and *The Astrology of Marsilio Ficino*¹⁴ both place the astrology in *Dvcc* within a divinatory perspective. Ms Voss has kindly given me access to a forthcoming paper *Diligence and Divine Chance*

which although primarily focusing on chapter XXI discusses it within the context of the whole of *Dvcc*.¹⁵ Finally, the first chapter of Geoffrey Cornelius' *The Moment of Astrology* discusses the type of astrology endorsed by Ficino in *Dvcc*, and in the last chapter his importance for what Cornelius calls "the hermeneutic turn in Renaissance astrology."¹⁶

The Translation of *De vita coelitus comparanda*

Marsilio Ficino (1433-1499) finished writing his *Three Books on Life* in 1489. There are to date two translations into English. Charles Boer's translation appeared in 1980. This has been criticised by Michael J. B. Allen for its use of the "wretched" Basel, 1576, *Opera omnia* text; its inaccurate translation at several points, particularly of *Dvcc*, and unhelpful glossary and lack of notes, with little information on historical figures such as Pythagoras, Plato and Socrates etc.¹⁷ There is also no Latin text, although it is not supposed to be a scholarly translation. The critical edition and translation of the three books by Carol V. Kaske and John R. Clark appeared in 1989. The translators refer to the Boer translation and the criticisms of Allen, who said it made "the production of a good scholarly edition and translation even more imperative."¹⁸ Notwithstanding the criticisms made of Boer, I have occasionally consulted his translation. I have also referred to Thomas Moore's book, as he translates several important passages.

The Translation of the Title of the Book: *De Vita Coelitus Comparanda*

Although the Charles Boer translation of *Dvcc* has been much criticised, when it comes to the actual title, it seems, at first glance, to be a more fitting one than Caske and Clarke's. The latter translate *comparanda* as "obtaining," which is certainly one of its meanings, but probably not the most usual one. It literally means "to take together with," as can be seen in the English word compare, so a translation that emphasises the idea of matching or agreeing does seem more appropriate. Boer renders the title as 'making your life agree with the heavens,'¹⁹ a translation that Thomas Moore endorses with his 'how life should be arranged according to the heavens.'²⁰ Angela Voss translates it in a similar vein as 'on fitting your life to the heavens.'²¹ On the face of it, then, these seem more apt than Caske and Clarke's translation of 'on obtaining life from the heavens.'²² However, it is worth exploring

Caske and Clarke's translation, especially as their work has the "authority" of being a critical edition and is similar to one Frances Yates' proffers as a possible translation, 'on capturing the life of the stars.'²³

We should first of all step back to look at the way the title of the book as a whole has been translated, and here we find subtle differences. This may be important because in the end the way *vita*, "life," is understood in this context is vital for the appropriate translation of *Dvcc. De vita libri tres* itself has been translated as *Three Books on Life* by Caske and Clarke; as *The Book of Life* by Boer, and *Three Books about Life* by Moore.²⁴ We may not be able to make much of these differences but the life referred to in the first two books, *De vita sana* and *De vita longa*, concern a "healthy life" and a "long life." Caske and Clarke's translation seems to presume it concerns obtaining a universal substance called "life" from the heavens. In the *Proemium* Ficino gives an explanation of the title. He says that when the ancient philosophers "examined the powers (*vires*) of the heavens and the natures of things below" they judged that this examination would be in vain if this knowledge did not bring them life and happiness.²⁵ Their examination was primarily concerned with "*ad vitam sibi coelitus comparandam*."²⁶ They attained good health and long life through this knowledge. Since the work as a whole is primarily a medical text, understanding the title as drawing in the life-giving power of the cosmos, makes it sound like a western version of Chinese qigong.²⁷ There is a great deal of attraction to understanding the text in this way but the Latin *vita* applies particularly to life as a period of time, and not to life as a substance (whether material or immaterial) that can be drawn or extracted from somewhere.²⁸ There is, however, another reason for taking this translation seriously and that is because Ficino himself uses the term *drawing down* to describe the contents of the book. In the *Proemium*, dated 10th July, 1489, and addressed to the King of Hungary, he says that he has:

...recently composed a commentary...on the book of Plotinus which discusses drawing favour down from the heavens. With all this in mind, I have just decided to extract that one (with the approval of Lorenzo himself) and dedicate especially to your Majesty.²⁹

Ficino completed his translation of Plotinus (204-270 C.E.) on 16th January 1486.³⁰ He then began work on a commentary: "What remains is to reconsider the words and to clarify the often obscure meaning with some commentaries."³¹ Evidently the

Plotinus work he is referring to here is *Enneads* IV.3.11, as *Dvcc* is preserved as a commentary on just that text in one manuscript.³² However, “drawing down favour” from the heavens is quite different from “obtaining life,” from them, so if this was part of the reasoning for their translation I do not think it is justified. There is the idea though in Ficino of drinking in the spirit of the world. And at the beginning of chapter XI he tells us why he is going into so much detail:

All these discussions are for this purpose, that through the rays of the stars opportunely received, our spirit properly prepared and purged through natural things may receive the most from the spirit of the life of the world.³³

Spiritus is a complex topic, with a long history, which I will treat as it arises in the commentary, but I will say a few words here on its connection with the title. Ficino was the inheritor of Plato’s idea of the world as a living animal which lives and breathes and which also has a spirit that we can absorb: “This is absorbed by man in particular through his own spirit which is by its own nature similar to it, especially if it is made more akin to it by art, that is, if it becomes in the highest degree celestial.”³⁴ The idea of spirit, *pneuma* has been identified by Graeme Tobyn with Chinese *chi* and Indian *prana*, and so obtaining more of this is something that is readily understandable, in the way that we can do the exercises of *qigong* or *yoga* to increase our *chi* or *prana*.³⁵ We can also gain *chi* or *prana* through food and here we do have a parallel with obtaining *spirit* through herbs and medicines, although there are no specific exercises to obtain it.³⁶ In the context of astrology however, and particularly the type of astrology discussed here by Ficino, the translations of Boer, Moore and Voss do seem more apt. There is support for the translation of *comparanda* as “matching” in the *Picatrix (Ghayat Al-Hakim)*, a book which Ficino is said to have drawn on for *Dvcc*, which describes the “art of matching.”³⁷ It is the art “by which similarity and difference can be recognized.” It is “necessary for learning the similarities between celestial and earthly bodies and which of the high bodies’ behaviour is similar to which of those on earth. How can anyone match between things that are similar if he does not command that knowledge?”³⁸

I have raised the issue of the meaning of the title of the book enough to show the difficulties; the most appropriate translation may become clearer once the commentary has been completed.

The Chapter Title

We can see from the title itself that the first chapter originally formed part of Ficino's commentary on Plotinus. In fact, the title of the book says that it was written by Marsilio Ficino, "which he composed among his commentaries on Plotinus." Between 1484 and January 1486 Ficino translated the whole of the *Enneads*, and immediately began a commentary on it.³⁹ He finished the commentary in 1490, having taken out the part that he called *De vita coelitus comparanda* for the *Three Books on Life*. In 1492 he published the commentary, together with his translation, in Florence. Ficino's regard for Plotinus, whom he considered to be the foremost Platonist, is evident in this letter outlining what he would call the ancient theology:⁴⁰

Therefore, because divine Providence wills to recall all people to herself in a wonderful way according to their individual natures, it happened that a certain holy philosophy was born in time past both among the Persians under Zoroaster and among the Egyptians under Hermes, her sound true to herself in both peoples. She was subsequently nurtured among the Thracians, under Orpheus and Aglaophemus, and soon grew to maturity, under Pythagoras, among the peoples of Greece and Italy. But it was by the divine Plato in Athens that she was finally brought to perfection.

However, the ancient tradition of theologians was to shroud the divine mysteries in the numbers and forms of mathematics as well as in the images of poetry. At length Plotinus stripped Theology of these coverings, and, as Porphyry and Proclus bear witness, he was the first and only one to penetrate, by divine inspiration, the secrets of the ancients.⁴¹

Ficino considered that divine providence had decreed that he should restore those teachings, and that such a task was signified in his horoscope.⁴²

In the very last chapter of *Dvcc* he says that we should not digress too far from what we originally started to do, i.e. interpret Plotinus.⁴³ It is not clear exactly when he "digressed," and indeed, how much of the book can be attributed to Plotinus. Plotinus nowhere discusses the attributes of the planets in so much detail as Ficino does and, as far as I am aware, never discusses electional astrology. Of course, Ficino is writing a commentary and is free to bring out the latent meaning of the text as he sees it. I will leave it to the scholars how far this can be considered a commentary on Plotinus and if so, what texts it is a commentary on.⁴⁴ I would concur, though, with the view that the first chapter at least refers to *Enneads* IV.3.11.⁴⁵ It is interesting to consider whether the title of the first chapter might be a fuller description of what Ficino intended the book to be as a whole, whether he carried out his intention or not. If we

compare this title with the first sentence of *Enneads* IV.3.11 there are striking similarities. Plotinus tells us that temples and statues were constructed by “the wise men of old” in a way that was sympathetic to soul, in the wish that the gods would appear in them. The “well-adapted” (*accommodatis*) physical forms that Ficino is referring to in his title, are temples and statues in Plotinus. *Accommodatus*, can mean “fit,” “suitable” or “appropriate” as well as “adapted” or “proper.”⁴⁶ This word appears in Chapter II, where Ficino says that the “the gifts of the celestials” can be captured “provided each accommodates himself (*se accommodet*) to that gift in particular to which he is particularly subject.”⁴⁷

Lines 1-12⁴⁸

Ficino describes here, in abbreviated form, the Neoplatonic universe or cosmos (*mundus*). Intellect, Soul and Body are three “hypostases” that are always present in any particular formulation of this cosmos.⁴⁹ The Neoplatonists were the first philosophers to conceive of the cosmos as a hierarchy of Being, incorporating all entities both corporeal and incorporeal.⁵⁰ For Plotinus, the first Neoplatonist to develop such a “gradation of Being,”⁵¹ the three primary hypostases are the One, Intellect and Soul.⁵² The One is also understood by him to be the Good,⁵³ Plato’s highest Idea,⁵⁴ an identification that goes back to Aristotle and is followed by all subsequent philosophers.⁵⁵ Ficino says in his *Philebus* commentary that “above the body is the soul, above the soul the intellect, above this the one itself and the good.”⁵⁶ For Ficino the Good is identified with God: “Therefore nothing exists above goodness which can be loved...It is the one, true, and good God.”⁵⁷ Ficino does not mention the One until line 61; here he is more concerned with showing the nature of Soul, and its intermediary position between Intellect and Body.

Intellect is the translation of the Latin *intellectus*. In Plotinus’ *Enneads*, the Greek word *nous* is regular translated as Intellect.⁵⁸ Ficino will also use the word *mens* when referring to the Intellect. In his *Philebus* commentary he gives this statement concerning the connection of Intellect, Soul and Body that is entirely in accord with the one in *Dvcc*:

Above the soul is the intelligence (*mens*). It is both an incorporeal essence and is entirely cut off from the body, so it has nothing in common with the body.

The intelligence stays the same in essence and operation; the body changes in both; the soul stays the same in essence but changes in operation. The intelligence is completely in eternity; the body is in time; the soul is in both.⁵⁹

The idea of *nous* as a metaphysical entity can be traced to Anaxagoras (500-428 B.C.E), who attributed the creation of the world to *Nous*.⁶⁰ Socrates in the *Phaedo* relates the story of how as a young man he was eager to learn of why things came into being and passed away⁶¹ but having investigated he decided that he was just not fitted for this kind of search.⁶² Then one day:

...I heard a man reading from a book, as he said, by Anaxagoras, that it is the mind (*nous*) that arranges all things. I was pleased with this theory of cause, and it seemed to me to be somehow right and that the mind should be the cause of all things.⁶³

But Socrates quickly became disillusioned and saw that “the man made no use of intelligence (*nous*), and did not assign any real causes for the ordering of things, but mentioned air and ether and water and many other absurdities.”⁶⁴ In the *Sophist*, the Eleatic Stranger tells Theaetetus that those who “ever undertook a critical definition of the number and nature of realities” talk to us like we are children, telling us stories.⁶⁵ He is referring to the various theories of the philosophers concerning the substance underlying all things. The number and type of underlying substances varied according to each philosopher, so we hear that Thales (c. 624-546 B.C.E.) considered water to be “the substance upon which everything is made and consists.”⁶⁶ Plato undertakes a critique of the theories of previous philosophers, who “insofar as they dealt with *Being*, told stories about *beings*, said what happened to beings.”⁶⁷ In the earlier dialogue the *Phaedo*, Plato says the philosophers are “groping in the dark,” when they fail to see that “a cause is one thing, and the thing without which the cause could never be a cause is quite another thing.”⁶⁸ One man considers that the earth stays below the heavens by a vortex, or thinks it is supported by a foundation of air but “gives no thought to the good, which must embrace and hold everything together.”⁶⁹ The *Phaedo* is generally considered to be a product of Plato’s “middle period” (about 370 B.C.E.),⁷⁰ the same period as the *Republic*, the dialogue where the idea of the good is articulated. The reference here clearly indicates the “Good” as the ultimate substance (hypostasis).

Plato’s critique of the ancient philosophers in the *Sophist* was ultimately aimed at Parmenides (c. 540-470 B.C.E.), who said:

One path only is left for us to speak of, namely, that *It is*. In it are very many tokens that what is, is uncreated and indestructible, alone, complete, immovable and without end. Nor was it ever, nor will it be; for now *it is*, all at once, a continuous one.⁷¹

For Plato, Parmenides is the first philosopher to move in an ontological dimension, for he doesn't posit *beings* like his predecessors but Being.⁷² In the *Timaeus*, right at the beginning of his exposition of the creation of the universe, Timaeus distinguishes that which always *is* from that which is always being generated and never *is*.⁷³ It is the fundamental distinction that must be made in any discourse on the All (*pan*).⁷⁴ Plotinus may be drawing on both Parmenides and Plato when he describes the Intellect as all things:

It has therefore everything at rest in the same place, and it only is, and its "is" is for ever, and there is no place for the future for then too it is—or for the past—for nothing there has passed away—but all things remain stationary for ever...⁷⁵

Heaven or as Plato says, "the whole Heaven, or Cosmos, or if there is any other name which it specially prefers," has a body and is tangible and visible, and therefore must have come into existence.⁷⁶ The creator of anything that comes into existence needs a model from which to create. If they keep their gaze on that which is eternal, on that which is uniform they will necessarily bring into being something that is beautiful. If they use a created model it will not be beautiful.⁷⁷ Since the Cosmos is "the fairest of all that has come into existence," it is plain that the *demiourgos* fixed his gaze on that which is eternal. This Cosmos is conceived as a Living Creature, made in the image of:

...that Living Creature of which all other living creatures, severally and generically, are portions. For that Living Creature embraces and contains within itself all the intelligible (*noēta*) Living Creatures, just as this Universe (*kosmos*) contains us and all the other visible living creatures that have been fashioned.⁷⁸

If the cosmos is fashioned as a Living Creature in the image of the eternal, the eternal itself must also be a Living Creature but one that is "all-perfect."⁷⁹ So the cosmos is "a movable image of Eternity."⁸⁰ It was made "smooth and even and equal on all sides from the centre, a whole and perfect body compounded of perfect bodies."⁸¹ Eternity contains all the intelligible (*noēta*) Living Creatures.

In the *Enneads* treatise, *On the Essence of the Soul*, Plotinus says that Intellect (*nous*) is the best part of the intelligible world (*kosmos*), the world of true being.⁸² The intelligible world is the world of eternity, and intellect is all together and indivisible. Ficino at several points in his *Phaedrus* commentary calls the intellect the prime intellect.⁸³ This is possibly to differentiate it from the human intellect that, as we shall see below, he identifies with the charioteer.⁸⁴ In his commentary on the *Symposium* he calls the Intellect, the Angelic Mind (*mens angelica*):

For the Platonists there are three worlds...First of all is God, the author of everything, who we say is the Good itself. He created first the Angelic Mind, then the Soul of this World as Plato would have it, and last, the Body of the World.⁸⁵

The identification of the Neoplatonic Mind with the Angel was part of the medieval tradition inherited by Ficino.⁸⁶ So, in his *Platonic Theology* he adapts a five-fold structure from Proclus into God, Angel, Soul, Quality and Body.⁸⁷ The complete identification of Angel with Mind is evident here, with God in the place of the Neoplatonic One or Good. Proclus himself, in his *Timaeus* Commentary, places the Good above the demiurge as his object of desire.⁸⁸ Michael J.B.Allen has pointed out that “determining Ficino’s final metaphysical position...is itself a complex matter.”⁸⁹ God though, the highest realm, is not a world (*mundus*) because world means *ornamentum*,⁹⁰ composed of many, which is a translation of the Greek *kosmos*.⁹¹ And this highest realm “ought to be perfectly simple,” and “the beginning and end of all the worlds.”⁹²

As for Soul, Ficino says that Plato thought that a certain soul, the *anima mundi*, the World-Soul, rules and moves the “the whole machinery of this world.” The body of the world, whose parts are the bodies of living things, is composed of the four elements.⁹³ Plato, in the *Timaeus*, tells us that soul was formed in the following manner:

Midway between the Being (*ousia*) which is indivisible and remains always the same and the Being which is transient and divisible in bodies, He blended a third form of Being compounded out of the twain, that is to say, out of the Same and the Other; and in like manner He compounded it midway between that one of them which is indivisible and that one which is divisible in bodies.⁹⁴

Soul is formed of both that which is same and indivisible and that which is divisible in bodies. Ficino identifies the soul as the Primum Mobile, the first mover, the ninth

sphere in Dante's *Paradiso*, occupied by angels, and the one immediately preceding the ultimate sphere, the *Empyrean*. It is moved by love:

This heaven has no other where than this:
the mind of God, in which are kindled both
the love that turns it and the force it rains.⁹⁵

After constructing the Soul, the demiurge:

...fabricated within it all the Corporeal, and uniting them centre to centre He made them fit together. And the Soul, being woven throughout the Heaven every way from the centre to the extremity, and enveloping it in a circle from without...⁹⁶

The Soul as the *Primum Mobile* surrounds the heavens of the fixed stars, the seven planetary heavens, the spheres of fire, air and water with Earth at the centre, "enveloping it in a circle from without," and extends all the way through "from the centre to the extremity," and is the originator of the movement of these spheres. Soul is everywhere, so stars and daemons also have souls. In his *Platonic Theology*, Ficino says there are three levels of rational souls: the world soul, the souls of the spheres, and the souls of living creatures contained within the individual spheres.⁹⁷ Man, living in the sphere of Earth, is at the lower end of the scale, animals having irrational souls.⁹⁸ Daemons, considered as living creatures, can occupy the spheres of both fire and air, although the matter is quite complicated.⁹⁹

In an important passage, Plato tells us why the demiurge created "Becoming and the All (*pan*)."¹⁰⁰ He did not create the visible but took it over and "seeing that it was not in a state of rest (*hēsychia*)," he "brought it into order out of disorder."¹⁰¹ Being good he could not but perform actions that were most fair, and nothing was fairer:

...than the rational (*nous*); and further, that reason cannot possibly belong to any apart from Soul. So because of this reflection He constructed reason (*nous*) within soul and soul within body as He fashioned the All, so that the work He was executing might be of its nature most fair and most good.¹⁰²

Lines 13-31

The Divine Mind is a translation of *mens divina*, and is sometimes translated as the divine intelligence.¹⁰³ Although Ficino has used two different words, *intellectus* and *mens*, both refer to *nous*.¹⁰⁴ However, *intellectus* would appear to refer only to *divina mens* while *mens* can, depending on the context, refer to the Intellect or to human

intelligence. The use of capital letters by translators of Platonic texts are presumably to distinguish human intellect, soul and body from the divine intellect, World-soul and World-body but this distinction is not adhered to by all authors and can create confusion for the reader. And, of course, there is no such distinction in the Greek and Latin texts. Unfortunately, it is something that I have not always been able to avoid myself. The distinction between heavenly and human *nous* is evident in the opening lines of the *Corpus Hermeticum*, the first text that Ficino translated for Cosimo de' Medici,¹⁰⁵ where Hermes is addressed by Poimandres, “the *Nous* of the Supreme,” and told to hold in his *nous* “all that you wish to learn and I will teach you.”¹⁰⁶ The *nous* of the supreme is here differentiated from human *nous*, and in his *Platonic Theology* he follows this distinction: “...mind in the soul is part of the soul but also in some way part of the mind, of the higher mind, which is totally and only mind.”¹⁰⁷ In his *Philebus* commentary, he identifies *mens* with wisdom (*sapientia*) and knowledge (*scientia*).¹⁰⁸ He distinguishes them in the following way:

Now the intelligence (*mens*) is the countenance looking back towards the truth and it has two eyes—a right and a left. The right eye gazes at the truth of those things that are inside the divine intelligence (*divina mens*), the left eye at those things that derive from it. The former glance is wisdom, the latter knowledge.¹⁰⁹

The intelligence, intellect, *mens* in Latin, *nous* in Greek, is the faculty with which we are able to see the Ideas. Plato characterizes the philosopher as the person who genuinely seeks knowledge and wisdom:

He is the kind of person who in his very essence is eager for beings as such... and does not weaken in his desire [□□□□], his innermost drive, till he has *grasped* the what-being of each thing as it is...and does this with the faculty of soul fitted to do so, that is, the faculty having the same source as the *ἰδέα*.¹¹⁰

The Ideas are introduced in the *Timaeus* when Timaeus, after his description of the generation of the planets, says that the World still did not fully resemble the “intelligible Living Creature.”¹¹¹ It did not have the full range of living creatures.

These living creatures exist as Ideas in the Divine Mind:

So this part of the work which was still undone He completed by moulding it after the nature of the Model. According, then, as Reason (*nous*) perceives Forms (*ideas*) existing in the Absolute Living Creature, such and so many as exist therein did He deem that this World also should possess.¹¹²

Intelligence, *nous* or *mens*, is able to perceive the forms existing in the Divine Mind; such a “gaze” Ficino calls *sapientia*, wisdom, *sophos* in Greek. In his *Symposium* commentary he says that the Divine or Angelic Mind, when it was created, being then “formless and dark,” turned toward God out of desire:

When it turned toward God, it was illuminated by the glory of God Himself. In the glow of His radiance, its own passion was set ablaze. When its whole passion was kindled, it drew close to God, and in cleaving to Him, assumed form. For God, who is omnipotent, created in the Angelic Mind, as it cleaved to Him, the forms of all things to be created.¹¹³

This differs from the description in *Dvcc* where the Intellect, following Plotinus, is without affect.¹¹⁴ Although in the *Platonic Theology*, as we saw, Ficino says there is “nothing above goodness that can be loved,” which implies that love exists at the level of the Angel or Mind.¹¹⁵ In *Dvcc* the World-Soul moves toward the Intellect out of passion (*affectus*), here in the commentary on the *Symposium*, as in the *Platonic Theology*, he describes the movement as love:

Now in the same way that the Angelic Mind, just born and formless, was turned by love (*amor*) toward God and received from Him its form, so also the World-Soul turned toward the Mind and toward God, from whom it was born. And, although it was at first formless and a chaos, it was directed by love toward the Angelic Mind, and of forms received from the Mind became a world.¹¹⁶

In chapters 16-20 of his *Philebus* commentary, Ficino discusses the Ideas and the doubts concerning them. He refers us to the *Phaedo* where he says, “Plato proves the Ideas must exist.”¹¹⁷ He is possibly referring to the conversation where Socrates asks Simmias if there is such a thing as equality in the abstract, and when Simmias replies yes, asks where “did we derive knowledge of it?”¹¹⁸ If we can know that some things fall short of being equal we must already have knowledge of what equality is.¹¹⁹ The process of learning is one where through using the senses we recollect what we previously already knew.¹²⁰ This recollection is the primary relation to beings: It is “a re-seeing of what our soul originally saw when travelling with a god.”¹²¹ Socrates, in the *Phaedrus*, likens the soul to a charioteer and a pair of winged horses.¹²² In the case of the gods the horses are well-matched¹²³ but for other souls one horse is noble and the other the opposite.¹²⁴ The chariots of the gods take them easily to the “top of the vault of heaven,” where they pass outside onto its surface and are carried round by its revolution and able to see the things of that region:¹²⁵

In the revolution it beholds absolute justice, temperance, and knowledge, not such knowledge as has a beginning and varies as it is associated with one or another of the things we call realities, but that which abides in the real eternal absolute; and in the that same way it beholds and fees upon the other eternal verities...¹²⁶

Of the other souls, who follow in the train of one of the gods, some, those who are most like the god, are able to raise the head of the charioteer into that region above the heaven, and the revolution carries them round, although they are only able to see some of the “eternal verities.”¹²⁷ This region above the heavenly vault is only visible to *nous*, “the pilot of the soul.”¹²⁸ Ficino interprets the charioteer’s head as the power ruling over the intellect; the charioteer, the power that unites him to the “universe’s principle.”¹²⁹ Only those souls that have seen those things that are above the vault of heaven can take on human form:

For the soul which has never seen the truth can never pass into human form. For a human being must understand a general conception formed by collecting into a unity by means of reason (*logismos*) the many perceptions of the senses; and this is a recollection of those things which our soul once beheld, when it journeyed with God and, lifting its vision above the things which we now say exist, rose up into real being.¹³⁰

There are as many seminal reasons in the World-Soul as there are Ideas in the Divine Mind. The World-Soul possesses these seminal reasons “by divine power.” The divine is identified by Ficino, as we have seen, as the Intellect. The seminal reasons, *logoi spermatikoi* in Greek, are originally a Stoic concept, but also play a major role in Plotinus.¹³¹ It explains for him how the intelligible world, the world of true being, is connected with the world of generation and corruption.¹³² In the fifth book of the *Enneads*, Plotinus criticizes the Stoic conception of the *logoi*.¹³³ He alludes to the demiurge in the *Timaeus*, ‘the maker of this All,’ in saying that the objects of his thought will not be impressions (*typous*) from other things but:

...archetypes (*archetypa*) and primary and the substance of Intellect. But if they are going to say that rational forming principles (*logoi*) are enough, they must clearly be eternal; but if they are eternal and not subject to affections, they must be in Intellect, and in an intellect of this kind, one which is prior to condition and nature and soul: for these are potential.¹³⁴

A living creature must necessarily come into being if its rational forming principle (*logos*) exists and matter receives the seminal forming principle (*logos spermatikos*), since there is nothing to hinder it.¹³⁵ These formative principles flow out from Intellect:

So Intellect, by giving something of itself to matter, made all things in unperturbed quietness; this something of itself is the rational formative principle flowing from Intellect. For that which flows from Intellect is formative principle, and it flows out always, as long as Intellect is present among realities.¹³⁶

This cosmos is a mixture of rational principle and matter, and Soul presides over the mixture.¹³⁷ Plotinus seems to be referring to the passage from the *Timaeus* quoted earlier, where the demiurge makes Soul out of a mixture of the Same and the Different.¹³⁸ In the text commonly identified as the one Ficino is commenting on, *Enneads* IV.3.11, Plotinus links the *logoi* with the Ideas in discussing why the ancient wise men made statues and temples:

Yes, the nature of the All, too, made all things skilfully in imitation of the [intelligible] realities of which it had the rational principles, and when each thing in this way had become a rational principle in matter, shaped according to that which was before matter, it linked it with that god in conformity with whom it came into being and to whom the soul looked and whom it had in its making. For it was certainly not possible for the thing made to be without a share in the god, nor again for the god to come down to the thing made.¹³⁹

In IV.3.10, the chapter immediately before, Plotinus explains the power of soul to set things in order:

It was given ordered beauty according to a formative rational principle (*logos*), since the soul has potentially in it, and throughout the whole of it, the power to set in order according to rational principles (*logoi*); just as the formative rational principles in seeds mould and shape living beings like little ordered universes. For whatever comes into contact with soul is made as the essential nature of soul is in a state to make it...¹⁴⁰

Soul has in itself the *logoi* of all the shapes (*morphe*) of everything in the Cosmos, and as the carer of all things soulless¹⁴¹ gives them life, and all together they have order and are beautiful, and produced without hindrance or labour.¹⁴² What soul gives to body is an image of the rational principle (*logoi*) it has, “an image of life.”¹⁴³

The same numbers of “species” are fashioned in matter as Ideas in the Divine Mind. Species is a translation of the Latin *species*, which has the same meaning as the Greek *idea*, “a seeing, sight, look, view.”¹⁴⁴ And although Ficino does use it the sense of the species of a genus, it is clear from the above quotations that it also means things that have this common “look,” or have common attributes.¹⁴⁵

At the very end of the last chapter of *Dvcc*, Ficino traces the idea of the seminal reasons back to Hermes and Plotinus who he says is in agreement with him. The forms of natural things are generated by the Anima Mundi through the seminal reasons, implanted in her by the divine:

These reasons he even calls gods, since they are never cut off from the Ideas of the Supreme Mind. He thinks, therefore, that through such seminal reasons the Anima Mundi can easily apply herself to materials since she has formed them to begin with through these same seminal reasons...¹⁴⁶

Intellect, as we have seen, is absolutely motionless, “without affect,” so it cannot be attracted. Therefore, it cannot be those divinities that are “wholly separate from matter” that are being attracted. The divinities wholly separate from matter are what Ficino calls supercelestial¹⁴⁷ or supramundane or supermundane (the Latin is *supramundanus*) in contrast to the mundane gods.¹⁴⁸ In his commentary on the *Symposium*, Ficino has a chapter called *On the Souls of the Spheres and the Daemons*.¹⁴⁹ He says that there are twelve spheres in the cosmos, the eight spheres of seven planets and fixed stars in the heavens, and the four elements, fire, air, water and earth, under the heavens, and since they are all different in “appearance, movements, and property,” there will accordingly be twelve souls. The planets, the so-called mundane or celestial gods, are the “foot-followers” of the Angelic Mind. Here, the supramundane gods are identified with the angels; an identification which Allen says is customary with Ficino.¹⁵⁰ Plotinus says the visible gods correspond to the supramundane, or as he says the “intelligible” gods, and depend upon them “like the radiance (*aiglē*) around every star.”¹⁵¹ In the following chapter of his *Symposium* commentary, Ficino explains how gifts are given by god to man through the medium of the gods and daemons:

To the ideas of all things which the divine Mind contains, the gods following them are said to be subordinate, and to the gifts of the gods, the daemons. For, to go from higher to the lowest level, they all go through a mediary in such a way that the ideas, which are the concepts of the divine Mind, distribute their gifts to man through the medium of the gods and daemons. Among these gifts, seven are pre-eminent: nicety of observation (*contemplationis* acumen), ability to govern, conviction (*animositas*), clarity of sense perception, ardour of love, keenness of insight, and fecundity of generation.

God first contains the capacity for these gifts in Himself. Then to the seven gods who move the seven planets, and whom we call Angels, He distributes the power of these gifts so that each of the gods takes one in preference to the other [according to the properties of his own nature]. They in turn grant them to the seven kinds of subservient daemons, each one especially to his own, and these then hand them on to men.¹⁵²

The daemons act as the intermediaries between gods (conceived in this instance as Angels) and men. Ficino is referring to Diotima's speech in the *Symposium* where Eros is said to be a "great *daemon*."¹⁵³ Through the daemonic realm (*daimonion*) are conveyed "all divination and priestcraft concerning sacrifice and ritual and incantations, and all soothsaying and sorcery."¹⁵⁴ The *daimonion* is the medium through which men converse with gods and gods with men. Whoever has skill (*sophos*) in these practices is a *daimonios* man.¹⁵⁵

Ficino says that "although the daemons bestow the capacity for these virtues on all men, they do so especially to those at whose conception and birth they are strongest in the disposition of the heavens."¹⁵⁶

If we gather together things that symbolize the same Idea we can draw into the material a particular gift from that Idea. It will also need to be suitably adapted. The translation of *opportune paratam* as "suitably adapted," though correct, does not bring out the temporal dimension of this "preparation." *Opportune* also means "well-timed," "in season," "seasonable," and is the equivalent of the Greek *kairos* or *eukairos*, timely.¹⁵⁷ When we take an opportunity, we are taking advantage of a window through which we can get things done. Electional astrology is in part the art of discovering and using these windows of opportunity.

The "living stars" from which we can attract gifts are, as Ficino's subsequent discussion will show, mainly the planets. However, the fixed stars, whose nature is said to be like that of one or other of the planets, or a combination of two, can also be attracted.¹⁵⁸ It is not so much that the fixed stars are harder to attract but that astrologers are more used to working with the planets. In his *Phaedrus* commentary Ficino says that our soul can:

...in the presence of any star live the life conformable to that star. Any planet governs the whole, but with its own property: Jupiter gives something Jovian to all, the Sun something Solarian, and the rest likewise. The absolute universal providence alone gives everything to all. So, in devoting itself to Jupiter or the Sun, our soul seems to receive, in a way, a providence like the whole's and like the world-soul's; when, that is, it has been completely restored to the amplitude of its reasons, powers and notions.¹⁵⁹

To "to live the life conformable to that star," is to "inhabit heaven along with the universal souls of the celestial beings."¹⁶⁰ We saw that the "well-matched" horses of

the gods took them to the top of the heavenly vault and they were able to stand on top of the cosmos and be taken round by the revolution. Those charioteers who were able to push their heads above the vault of heaven, were able to see, if dimly, the “eternal verities.” By following in the train of the god, that is, by undertaking the activities associated with it, we can, perhaps, re-grow our wings and rise up through the heavenly spheres.¹⁶¹

The “divine lures” or baits in material form (*illices*) would seem to be similar, if not the same, as the *sunthemata* of Iamblichus.¹⁶² Iamblichus appears to use the Greek word *sunthemata* interchangeably with *sumbola*,¹⁶³ and both words mean “symbols” but I will stick with the former term here.¹⁶⁴ They would be used in theurgy to form a receptacle in which the gods could dwell.¹⁶⁵ Without these *sunthemata* there is no possibility of participating in the existence of the gods. These material baits can take the form of “a physical object such as a plant, gem, bone, stone, herb or type of incense or another material object, linked with a specific deity through *sympatheia*, it could also be a verbal utterance, a musical composition, a ritual or a text.”¹⁶⁶

However, from the standpoint of theurgical practice the planets themselves should be viewed as *sunthemata*, being the form taken by the Olympian gods within the heavenly spheres.¹⁶⁷ In Greek astrology the planets were thought of as the “stars” of the gods.¹⁶⁸ The horoscope, containing as it does the planetary *sunthemata* in the form of glyphs, might itself be considered as a “divine lure,” a receptacle for the gods to dwell. The planetary gods are the highest *sunthemata* in what the Ficino, following the Neoplatonists, calls “chains of being.”¹⁶⁹ Certain “things of appearance” are in sympathy with each other and with “the invisible powers.” They form a chain of being leading right up to the god who leads them.¹⁷⁰ The *sunthemata* of each chain are held together by their “resemblances, affinities, and special sympathies... a common essence, distributed among several beings.”¹⁷¹ Sympathy (*sympatheia*) is “a reciprocal and simultaneous attraction between the manifest being and his celestial prince.”¹⁷² Ficino implicitly refers to this chain or “series” when he gives a list of what “things” come under a particular planet. He will usually start with the lowest members of the chain, the gems and metals; then will come flowers, herbs and spices, followed by animals, and finally types of men.¹⁷³

Ficino says that Soul turns to both intellect and body by desire. Desire is a translation of *affectus*, a word that seems to have a similar meaning to the Greek *pathos*, for Corbin gives the latter the sense of “affection, emotion, passion.”¹⁷⁴ Proclus’ text, *The Hieratic Art of the Greeks*, describes the heliotrope’s sympathetic movement following the sun as a prayer to that celestial body. Corbin says this is both a *heliotropism* and a *heliopathy*: a “conversion” towards, and a “passion” for, its celestial prince.¹⁷⁵ Proclus (412-485 C.E.) equates the hieratic art with the dialectic of love, which I take to be that which Plato describes in the *Symposium*¹⁷⁶ and the *Phaedrus*. In the *Phaedrus*, Plato says that the likenesses of the things he saw when beholding the true realities causes the madness of the lover.¹⁷⁷ And the one who followed Zeus in that journey will look for a lover of philosophical character, and so with the other gods; each lover “chooses his love from the ranks of the beautiful according to his character, and he fashions him and adorns him like a statute, as though he were his god, to honour and worship him.”¹⁷⁸ For Proclus, an angel would be at the head of the train escorting the archangel or god who is the leader of the series.¹⁷⁹

Ficino does not really refer to the “invisible” gods, the real leaders of each chain, in *Dvcc* except to say that the connectedness of the universe is such that many people say that “we can even through the celestials reconcile the super-celestials to us or perhaps wholly insinuate them into us.”¹⁸⁰ Ficino draws back from this though, saying he will leave that to them. In *Enneads* IV.3.11, Plotinus says that the heavenly bodies are gods, “by for ever not departing from those intelligible gods and their souls look towards Intellect.”¹⁸¹ The Intellect, being the best part of the intelligible world,¹⁸² is the symbolic equivalent of the sun in the divine realm.¹⁸³

Lines 32-62

We have seen that the many things which conform to the same idea need to be suitably adapted, and this “preparation” has the implicit sense of being “timely.” Ficino now makes explicit that the right moment is crucial in trying to draw from the Soul the gifts of a particular star and daemon. Much of *Dvcc* details the correspondences between the planets and things in the world. Some of the pre-eminent gifts of the planets, which Ficino listed in his *Symposium* commentary, were

given above. The gifts detailed there are particularly pure, if not the highest, expressions of the planet's nature. Ficino calls these "divinely infused qualities," "honourable."¹⁸⁴ Iamblichus (c. 245- c. 325 C.E.) considers that it is their reception in the realm of generation, "a realm of change and passion," that leads to the "potencies" (*dunameis*) of the planets that are projected down here sometimes seeming evil.¹⁸⁵ Saturn, whose emanation "tends to pull things together," can become rigidity and coldness when it is received at the material level.¹⁸⁶ Ficino considers that it is the abuse of these honourable qualities that leads to their degeneration. When we exercise such virtues as love, governing, generation and conviction we can make them "disgraceful."¹⁸⁷ Ficino believed that in the case of Saturn, a planet exceedingly powerful in his own horoscope, the more we were identified with matter the more negative would be its effects on us, but he is "propitious to those who have laid aside an ordinary, worldly life in preference for a contemplative recollection of divine matters."¹⁸⁸

How are these "emanations" (*aporroia*), as Iamblichus calls them, understood by Ficino? He says that the influence of the particular star and daemon from which gifts have been sought is "like a piece of wood treated with sulphur for a flame that is everywhere present."¹⁸⁹ The influence is not only through the rays of the star and daemon but also through the World-Soul, which is everywhere. He also uses the same image of flames and sulphur in chapter XVI, which concerns the powers of the rays of the planets. The rays of all the stars in an instant penetrate the earth's mass and go straight to the centre, where their intensity "is immediately kindled and, once kindled, is vaporized and dispersed through channels in all directions and blows out both flames and sulphur."¹⁹⁰ This is the fire that the ancients believed belonged to the goddess Vesta. Can we doubt, he says, that if they can penetrate the earth they can penetrate engraved metals and gems and imprint them with celestial gifts. These rays are not inanimate like the rays of a lamp, but are the eyes of a living body, living and perceiving, and "they bring with them marvellous gifts from the imaginations and minds of the celestials."¹⁹¹ These gifts are known as the "occult virtues of things."¹⁹² Plato's image of the cosmos as a "living animal" informs this understanding, a fact that Ficino continually stresses.¹⁹³ In chapter XI he gives a marvellous picture of it:

The life of the world, innate in everything, is clearly propagated into plants and trees, like the body-hair and tresses of its body. Moreover, the world is

pregnant with stones and metals, like its bones and teeth. It sprouts also in shells which live clinging to the earth and to stones...the celestial bodies which are like the head, heart or eyes of the world. From there through the stars as through eyes, it spreads everywhere not only its visible but also its visual rays.¹⁹⁴

Diverse powers (*virtutes*) arise from the rays and their combination with each other. If one should doubt that their effects arise more quickly than the combination of tones and rhythms in music what about the passionate love that can be kindled by a sudden glance, i.e. by rays from the eyes.¹⁹⁵ This refers to the theory that everything in nature emits rays. Al-Kindi (died c. 870), the author of what is considered the most influential book on the subject of rays, also held this theory.¹⁹⁶ He was very much influenced by the Neoplatonic tradition, and believed that every part of the cosmos can affect every other part.¹⁹⁷ His theory of planetary rays goes back to the *Tetrabiblos* of Ptolemy, the great 2nd century C.E. astronomer/astrologer.¹⁹⁸ Although everything emits rays, it is “celestial harmony that coordinates all the rest and is the ultimate source of all causation.”¹⁹⁹ Al-Kindi’s system, although strongly influenced by Neoplatonism, is possibly quite deterministic, and it also denies the role of spirits in astrology and magic.²⁰⁰ He does, however, stress the importance of imagination and desire in the working of magic.²⁰¹ I cannot pursue here any similarities or differences between Ficino’s and Al-Kindi’s theories of rays.

The art of suitably adapting in a proper manner the gathered materials to receive the emanations of the planets has been called theurgical astrology by Gregory Shaw:

In theurgical astrology one would create a receptacle appropriate to these divinities so that their emanations might be properly received. This is why theurgists would gather specific stones, plants, or animals at specific times; for the objects and intervals employed in the rite were associated with the gods whose presence was invoked.²⁰²

These groups of things gathered together at the right moment aim toward a particular reason, which, as we have seen, was understood by Plotinus as a god.²⁰³ Ficino gives examples of what he considers to be the right moment, or, as Shaw says, the specific time, throughout *Dvcc*. They are basic rules of electional astrology: the planet should be as strong as possible within the time constraints imposed. Strength for a planet depends, first of all, on what are called its essential dignities, i.e. its position in the signs of the zodiac. If possible it should be in one of the signs it rules or where it is exalted. Secondly, what are called its accidental dignities should be considered.²⁰⁴

These are its position in the houses of the horoscope, its speed and direction, and its relationship with other planets and factors.²⁰⁵ A regular example of this is Ficino's stress on the need for the Moon to be applying directly by a good aspect to the planet from which a gift is desired.

In themselves, the planets can be considered gods, the mundane gods referred to previously. Iamblichus' describes how the heavenly bodies, who are all "good and causes of good" and direct themselves towards the One, are united to the incorporeal gods:

For the visible gods are outside their bodies, and for this reason are in the intelligible realm, and the intelligible gods, by reason of their infinite unity, embrace within themselves the visible ones, and both take their stand alike according a common unity and single activity.²⁰⁶

The reason of any star or daemon flourishes in the World-Soul. The question arises of how exactly the daemons participate in the transmitting of celestial gifts. In the *Symposium* commentary he explains how each planet has its own daemons: Saturnian strengthens the gift of contemplation through Saturnian daemons;²⁰⁷ we receive greatness (*magnitude*) of soul (*animus*) through the Martian daemons; through the Mercurial daemons Mercury promotes skill in speaking and keenness of insight.²⁰⁸ The capacity for all these virtues is bestowed by the daemons on every human being but "they do so especially to those at whose conception and birth they are strongest in the disposition of the heavens."²⁰⁹ The capacity for all these virtues is bestowed by the daemons on every human being but "they do so especially to those at whose conception and birth they are strongest in the disposition of the heavens."²¹⁰ This is usually decided by examining the essential and accidental dignities of each planet.²¹¹ However, we can, as has been mentioned, abuse them. Ficino stops here rather abruptly to turn back to his theme of love. However, he may be alluding to something he first mentions in Chapter II of *Dvcc*, and then develops in some detail in Chapter XXIII and XXIV. He outlines a number of the activities, pursuits, occupations and emotions through which we come under the influence of a particular planet. So, engaging in gaiety, music and festivities we are "exposed" to Venus.²¹² He then says how we can make use of the knowledge of our birth horoscope:

The specific rule would be to investigate which star promised what good to the individual at his nativity, to beg grace from that star rather than another, and to

await from any given star not just any gift and what belongs to other stars, but a gift that is proper to that one.”²¹³

This is what astrologers call a *radical* election, because it is based on the natal horoscope, also called the *radix*. Before we can receive a particular gift we should be familiar with our natal horoscope and see what is “promised” in it. It is a “rule” of natal interpretation that only what can be discerned in the birth chart has the possibility of coming to pass. If we wish to improve our powers of contemplation for a particular task, we first have to see if we have the possibility for such a gift in our horoscope. Saturn would be the planet able to bestow the gift of contemplation. If he is strong in our birth chart we have the capacity for contemplation. However, as Ficino says, everyone has some capacity for the planetary gifts. So, even if Saturn is not strong natively we can still improve our contemplative capacity. If we want to strengthen it we have to choose a time when Saturn is strong. It may not be possible to choose a time when Saturn is strong by sign, as he stays in each sign for about 2½ years. He will be strong by house position several times a day, though. We could also wait until the Moon makes a favourable aspect (trine or sextile) to him.²¹⁴ In addition, we could choose Saturn’s day, Saturday, and perhaps his hour, to “beg grace” from him.²¹⁵ We would be fortunate to find the Moon favourably aspecting Saturn in his hour and on his day in the period of time that we want to perform the ritual. We may have to wait. The longer the span of time we are prepared to wait, the stronger we can make the indications for Saturn. We have to do the best we can. If the Sun trines Saturn in the natal chart we should choose a time when the Sun in the sky is trining Saturn in the sky, or forming a trine with the position of Saturn in the birth chart. To receive the greatest good though we need to identify the planet that is the leader of the personal daemon.

In Chapter XXIII and XXIV Ficino introduces the Platonic doctrine of the guardian daemon, assigned to each person by their own star:

...every person has at birth one certain daemon, the guardian of his life, assigned by his own personal star, which helps him to that very task to which the celestials summoned him when he was born.²¹⁶

Plato, in the *Timaeus*, tells how the demiurge makes individual souls.²¹⁷ Using the residue of the mixture out of which he had made the World-Soul, he divided it into as many souls as there are stars:

...and each several soul he assigned to one star, and setting them each as it were in a chariot (*oxēma*) He showed them the nature of the Universe, and declared unto them the laws of destiny, —namely, how that the first birth should be one and the same ordained for all, in order that none might be slighted by Him; and how it was needful that they, when sown each into his own proper organ of time, should grow into the most god-fearing of living creatures...²¹⁸

In the *Timaeus* it is the planets that “came into existence for the determining and preserving the numbers of Time.”²¹⁹ Although souls are assigned in the *Timaeus* to stars, and there are as many souls as there are stars,²²⁰ Ficino never talks about the personal daemon in connection with a fixed star, but only planets. Such a daemon need not be one that is actually accompanying a planetary god, a celestial daemon. For, as Allen has pointed out, all daemons, and indeed all souls and objects, are “oriented towards a particular planet.”²²¹ In a letter to his friend Callimachus Ficino calls the personal daemon *angelos custodies*.²²² The guardian daemon is able to influence us through an “easy and hidden persuasion, just as ships are steered with a rudder by the helmsman.”²²³ However, if our minds are subject to the senses and the lower daemons this may affect the ability of the personal daemon to guide us.²²⁴ Astrology is able to help, for to the extent that that “you follow the auspices” of your geniture, your undertakings will be promoted and your life will be favoured.²²⁵ Ficino was perhaps influenced in his understanding of the “planetary” daemon by the *Phaedrus*. We saw earlier that souls follow in the train of the god as he ascends quickly through the celestial spheres, led by Zeus, to attend a feast, and then passes outside onto the top of the vault of heaven.²²⁶ Some souls may be able to get a glimpse of the eternal verities by the charioteer pushing his head above the vault. The revolution will then carry them round. These are the souls who “best follow after God and are most like him.”²²⁷ I can see no justification for translating *theos* as God here. I think we should understand it to mean one of the Greek gods. And in terms of the election astrology of *Dvcc* it means a planetary god. In his *Phaedrus* commentary Ficino writes in detail about the relationship of the planets and their daemons:

The god of each soul is not only the celestial planet itself but also the celestial or airy demon, the god’s companion who is named with the same name. A soul never changes its god, but it can change its demon when it is radically changed. Perhaps it does not change its class of demons, though; for just as one soul is always Jovian, although in different ways, so it always has as its leader perhaps a demon from the Jovian class if not the same individual demon. For there are many Jovian demons for Jupiter’s many properties, and many souls too.²²⁸

Although a soul is always under the same god and one of its demons, it is also able to receive the “influx” from the other planetary demons. In chapter XXIII of *Dvcc*, Ficino says that “whoever, therefore, wants to have the heavens propitious” should zealously pursue the work and way of life that he was born for.²²⁹ This activity is one that from the earliest years:

...you do, speak, play-act, choose, dream, imitate; that activity that you try more frequently, which you perform more easily, in which you make the most progress, which you enjoy above all else, which you leave off unwillingly.²³⁰

To the extent that you follow this you will receive favour from the heavens. He gives the same goal for the individual human soul in the *Phaedrus* commentary, although he is more explicit about that goal. Seen in terms of the *Phaedrus*, we long (*desideratus*) to return to our home among the stars and particularly to our own god. Being like the god, imitating him, living according to that god and his daemon will “contribute to this goal.”²³¹ Seeing that *desidero*, the verb from which *desideratus* is formed, literally means “from the stars,” one can’t help wondering whether Ficino was using the word with full knowledge of its etymology.²³² We are moved naturally toward this goal by our *ingenium*, a word that Allen translates as “mental disposition” but Caske and Clarke translate, in this context, as “natural bent.”²³³ We can then know it completely by inquiry and experience, and finally attain it by imitating it:

Therefore, what is naturally proposed to each soul is to know, to imitate, and to attain the study and office most kin to its own god and to unite at length by such a profession with its own god and leader.²³⁴

If through an election horoscope one can achieve a particular goal by realising the virtue of a particular planet, through the natal horoscope one can be helped towards our life goal, which is to return to “our celestial homeland and to our own god,” by discovering our star and daemon.²³⁵ We can discover this through “scrutinizing” our natural bent, “our own desires and thoughts,” and “external fortunes”, and then, through knowledge of the planetary significations, determine which god we should follow.²³⁶ If we have knowledge of our horoscope these “internal” and “external” indications can be “realised” by locating them in our natal planetary configurations.²³⁷

Ficino says that “Porphyry searches for a rule from the planet that is lord of the geniture.”²³⁸ He is referring to the series of questions Porphyry (232 - died c. 305 C.E.), the pupil of Plotinus, asked the Egyptian priest Anebo, concerning the gods,

divination, daemons and other related matters.²³⁹ They are answered by Iamblichus (dates uncertain, c. 3rd/4th century) a one-time pupil of Porphyry, in the guise of Abamon, the supposed master of Anebo, in *De Mysteriis*, a book that Ficino translated from the Greek. The questions on the daemon ask:

Concerning the peculiar daemon, it must be inquired how he is imparted by the lord of the geniture, and according to what kind of efflux, or life, or power, he descends from him to us? And also, whether he exists, or does not exist?²⁴⁰

Iamblichus has “multiple objections” to Porphyry’s question concerning the daemon but principally they are two: firstly, the matter is treated technically rather than theurgically, and secondly, the possibilities of how the daemon can be discovered technically are limited to the lord of the geniture.²⁴¹ Ficino himself quotes the authority of Firmicus Maternus (fl. 334 C.E.) who does not look for the daemon using the “rule” of the lord of the geniture.²⁴² That locating the daemon in one particular planet of the natal chart is a more complex matter than can be provided by a rule is born out by Ficino’s own horoscope. We saw previously that he considered that he had been called by providence to restore the ancient theology, and this was signified in his birth chart. This great task of his life is not only shown by Saturn, the planet that he continually referred to as his guiding *genius*, rising in Aquarius, but also to the ninth house, the house of philosophy and wisdom, being occupied by the Sun and Mercury and to the aspects they receive from other planets.²⁴³

Lines 63-74

Whereas the specific forms and powers of the species are made by the World-Soul through their seminal reasons with the help of the stars and constellations, the gifts of individuals are made with the aid of the location of the planets and stars and their motions, and the several aspects they make between themselves, but again also by means of the seminal reasons. The whole of *Dvcc* is concerned with how we can actively draw down these gifts and not just be passive recipients of them.²⁴⁴

Of the organs in our body it is the heart in particular through which the soul puts forth the force of life that flows through our bodies. In the same way the World-Soul uses the Sun to spread its power of universal life. Some thinkers believe that the entire Soul is more present in the heart and the Sun, than any other member. The heart’s association with the Sun is a commonplace of astrological symbolism. Nicholas

Culpeper, the 17th century herbalist and “astro-physician,” echoes Ficino’s comparison. The heart:

...is to the body as the Sun is to the Creation: As the heart is in the *Microcosm*, so is the Sun in the *Megacosm*: for as the Sun gives life, light, and motion to the Creation, so doth the Heart to the Body; therefore it is called, *Sol Corporis*, as the Sun is called *Cor Coeli*, because the Operations are so like.²⁴⁵

According to Greek medicine the vital spirit has its residence in the heart and flows from there to the rest of the body through the arteries.²⁴⁶

Lines 75-90

Ficino introduces the idea of spirit as early as chapter II of the first book of *De Vita*, where he leaves us in no doubt as to its importance for “the hunters after the highest good and truth.”²⁴⁷ It is the instrument which the literary scholar neglects but with which he can “measure and grasp the whole world (*mundus universus*).” This is the Greek *pneuma*,²⁴⁸ and Ficino gives the following definition of it:

...the spirit, which is defined by doctors as a vapour of the blood — pure, subtle, hot, and clear. After being generated by the heat of the heart out of the more subtle blood, it flies to the brain; and there the soul uses it continually for the exercise of the interior as well as the exterior senses. This is why the blood subserves the spirit; the spirit, the senses; and finally the senses, reason.²⁴⁹

Therefore contemplation, of such importance to the scholar, is only as good as the quality of the blood, which is made by the natural faculty located in the liver. The lightest part of the blood “flows into the fountain of the heart,” where the vital faculty is located. This generates spirits that rise into the brain, where the power of sense and motion dominates. This is called the animal faculty.²⁵⁰ Ficino would appear to be speaking here of the “medical spirit” of Greek medicine, “based ultimately on Aristotle and Galen, and systematized by the Arabs,”²⁵¹ although Epistratus of Chios (c.304 – c. 250 B.C.E) may have been the first to use the idea of *pneuma* to explain the presence of vitality in the body.²⁵²

The only doubt concerns his remark that philosophers use this spirit “to measure and grasp the whole world.” Is Ficino here referring to the *oxēmata-pneuma*, the astral body or vehicle of the soul that plays a fundamental role in Neoplatonism?²⁵³ The Plato passages concerning the chariot of the soul in the *Phaedrus* and the *Timaeus* were the ground from which ideas concerning the astral body developed. D.P.Walker

has written of the muddle caused by confusing the astral body and the medical spirit.²⁵⁴ And it is easy, as he points out, to see how the use of the word “spirit” could lead to “a blurring of the distinction between corporeal spirit and incorporeal soul.”²⁵⁵

Michael J.B.Allen has also given a warning concerning Ficino’s use of “spirit” in

Dvcc:

Many aspects of the Neoplatonists’ accounts of the “spirit,” the “vehicle,” and the various higher “bodies” await further study and clarification, as do Ficino’s own theories and their indebtedness to ancient and Byzantine authorities. In particular we should beware of transposing Ficino’s extensive and important account in his *De Vita* 3.1, 4, 11, 20...to other very different contexts.²⁵⁶

It seems, though, from Walker’s account, that the Neoplatonic astral body derives, in some measure, from medical spirits.²⁵⁷ And Walker also says that in *Dvcc* Ficino’s understanding of spirit is clearly much wider than its technical medical meaning.²⁵⁸ It seems to me that Ficino’s understanding of spirit here does refer to both the medical spirit and astral body. Angela Voss has described how Ficino reads into the “spirit” in *Dvcc* not just how it is understood in Greek medicine, but also how the Arabic astrologers understood it:

The sense in which Ficino uses the idea of ‘spirit’ here is akin to the physiological spirits of Galenic medicine, but he attributes to the “Arabic astrologers” an extension of this, in which the spirit becomes the interface between the *anima mundi* and the material world, and between the human soul and the body.²⁵⁹

She also suggests that because this “vehicle” played a key role in Neoplatonic theurgy, Ficino may have wanted to disguise it “as something more innocuous and less challenging to his orthodox critics.”²⁶⁰

In his *Symposium* commentary Ficino relates a myth of how the soul takes on a body. It slips down to earth out of the Milky Way through the constellation of Cancer. It does this as soon as it is born, and because it is about to put on a less pure body it needs a garment, “a certain heavenly and clear wrap,” to clothe the “perfectly pure” soul.²⁶¹ He calls it, after the mythic hymn in the *Phaedrus*, “the chariot of the soul.”²⁶² This body is the one that is “firstly and truly alive,” and is also called the “celestial or airy body.”²⁶³

In chapter III he tells us that just as there is between our soul and body a spirit, there also exists between the World-Soul and its body a spirit, the spirit of the World.²⁶⁴ It exists, in both cases, to transmit “life” from the soul to the body. All living things “live and generate” through the spirit and the elements that contain the most spirit (probably referring to fire and air) seem most alive. Gems and metals can’t generate it “because the spirit in them is inhibited by the grosser material.”²⁶⁵ However, once separated and conserved it can generate itself, so spirit distilled from gold is able to be used on other metals to make gold. This is what the Arab astrologers called Elixir.²⁶⁶ The World-Spirit and our spirit are almost the same except our soul draws the spirit from our humours whereas the World-Soul gives birth to the elements through the World-Spirit.²⁶⁷ Ficino says it can be called “the heavens.” It is also called the quintessence, a characterization first made by Aristotle.²⁶⁸ This “fifth element” has the power of all of them: mostly of “stellar fire,” some of air, less of water and least of all of earth.²⁶⁹ The World-Spirit is also clear and hot like our spirit and receives its ability to give life through “the higher gifts of Soul.” The two spirits merge into one in the description of Apollonius of Tyana that Ficino quotes: “No one should wonder, O Apollonius, that you have acquired the knowledge of divination, since you bear in your soul so much ether.”²⁷⁰ The ether is the purer, upper air – which, if we can absorb it, will promote our ability to divine. The ether must be very close to the stellar fire, for Ficino says the stars and daemons exist in the World-Spirit and by means of it.²⁷¹ Aristotle sought to establish the Platonic doctrine between soul and star more firmly by the characterization of their substance as ether.²⁷²

Through art our spirit can become like the World-Spirit, that is to say “the highest degree celestial.”²⁷³ The similarity of the spirit to the celestial rays means that these “act in particular and to the greatest extent on the spirit.”²⁷⁴ *Spiritus, pneuma*, as both words suggest,²⁷⁵ is something we can breathe in, for the world as Plato showed in the *Timaeus* is a “Living Creature.”²⁷⁶ This art involves medicine to purge our spirit of “filth, and anything that at all inhering in it... which is unlike the heavens.”²⁷⁷ And it can be made more “luminous by luminous things,” rarefied and strengthened by care and made the highest degree celestial by absorbing the Sun’s influences and rays. The Sun, the leader of the heavens, contains the most spirit,²⁷⁸ and the human species is mainly Solar.²⁷⁹ By choosing a time to collect Solar things when the Sun is dominant, we can obtain all the celestial goods, for the Sun contains all the celestial gifts.²⁸⁰

At the end of chapter XXII Ficino summarises his understanding of how the spirit mediates between the heavens and man:

...whenever we say “celestial goods descend to us, understand: (1) that gifts from the celestial *bodies* come into our *bodies* through our rightly-prepared spirit, (2) that even before that, through their rays the same gifts flow into a spirit exposed to them either naturally or by whatever means, and (3) that the goods of the celestial *souls* partly leap forth into this our spirit through rays, and from there overflow into our souls and partly come straight from their souls or from angels into human souls which have been exposed to them — exposed, I say, not so much by some natural means as by the election of free will or by affection. In summary, consider that those who by prayer, by study, by manner of life, and by conduct imitate the beneficence, action, and order of the celestials, since they are more similar to the gods, receive fuller gifts from them.²⁸¹

In order too receive the celestial goods we need to actively seek them, and with “affection” for they don’t come “naturally.” Affection is the translation of the Latin *affectus*, a word that we saw was used to describe how the Soul turns to the Intellect and Body of the World. Ficino also uses it to describe how the Arab’s explain the workings of fashioning images to receive celestial benefits:

...our spirit, if it has been intent upon the work and upon the stars through imagination and emotion (*affectus*), is joined together with the very spirit of the world and with the rays of the stars through which the world-spirit acts. And when our spirit has been so joined, it too becomes a cause why (from the world-spirit by way of the rays) a particular spirit of any given star, that is, a certain vital power, is poured into the image — especially a power that is consistent with the operator.²⁸²

Not for the first time we see that love or desire is central to the working of magic or divination. It is something he will emphasise in chapter XX when he says our spirit is transformed into a particular celestial spirit “by an affect (*affectus*) which is love.”²⁸³ The more a person “yearns (*affectet*) vehemently” to get help from a medicine or image he has fashioned and “believes with all his heart and hopes with all his strength” the more help he will get from it.²⁸⁴ Celestial aid is often caused by the same “love and faith toward a celestial gift.”²⁸⁵

Although the quintessence is “active everywhere” we can ingest it if we learn how to separate it from the other elements with which it is mixed. Some things though are full of it, and in its purer form, so to obtain it we should learn how to use these. They

are things such as gold, balsam and wine, which smell sweet and shine, and have a hot, moist and clear quality.

Lines 91-107

Ficino suggests here that the more we use “things,” *sunthemata*, to continue using Iamblichus’ term, that are most similar to human beings in our “receptacle,” the more power we will receive from that planet. What *sunthemata* are particularly “human” he does not expand on much here. He only says that Solar men, the visible head of the chain being used here as an example, are “blond, curly-haired, prone to baldness, and magnanimous.” Throughout *De Vita* 3, though, he will give examples of what we might consider “human” *sunthemata*. In chapter II, for example, he says that:

...by withdrawal from human affairs, by leisure, solitude, constancy, theology...we come under the influence of Saturn... We come under Jupiter by natural philosophy...civil religion...of Venus, by gaiety and music and festivity.²⁸⁶

By pursuing these things and through the very quality of our spirit we are exposed to the planet. If we try to embody the “spirit” of the planet we will be able to receive the planetary gift.

All the “things” forming the receptacle, will, of course, only become *sunthemata* when they are “accommodated” for use. We saw earlier that he uses this word in chapter II when he says that if we accommodate ourselves to the gift to which we are particularly subject we will be able to receive that celestial gift.²⁸⁷ This is probably an allusion to chapter XXIII, discussed above, where we can discover our natural bent. We accommodate ourselves to them by using them appropriately. This could involve using them as food or as ointments, and in our daily habits. We should above all love them and devote our thoughts to them.

Lines 108-121

We can follow in the train of Jupiter, using the *Phaedran* image, by making our behaviour conform as much as possible to his. In the discussion on the title of the first chapter of *Dvcc*, I referred to the similarities between that title and the first line of *Enneads* IV.3.11.²⁸⁸ Frances Yates considered that Ficino used this Plotinus text as a

cover for a commentary on the *Asclepius* of Hermes Trismegistus. By these means she says he could justify the use of talismans on Neoplatonic grounds:

...on the grounds that the ancient and the modern users of talismans are not invoking devils but have a deep understanding of the nature of the All, and of the degrees by which the reflections of the Divine Ideas descend into the world here below.²⁸⁹

The *Asclepius* concerns the use of techniques to animate statues, and it may well be that Ficino is drawing heavily on this text for *Dvcc*.²⁹⁰ However, it is not only statues that Plotinus says the wise men of old made in order for the gods to be present in them, but also temples. And Ficino's astrology in *Dvcc* bears striking resemblances to forms of worship practiced by the Sabians of Harrān that centred on the temple. This is not surprising as the Sabians reinterpreted ancient Syrian or Syro-Babylonian cults using elements that came from Neoplatonic philosophy.²⁹¹ However, it was the Platonic teaching from the *Timaeus* that each soul comes from a particular star that found positive expression in their religion. Each planet is ruled over by an Angel, and that Angel has its temple (*haykal*) in the form of the planet. The principal concern for the Sabian worshipper is to gain the protection of their Angel by existing in the manner of the planet that is the Angel's temple. Rituals, both collective and individual, sought to bring about this concordance of soul and Angel. Collective worship took place in temples built in the image of the planet, which were visited on their sacred day.²⁹² Each temple would be built in a way designed to draw down the influence of the particular planet.²⁹³ Jupiter's temple, for example, was made from green stone and constructed upon a triangular base, with the image of Jupiter made of tin.²⁹⁴ The 'talismanic' design of each temple created the right conditions for any person worshipping there to be infused with the planetary god's power.²⁹⁵ While individual worship took the form of a *munājāh*, a secret or intimate conversation with the Angel of the star.²⁹⁶

There is no evidence that Ficino drew directly on Sabian ideas, but the similarity between Ficino's astrology and Sabian worship, rooted as it is in Syro-Babylonian cults, is testimony that the form of practice outlined in *Dvcc* is of ancient origin.

Conclusion

Corbin says that the rituals used in the Sabian liturgies are described by the author of the *Ghāyat Al-Hakīm*.²⁹⁷ Now the *Picatrix*, the Arab magical text said to be a major influence on *Dvcc*, is the Latin name for this book.²⁹⁸ However, Corbin considers the book to have been written in the 8th century²⁹⁹ while the translation of the only English version of the text says it is from the 11th century.³⁰⁰ It is possible that we are talking of two different texts with the same name.³⁰¹ This English translation does mention the Sabians but I can find no reference to their liturgies.³⁰² However, Garin refers to the tradition preserved in the *Picatrix* of the castle of Hermes which “has on its summit a luminous globe whose lights slowly take on the colour of the planets according to the days of the week.”³⁰³ Again, I have been unable to find this in the English translation.

Corbin makes an important statement when discussing the Sabian rituals concerning the difference between what he calls ‘philosophical Sabianism’ and talismanic magic: the latter involves the conjuration of a star.³⁰⁴ This certainly warrants a discussion that I have been unable to pursue here. There is undoubtedly much that remains to be investigated concerning the *Picatrix* and its supposed influence on *Dvcc*.

The similarities and differences (if any) between Al-Kindi’s theory of rays and Ficino’s also warrant further study. I have also been unable to follow-up the origin of the seminal reasons in Stoic thought and its subsequent historical development. The central importance of the *spiritus* to Ficino’s astrology could also have done with a more detailed treatment. And although my commentary leaves no doubt as to the importance of love or desire in Ficino’s astrology, it perhaps does not sufficiently stress its vital necessity.

A Final Word on the Title of the Dissertation

I originally intended to call my dissertation *Ficino’s Katarchic Astrology* but decided that to name his astrology would be to limit it, for there are other names that might be equally appropriate.³⁰⁵ However, the astrology demonstrated in *Dvcc* is what I would call katarchic. There is an essential difference between most electional astrology practiced today and Ficino’s. His approach does not just ask for the appropriate signifiers for a proposed course of action but also demands the embodiment of the

astrological symbolism, in which the desire and the intention of the querent are essential. So he advises us “to get a lot of light” if we want to “draw down” the gifts of the Sun.³⁰⁶ This attitude can be called katararchic, for the word from which the Greek word *katarche* derives is *katarchesthai*, which means to begin the rites of sacrifice, in order to determine the will of the gods.³⁰⁷ It asks (the gods) what should be done in a particular situation, what action will lead to good fortune, and this action is at the same time an ethical one.³⁰⁸ This attitude is displayed throughout *Dvcc*. This is further evidence of the “antiquity” of Ficino’s approach to astrology. It places it firmly within a divinatory understanding.³⁰⁹ And if we agree with this interpretation, translation titles that emphasize the ‘matching’ or ‘fitting’ or ‘aligning’ of one’s life to the heavens do seem more appropriate than Caske and Clarke’s ‘on obtaining life from the heavens.’

I also thought of calling my dissertation *Ficino’s Daemonic Astrology*, for, following Plato’s characterisation in the *Symposium*, he could certainly be called a *daimonios* man.³¹⁰ As Michael J.B.Allen has pointed out, his choice of what to translate from the writings of the Neoplatonists indicates his fascination with the daemonic.³¹¹ As my commentary shows, daemons play a key role in the electional astrology of *Dvcc*. However, as Angela Voss has pointed out, although the intermediary position of daemons “deeply informs his project,” because of his position in the Church, and the climate of the times, it could never be explicit.³¹² How Ficino displayed both a katararchic and a daemonic attitude to astrology is shown in a letter he wrote to Nicholas Báthory, Bishop of Vác, called “Much that the stars show, the daemons urge, and we enact.” Having been asked by the King of Hungary to teach Plato at his court, he says that he cannot come himself, but will try and get his cousin Sebastiano to come instead, giving the following reasons:

It would be a wonder for me to leave the home of my birth, for either the move will be prevented by Saturn, rising upon us in Aquarius, as perhaps an astrologer might think, or it will be forbidden by one of those spirits of Saturn, as a Magus might believe; or perhaps my feeble body, unfit for hardships, will prevent the journey, or my mind, always intent on contemplation, will order me to be still. Now I have put forward several possible causes for this situation. For the Platonists think that human events are indeed sometimes indicated by the stars, but are frequently set in motion by the daemons attending upon the stars, and are finally brought to completion by us human beings, according to our earthly circumstances.³¹³

The stars may show the circumstances of our lives, mysteriously brought about by the daemon, but in the end we are responsible, by our actions and attitude, for the bringing to completion of those circumstances. The wise man, the priest “for the sake of human welfare tempers the lower parts of the world to the upper parts; and just like hen’s eggs, so he fittingly subjects earthly things to heaven that they may be fostered.”³¹⁴ If someone is shown negatively in a situation he can still “gird himself,” and temper his own heaven, as Ficino tells his friend Lorenzo di Pierfrancesco.³¹⁵

We can choose to enact or not to enact a given planetary configuration. Awareness of a negative indication in our own horoscope, for example, gives us the choice of following that tendency or resisting it. We do not have to enact the symbolism shown if it will clearly bring about a negative outcome. Tempering our heaven we can act in accordance with the stars, our daemon, and our own free will insofar as we “willingly obey Providence.” Earlier, I quoted at length a letter Ficino wrote to John of Hungary in which he says that “divine providence has decreed the restoration of the ancient teachings.”³¹⁶ John had questioned a letter of Ficino’s that said “almighty God commands that where divine providence leads, we should follow.”³¹⁷ He had heard from two of Ficino’s astrologer friends that it is, in fact, a “configuration of the heavens” that led Ficino to revive the ancient teachings. So, Ficino is acting in accordance with fate rather than providence. Ficino replies that it from the “celestial minds” that principally the duties concerning souls are derived.³¹⁸ These are the ministers of God, and when human deliberations are in harmony with them, duties also proceed, “to some extent,” from these deliberations. The stars, the instruments of the divine minds, show these duties, and we are, in fact, most free when we act in accordance with divine will:

...Fate, as the herald of Providence, is calling you to that task and is showing you what Providence has decided and is commanding you to do. You, for your part, have the strength to pursue such a difficult task through to completion, insofar as Providence and Fate are favourable. Again, you are acting freely, insofar as you willingly obey Providence. And, you are in truth master in the kingdom of Fate when you seem to be a servant in the kingdom of Providence.³¹⁹

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Appendix A

(The pages within brackets refer to the corresponding numbering of the Latin text.)

***The Book “On Obtaining Life from the Heavens”
by Marsilio Ficino of Florence,
Which He Composed among His Commentaries on
Plotinus***

***In What, According to Plotinus, the Power of Attracting Favor from
the Heavens Consists, Namely, That Well-adapted Physical Forms
Can Easily Allure the World-soul and the Souls of the Stars and
Daemons***

Chapter I

[1-12] If there were only these two things in the universe — on one side the Intellect, on the other the Body — but no Soul, then neither would the Intellect be attracted to the Body (for Intellect is absolutely motionless, without affect, which is the principle of motion, and very far away from the Body), nor would the Body be drawn to the Intellect (for Body is in itself powerless, unsuited for motion, and far removed from the Intellect). But if a Soul which conforms to both were placed between them, an attraction will easily occur to each one on either side. In the first place, Soul is led most easily of all, since she is the Primum Mobile and moveable of herself, of her own accord. Moreover, since, as I have said, she is the mean of things, in her own fashion she contains all things and is proportionally [Intellect: Soul: Soul: Body] near to both. Therefore she is equally connected with everything, even with those things which are at a distance from one another, because they are not at a distance from her. For besides the fact that on the one side she conforms to the divine and on the other side to the transient, and even turns to each by desire, at the same time she is wholly and simultaneously everywhere.

[13-31] In addition, the World-Soul possesses by divine power precisely as many seminal reasons of things as there are Ideas in the Divine Mind. By these seminal reasons she fashions the same number of species in matter. That is why every single species corresponds through its own seminal reason to its own Idea and oftentimes

through this reason it can easily receive something from the Idea — since indeed it was made through the reason from the Idea. This is why, if at any time the species degenerates from its proper form, it can be formed again with the reason as the proximate intermediary and, through the Idea as intermediary, can then be easily reformed. And if in the proper manner you bring to bear on a species, or on some individual in it, many things which are dispersed but which conform to the same Idea, into this material thus suitably adapted you will soon draw a particular gift from the Idea, through the seminal reason of the Soul: for, properly speaking, it is not Intellect itself which is led, but Soul. And so let no one think that any divinities wholly separate from matter are being attracted by any given mundane materials, but that daemons rather are being attracted and gifts from the ensouled world and from the living stars. Again, let no man wonder that Soul can be allured as it were by material forms, since indeed she herself has created baits of this kind suitable to herself, to be allured thereby, and she always and willingly dwells in them. There is nothing to be found in this whole living world so deformed that Soul does not attend it, that a gift of the Soul is not in it. Therefore Zoroaster called such correspondences of forms to the reasons existing in the World-Soul “divine lures” and Synesius corroborated that they are magical baits.

[32-62] Finally, let no one believe that absolutely all gifts are drawn from the Soul to any one particular species of matter at a specific time, but rather at the right moment only those gifts of that one seed from which such a species has grown, and of seeds that are similar to it. Accordingly, the person who has employed only human things, will thence claim for himself not the gifts proper to fish or to birds but the human gifts and similar ones. But if he employs things which pertain to such and such a star and daemon, he undergoes the peculiar influence of this star and daemon, like a piece of wood treated with sulphur for a flame that is everywhere present. And he undergoes this influence not only through the rays of the star and the daemon themselves, but also through the very Soul of the World everywhere present. For the reason of any star and daemon flourishes in her. It is partly a seminal reason so that she can generate, and partly an exemplary reason so that she can know. For according to the more ancient Platonists, from her reasons, the World-Soul constructed in the heavens besides the stars, figures and such parts of them as are also themselves figures of a

sort; and she impressed properties on all these. In the stars, moreover — in their figures, parts and properties — are contained all the species of things below and their properties. She arranged 48 universal figures: 12 in the zodiac and 36 outside it; likewise she placed 36 more figures in the zodiac according to the number of faces. Again she arranged in the Zodiac 360 more figures according to the number of its degrees — for in each degree whatsoever there are many stars that make up images there. Similarly the images [constellations] outside the zodiac she divided into many figures [paranatellonta] according to the number of the Zodiacal faces and degrees. Finally, she established certain relations and proportions of the latter universal images to the former universal images — relations and proportions which themselves are also images out there. Figures of this kind each have their own coherence from the rays of their stars directed toward each other by their own special property. On these well-ordered forms the forms of lower things depend; they are ordered by them. But even those celestial forms, being [spatially] set apart from each other, proceed from reasons of the Soul that are joined together; and being forms somewhat changeable, they proceed from the reasons which are stable. But the reasons, insofar as they do not make up a unity, are traced back to the Forms in the Intellect — the intellect in Soul and the higher Intellect — which do make up a unity; and these Forms, being multiples, are reduced to the perfectly simple One and Good, just as the celestial figures diminish to a point at the Pole.

[63-74] But let us return to the Soul. When, therefore, the Soul gives birth to the specific forms and the powers pertaining to the species of things below, she makes them through their respective reasons with the aid of the stars and the celestial forms. But she produces the endowments peculiar to individuals (which are often in some individuals as marvellous as they habitually are in the species themselves) likewise through the seminal reasons, but not so much with the aid of celestial forms and figures as by the location of the individual stars and the relation of the motions and aspects of the planets both among themselves and with respect to the stars which are above the planets. Now our own soul beyond the particular forces of our members puts forth a general force of life everywhere within us — especially through the heart as the source of the fire which is the nearest thing to the soul. In the same way the World-soul, which is active everywhere, unfolds in every place its power of universal

life principally through the Sun. Accordingly, some thinkers say the entire Soul, both in us and in the universe, dwells in any member but most of all in the heart and in the Sun.

[75-90] Always remember, though, that just as the power of our soul is brought to bear on our members through the spirit, so the force of the World-soul is spread under the World-soul through all things through the quintessence, which is active everywhere, as the spirit inside the World's Body, but that this power is instilled especially into those things which have absorbed the most of this kind of spirit. This quintessence can be ingested by us more and more if a person knows how best to separate it, mixed in as it is with other elements, or at least how to use those things often which are filled with it, especially in its purer form. Such things are: choice wine, sugar, balsam, gold, precious stones, myrobalans, and things which smell most sweet and which shine, and especially things which have in a subtle substance a quality, hot, moist, and clear; such, besides wine, is the whitest sugar, especially if you add to it gold and the odor of cinnamon and roses. Then too, just as foods we eat in the right way, although not themselves alive, are converted through our spirit to the form of our life, so also our bodies rightly accommodated to the body and spirit of the world (that is through cosmic things and through our spirit) drink in as much as possible from the life of our world.

[91-107] If you want your food to take the form of your brain above all, or of your liver, or of your stomach, eat as much as you can of like food, that is, of the brain, liver, and stomach of animals which are not far removed from the nature of man. If you want your body and spirit to receive power from some member of the cosmos, say from the Sun, seek the things which above all are most Solar among metals and gems, still more among plants, and more yet among animals, especially human beings; for surely things which are more similar to you confer more of it. These must be brought to bear externally and, so far as possible, taken internally, especially in the day and the hour of the Sun and while the Sun is dominant in a theme of the heavens. Solar things are: all those gems and flowers which are called heliotrope because they turn towards the Sun, likewise gold, orpiment and golden colors, chrysolite, carbuncle, myrrh, frankincense, musk, amber, balsam, yellow honey, sweet calamus, saffron, spikenard, cinnamon, aloe-wood and the rest of the spices; the ram, the hawk,

the cock, the swan, the lion, the scarab beetle, the crocodile, and people who are blond, curly-haired, prone to baldness, and magnanimous. The above-mentioned things can be adapted partly to foods, partly to ointments and fumigations, partly to usages and habits. You should frequently perceive and think about these things and love them above all; you should also get a lot of light.

[108-121] If you suspect that your belly is being deprived of the heat of the liver, draw the power of the liver to the belly both by rubbing and by fomentations made from things which agree with the liver, namely from chicory, endive, spodium, agrimony, hepatica, and livers. In the same way, so that your body may not be deprived of Jupiter, take physical exercise in Jupiter's day and hour and when he is reigning; and in the meantime use Jovial things such as silver, jacinth, topaz, coral, crystal, beryl, spodium, sapphire, green and aery colors, wine, sugar, white honey; and entertain thoughts and feelings which are especially Jovial, that is, steadfast, composed, religious, and law-abiding; and you will keep company with men of the same kind — men who are sanguine, handsome, and venerable. But remember to mix those first things on my list, since they are cold, with gold, wine, mint, saffron, cinnamon and doricum; remember too that the lamb, the peacock, the eagle, and the young bullock are Jovial animals.

[120-121] But how the power of Venus may be attracted by turtle-doves, pigeons, white water wag-tails, and the rest, modesty forbids me to reveal.

Appendix B

(Cf. dissertation commentary on lines 32-62 of Ficino's text.)

Some remarks concerning the translation of “lord of the geniture” in Chapter XXIII of *Dvcc*

In the first paragraph of chapter XXIII there are two translations by Caske and Clarke that don't seem quite right to me. One's *ingenium*, one's natural bent, the translation says, “That assuredly is the thing for which the heavens and the lord of your horoscope gave birth to you.”³²⁰ Lord of your horoscope is a translation of *coelum rector*, literally “ruler of heaven,” and I am doubtful if it should be understood as lord of your horoscope. Boer translates the sentence as “this is clearly what heaven and the rector of heaven bore you for.”³²¹ In this case at least his translation seems more trustworthy. Caske and Clarke's translation has a bearing on the very next sentence which they translate as “...they will promote your undertakings and will favour your life to the extent that you follow the auspices of the lord of your geniture...”³²² Geniture, i.e. the birth horoscope, is a straightforward translation of *genitor* but there is no Latin word for “lord” here. Boer has “...pursue the signs of this creator...,” which I don't think is accurate either but at least doesn't insert a non-existent “lord.”³²³ I suspect the insertion of the idea of the lord of the horoscope or geniture was influenced by the sentence I quote further on: “Porphyry searches for a rule from the planet that is lord of the geniture.” Caske and Clarke's translations have the effect of promoting the idea that Ficino connects the ruler of the birth-chart with the personal daemon. Ficino quotes Porphyry but he doesn't actively endorse this method of finding the daemon.

Appendix C

(Cf. dissertation commentary on lines 32-62 of Ficino's text.)

The Personal Daemon and the Part of the Daemon in Chapter XXIII of *Dvcc*

Ficino quotes the authority of Firmicus Maternus concerning the daemon in chapter XXIII of *Dvcc*.³²⁴ Firmicus Maternus was the author of the *Eight Book of the Mathesis*, which Jean Rhys-Bram calls “the final, as well as the most complete work of astrology of the Classical world.”³²⁵ Firmicus says that the lord of the geniture is either the planet with the most dignities or the one that is lord of the sign that the Moon will next move into.³²⁶ However, Firmicus, Ficino says, looks for the daemon rather in the relationship of the Sun to the Moon. This, in fact, is the part of the daemon, and Ficino says whatever term it falls in “they think your daemon belongs to it too.”³²⁷ The terms are sections of the zodiac signs allotted to Saturn, Jupiter, Mars, Venus and Mercury.³²⁸ Firmicus, as Rhys-Bram the translator of the English version points out, gives the same calculation for the part of the daemon as the part of fortune when they should be opposite,³²⁹ a fact that is evident in Ficino's summary of the method: “...in short, from the lord of the nativity together with the daemon, they usually assess your course of life and your fortune. I added “fortune” because some compute your Part of Fortune by nearly the same system.”³³⁰

The part of fortune and the part of the daemon (often translated as spirit or divinity) belong to a system that goes back to Greek astrology, where they were known as *kleroi*, lots.³³¹ Paul of Alexandria, in his *Introductory Matters* (378 C.E.),³³² discusses the Seven Lots in the *Panaretus*, a text ascribed to Hermes Trismegistus³³³, which is now lost.³³⁴ Each of the seven lots is connected to one of the seven planets:

It seems that the Lots have this for their genesis, since by nature the Moon comes to be Fortune; the Sun, Divinity (daemon); Aphrodite, Eros; the star of Hermes, Necessity; that of Ares, Courage; that of Zeus, Victory; that of Saturn, Nemesis.³³⁵

The position of the lot of fortune by day is the distance from the Sun to the Moon added to the Ascendant (Asc + Moon – Sun); by night it is the distance from the Moon to the Sun added to the Ascendant (Asc + Sun – Moon). The procedure is

reversed for the lot of the daemon.³³⁶ Paulus does link the lot of the daemon to one's vocation: "Divinity happens to be lord of soul, temper, mindfulness, and every power; and sometimes it also cooperates in the determination concerning what one does."³³⁷

Dorian Gieseler Greenbaum has recently completed a Ph.D (2009) called "The *Daimon* in Hellenistic Astrology: Origins and Influence," at the Warburg Institute, University of London, but I have been unable to access this paper to see if it throws any further light on the personal daemon in the birth chart.

NOTES

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- ¹ Proclus, introduction p.1.
² Ficino (1981) & Ficino (1944).
³ *Dvcc* is used throughout as an abbreviation for *De Vita Coeliutus Comparanda*.
⁴ cf. Appendix A.
⁵ Ficino (1989).
⁶ Moore (1990).
⁷ Bullard (1990).
⁸ Walker (2000).
⁹ Garin (1983).
¹⁰ Yates (1969).
¹¹ Copenhaver (1984).
¹² Voss (2006).
¹³ Voss (2008).
¹⁴ Voss (2001).
¹⁵ Voss forthcoming paper 2011.
¹⁶ Cornelius (2003).
¹⁷ Michael J. B. Allen (1982), pp. 69-72.
¹⁸ Ficino (1989), p. 5.
¹⁹ Ficino (1980), p. 83.
²⁰ Moore, p. 25.
²¹ Voss (2001), p. 6.
²² Ficino (1989), p. 237.
²³ Yates, p. 56.
²⁴ Moore, p. 25.
²⁵ Ficino (1989), proemium [2-3], pp. 236-7.
²⁶ Ficino (1989), [5], p. 238.
²⁷ cf. the definition given by Wong Kiew Kit, p. 4: “Chi Kung is the art of developing energy, particularly for health, internal force and mind training.”
²⁸ Lewis and Short, p. 1998.
²⁹ Ficino (1989), proemium [25-26], pp. 237-238.
³⁰ Ficino (2003), letter 24, p. 29.
³¹ Ficino (2003), letter 24, p. 29.
³² Ficino (1989), editorial introduction, p. 7.
³³ Ficino (1989), III.11.1-3, p. 289.
³⁴ Ficino (1989), III.4.8-11, p. 259.
³⁵ Toby, p. 75.
³⁶ cf. Reid, p. 34.
³⁷ cf. Ficino (1989), introduction, p.45.
³⁸ *Picatrix*, pp. 67-68.
³⁹ Hirai, p. 277.
⁴⁰ cf. Ficino (2003), p.20.
⁴¹ Ficino (2003), letter 19, p. 22.
⁴² Ficino (2003), letter 19, pp. 21-24.
⁴³ Ficino (1989), chapter XXVI [1-2], pp. 384-5.
⁴⁴ For a discussion of this cf. *Editorial Introduction*, Ficino (1989), pp. 6-8, and *The Place of “De Vita” in the Canon*, Ficino (1989), pp. 24-31.
⁴⁵ cf. *The Place of “De Vita” in the Canon*, cited above.
⁴⁶ cf. Lewis & Short, p. 18.
⁴⁷ Ficino (1989), III.2.11, p. 250-251.
⁴⁸ The lines referred to in the Paragraph Headings are the ones in the Latin text.
⁴⁹ Hypostasis is just the straightforward translation of the Greek *hypostasis*, often translated into English as *substance*, the real nature of a thing, its *essence*, cf. Liddell & Scott, p. 847
⁵⁰ Kristeller, p. 74.
⁵¹ Kristeller, p. 75.
⁵² cf. *Enneads* V.1, *On the Three Primary Hypostases*, pp. 11-53.

- ⁵³ cf. *Ennead* VI.9 *On the Good or the One*.
- ⁵⁴ cf. *Republic* VI [517B], p. 131.
- ⁵⁵ Gadamer, p. 31.
- ⁵⁶ Ficino (1975a), chapter 4, p. 88.
- ⁵⁷ Ficino (2001), Book II, chapter I, pp. 96-7.
- ⁵⁸ cf. *Enneads* ff.
- ⁵⁹ Ficino (1975a), chapter 4, p. 100.
- ⁶⁰ Zeller, p. 61.
- ⁶¹ *Phaedo* [96A-B], p. 331.
- ⁶² *Phaedo* [96C], p. 333.
- ⁶³ *Phaedo* [97C], p. 335.
- ⁶⁴ *Phaedo* [98B-C], p. 339.
- ⁶⁵ *Sophist* [242C], pp. 357-9.
- ⁶⁶ Zeller, p. 27.
- ⁶⁷ Plato's *Sophist*, p. 305.
- ⁶⁸ *Phaedo* [99B], p. 341.
- ⁶⁹ cf. *Phaedo* [99C], p. 341.
- ⁷⁰ cf. Guthrie, p. 396.
- ⁷¹ Parmenides, Fragment VIII.
- ⁷² cf. Heidegger (1997), p. 307
- ⁷³ *Timaeus* [27C], p. 49.
- ⁷⁴ *Timaeus* [27C], p. 49.
- ⁷⁵ *Enneads* V.1.4.22-26, p. 25.
- ⁷⁶ *Timaeus* [28B], p. 51.
- ⁷⁷ *Timaeus* [28A-B], p. 51.
- ⁷⁸ *Timaeus* [30C-D], p. 57.
- ⁷⁹ *Timaeus* [31B], p. 57.
- ⁸⁰ *Timaeus* [37D], p. 77.
- ⁸¹ *Timaeus* [34B], p. 65.
- ⁸² *Enneads* IV. 2 [1] (21), pp. 20-21. This is placed second in Armstrong's translation for the Loeb Classical Library, although Ficino and the *edition principes* place it first; cf. introductory note on p. 7.
- ⁸³ cf. Ficino (1981), chapter 10, [iii], p. 110; 10, [xii], p. 118; 11 [vii], p. 124.
- ⁸⁴ Ficino (1981), chapter 7, [i], p. 98.
- ⁸⁵ Ficino (1944), chapter III, p. 126.
- ⁸⁶ Kristeller, p. 107.
- ⁸⁷ Kristeller, p. 106.
- ⁸⁸ Proclus, p. 93.
- ⁸⁹ Ficino (2001), introduction, p. xiv; for Proclus' ontology cf. Blumenthal & Lloyd, pp. 41.
- ⁹⁰ Ficino (1944), chapter III, p. 127.
- ⁹¹ Lewis & Short, p. 1279.
- ⁹² Ficino (1944), First Speech, chapter III, p. 125
- ⁹³ Ficino (1944), Sixth speech, chapter III, p. 184.
- ⁹⁴ *Timaeus* [35A], p. 65.
- ⁹⁵ *Paradiso* 27. 106-111.
- ⁹⁶ *Timaeus* [37E], p. 73.
- ⁹⁷ Ficino (2001), IV.1, p. 249.
- ⁹⁸ cf. Kristeller, p. 108.
- ⁹⁹ cf. Allen (1984), pp. 12-14.
- ¹⁰⁰ *Timaeus* [29E], p. 55.
- ¹⁰¹ *Timaeus* [30A], p. 55.
- ¹⁰² *Timaeus* [30B], p. 55.
- ¹⁰³ cf. for example, Ficino (1975a), chapter 18, p. 182.
- ¹⁰⁴ cf. Ficino (1975a), introduction by Michael J.B.Allen, p. 47.
- ¹⁰⁵ Kristeller, p. 17.
- ¹⁰⁶ *Corpus Hermeticum*, Book I, p. 17.
- ¹⁰⁷ Ficino (2001), Book I, chapter V, p. 65.
- ¹⁰⁸ Ficino (1975a), chapter 15, p. 164.
- ¹⁰⁹ Ficino (1975a), chapter 15, p. 164.
- ¹¹⁰ Heidegger (2002), p. 49; cf. *Republic* Book VI [490A], p. 27.

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- ¹¹¹ *Timaeus* [39E], p. 83.
- ¹¹² *Timaeus* [39E], p. 83.
- ¹¹³ Ficino (1944), chapter III, p. 127.
- ¹¹⁴ cf. line 3 of the text.
- ¹¹⁵ *Platonic Theology*, quoted above, dissertation p. 6.
- ¹¹⁶ Ficino (1944), chapter III, p. 129.
- ¹¹⁷ Ficino (1975a), chapter 16, p. 176.
- ¹¹⁸ *Phaedo* [74A-B], p. 257.
- ¹¹⁹ *Phaedo* [75A], p. 261.
- ¹²⁰ *Phaedo* [75E], p. 265.
- ¹²¹ cf. Heidegger (1997), p. 231.
- ¹²² *Phaedrus* [246A], p. 471.
- ¹²³ *Phaedrus* [247B], p. 475.
- ¹²⁴ *Phaedrus* [246A], p. 471.
- ¹²⁵ *Phaedrus* [247B-C], p. 475.
- ¹²⁶ *Phaedrus* [247D-E], p. 477.
- ¹²⁷ *Phaedrus* [248A], p. 477.
- ¹²⁸ *Phaedrus* [247C], p. 477.
- ¹²⁹ Ficino (1981), chapter 7, [i], p. 98.
- ¹³⁰ *Phaedrus* [249B-C], p. 481.
- ¹³¹ Peters, p. 110.
- ¹³² Espin & Nickoloff, p. 785.
- ¹³³ cf. *Enneads* V.9.5.23-26, p. 299.
- ¹³⁴ *Enneads* V.9.4.22-26, p. 295.
- ¹³⁵ *Enneads* V.9.9.8-11, p. 309.
- ¹³⁶ *Enneads* III.2.2.15-26, pp. 47-49.
- ¹³⁷ *Enneads* III.2.2.39-41, p. 51.
- ¹³⁸ cf. dissertation p. 8; *Timaeus* [35A], pp. 64-65.
- ¹³⁹ *Enneads* IV.3.11.8-14, pp. 70-71.
- ¹⁴⁰ *Enneads* IV.3.10.10-16, pp. 66-67.
- ¹⁴¹ *Phaedrus* [246B], p. 473.
- ¹⁴² *Enneads* IV.3.10.26-44, p. 69.
- ¹⁴³ *Enneads* IV.3.10.39-41, p. 69.
- ¹⁴⁴ cf. Lewis & Short, p. 1736 & Liddell & Scott, p. 375.
- ¹⁴⁵ Concise Oxford Dictionary, p. 1101.
- ¹⁴⁶ cf. for example, Ficino (1989), III.26.122-129, p. 391.
- ¹⁴⁷ Ficino (1989), III.15.88-89, p. 319.
- ¹⁴⁸ Allen uses both translations, cf., for example, Ficino (1984), p.101 & Ficino (1981), p.110.
- ¹⁴⁹ Ficino (1944), Sixth Speech, chapter III, pp. 184-186.
- ¹⁵⁰ Ficino (1984), p. 101.
- ¹⁵¹ *Enneads* III.5.6.22-24, p. 187.
- ¹⁵² Ficino (1944), Sixth speech, chapter IV, p. 186.
- ¹⁵³ *Symposium* [202E], p. 179.
- ¹⁵⁴ *Symposium* [202E-203A], p. 179.
- ¹⁵⁵ *Symposium* [203A], p. 179.
- ¹⁵⁶ Ficino (1944), Sixth speech, chapter IV, p. 187.
- ¹⁵⁷ cf. Lewis & Short, p. 1271, and Liddell & Scott, p. 392.
- ¹⁵⁸ Robson, p. 95.
- ¹⁵⁹ Ficino (1981), chapter VIII, [i], p. 102.
- ¹⁶⁰ Ficino (1981), chapter VIII [ii], p. 102.
- ¹⁶¹ cf. *Phaedrus* [256B], p. 503.
- ¹⁶² *De Mysteriis* IV.2 (Greek Text), p. 206.
- ¹⁶³ cf. Addey, p. 34.
- ¹⁶⁴ cf. Liddell & Scott, pp. 776 and 759.
- ¹⁶⁵ *De Mysteriis* V.23, p. 269.
- ¹⁶⁶ Addey, pp. 34-5.
- ¹⁶⁷ Addey, p. 168.
- ¹⁶⁸ cf. Ptolemy, p. 35, note 3.
- ¹⁶⁹ Ficino (1989), III.14.14-15, p. 311.

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- ¹⁷⁰ cf. Copenhaver, p. 551.
- ¹⁷¹ Corbin (1997), p. 288, note 3.
- ¹⁷² Corbin (1997), p.106.
- ¹⁷³ cf. for example the Solar chain, Ficino (1989), III.1.99-104, p. 249.
- ¹⁷⁴ Corbin (1997), p. 106.
- ¹⁷⁵ Corbin (1997), p. 106.
- ¹⁷⁶ *Symposium* [210A-212A], pp. .202-209.
- ¹⁷⁷ *Phaedrus* [249E-250A], p. 483.
- ¹⁷⁸ *Phaedrus* [252D], p. 491.
- ¹⁷⁹ Corbin, p. 106.
- ¹⁸⁰ Ficino (1989), III.15.88-89, p. 319.
- ¹⁸¹ *Enneads* IV.3.11.24-27, p. 73.
- ¹⁸² cf. dissertation p. 8 above, and note 81.
- ¹⁸³ *Enneads* IV.3.11.14-15, p. 71.
- ¹⁸⁴ Ficino (1944), sixth speech, chapter IV, p. 187.
- ¹⁸⁵ *De Mysteriis*, Book I.18, p. 69.
- ¹⁸⁶ *De Mysteriis*, Book I.18, 59-62, p. 69.
- ¹⁸⁷ Ficino (1944), sixth speech, chapter IV, p. 187.
- ¹⁸⁸ Voss (2001), p. 8.
- ¹⁸⁹ Ficino (1989), III.1.38-39, p. 323.
- ¹⁹⁰ Ficino (1989), III.16.8, p. 321.
- ¹⁹¹ Ficino (1989), III.16.40-41, p. 323.
- ¹⁹² Ficino (1989), III.16.37-38, p. 323.
- ¹⁹³ cf. III.2.4; III.2.88; Apology, 96-97.
- ¹⁹⁴ Ficino (1989), III.11.3-6, p. 289.
- ¹⁹⁵ Ficino (1989), III.16.56-57, p. 325.
- ¹⁹⁶ Al-Kindi, introduction by Robert Hand, p.iv.
- ¹⁹⁷ Al-Kindi, introduction by Robert Hand, p.v.
- ¹⁹⁸ Al-Kindi, introduction, p. iv.
- ¹⁹⁹ Al-Kindi, introduction, p. vi.
- ²⁰⁰ Al-Kindi, preface, p. vi & introduction by Robert Zoller, p. xvi.
- ²⁰¹ Al-Kindi, chapter 5, p. 23.
- ²⁰² Shaw, p.5.
- ²⁰³ cf. Ficino (1989), III.26.130, p. 391.
- ²⁰⁴ Ficino gives a fairly comprehensive list of these in chapter IX, pp. 282-285 For a complete list of the essential and accidental dignities and debilities of the planets cf. Lilly, p.115.
- ²⁰⁵ cf. Ficino (1989), Book Three, chapter II, 26-42, where he lists some of these factors.
- ²⁰⁶ *De Mysteriis*, Book I.19. 56-58, pp. 74-75.
- ²⁰⁷ This is my translation of the Latin text: *Contemplationis donum Saturnus per Saturnios daemones roborat*. cf. p. 81. The English translation has: Saturn strengthens our power of observation through the Saturnian daemons, cf. p. 187
- ²⁰⁸ Ficino (1944), Sixth speech, chapter IV, p. 187.
- ²⁰⁹ Ficino (1944), Sixth speech, chapter IV, p. 187.
- ²¹⁰ Ficino (1944), Sixth speech, chapter IV, p. 187.
- ²¹¹ cf. Lilly, p. 744.
- ²¹² Ficino (1989), III.2. 67-81, pp. 253-5.
- ²¹³ Ficino (1989), III.2.82-85, p. 255.
- ²¹⁴ A trine aspect is 120°, and a sextile 60°.
- ²¹⁵ cf. Ficino (1989), 3.1.98.
- ²¹⁶ Ficino (1989), III.23.11-13, p. 371.
- ²¹⁷ *Timaeus* [41E], p. 91.
- ²¹⁸ *Timaeus* [41E-42A], p. 91.
- ²¹⁹ *Timaeus* [38C], p. 79.
- ²²⁰ *Timaeus* [41E], p. 91.
- ²²¹ Allen (1984), p. 20.
- ²²² Ficino (2003), letter 5, Latin text, p. 158, cf, also, Ficino (1989), III.23.88&93, where he also equates daemons with angels.

- ²²³ Allen (1984), p. 20, says that the Christian “guardian angel” takes on for Ficino some of the characteristics we associate with a person’s “genius,” and that it was Apuleius who first translated the Greek *daimōn* by the Latin *genius*.
- ²²⁴ Ficino (2003), letter 5, p. 8.
- ²²⁵ Ficino (1989), III.23.8-9, p. 371. Caske and Clarke translate this as “follow the auspices of the lord of your geniture” but there is no word for “lord” in the Latin; cf. Appendix B.
- ²²⁶ *Phaedrus* [247A-B], pp. 474-5.
- ²²⁷ *Phaedrus* [248A], pp. 476-7.
- ²²⁸ Ficino (1981), Summa 30, pp. 182-3.
- ²²⁹ Ficino (1989), III.23. 1-4, p. 371.
- ²³⁰ Ficino (1989), III.23.5-9, p. 371.
- ²³¹ Ficino (1981), Summa 30, pp. 182-3.
- ²³² For the etymology of desire, cf. Wells & Costello.
- ²³³ Ficino (1981), p.182 for Allen, and Ficino (1989), p. 371 for Clarke & Caske.
- ²³⁴ Ficino (1981), Summa 30, pp. 182-3.
- ²³⁵ Ficino (1981), Summa 30, pp. 182-3.
- ²³⁶ cf. Ficino (1989), III.23.14 & Ficino (1981), Summa 30, pp. 182-3.
- ²³⁷ For realised interpretation, cf. Cornelius (2003), pp. 292-302.
- ²³⁸ Ficino (1989), III.23.52, p. 373.
- ²³⁹ Porphyry, *Letter to Anebo*.
- ²⁴⁰ Porphyry, pp. 5-6.
- ²⁴¹ *De Mysteriis*, IX.1 &2, pp. 326-7.
- ²⁴² cf. line 56 and Appendix C.
- ²⁴³ cf. for example, Ficino (2003), letter 19, p. 23.
- ²⁴⁴ Cornelius (2003), p. 6.
- ²⁴⁵ Culpeper, p. A3.
- ²⁴⁶ cf. Culpeper, p. A3.
- ²⁴⁷ Ficino (1989), I.II.8-9, p. 111.
- ²⁴⁸ cf. Tobyn, p. 75.
- ²⁴⁹ Ficino (1989), I.II.8-9, p. 111.
- ²⁵⁰ Ficino (1989), I.II.16-20, pp. 110-111.
- ²⁵¹ Walker (1958), p. 120.
- ²⁵² cf. Al-Kindi, chapter 5, note 4.
- ²⁵³ cf. Corbin (1997), p. 92.
- ²⁵⁴ Walker (1958), p. 121.
- ²⁵⁵ Walker (1958), p. 121.
- ²⁵⁶ Allen (1984), p. 102, note 28.
- ²⁵⁷ Walker (1958), p. 122.
- ²⁵⁸ Walker (2000), p. 12.
- ²⁵⁹ Voss (2011), p. 13.
- ²⁶⁰ Voss (2011), p. 14.
- ²⁶¹ Ficino (1944), Sixth Speech, chapter IV, p. 186.
- ²⁶² Ficino (1944), Sixth Speech, chapter IX, p. 196.
- ²⁶³ Ficino (1981), Summae, chapter 29, pp. 178-9.
- ²⁶⁴ Ficino (1989), III.3.4-7, p. 255.
- ²⁶⁵ Ficino (1989), III.3.17-18, p. 257.
- ²⁶⁶ Ficino (1989), III.3.18-24, p. 257.
- ²⁶⁷ Ficino (1989), III.3.24-31, p. 257.
- ²⁶⁸ cf. Proclus, appendix II, p. 316.
- ²⁶⁹ Ficino (1989), III.3.33-35, p. 257.
- ²⁷⁰ Ficino (1989), III.3.40-41, p. 257.
- ²⁷¹ Ficino (1989), III.4.4, p. 259.
- ²⁷² Corbin (1986), p. 139.
- ²⁷³ Ficino (1989), III.4.8-10, p. 259.
- ²⁷⁴ Ficino (1989), III.16.44-45, p. 323.
- ²⁷⁵ Both words mean “a breath,” cf. Lewis & Short, p. 1743 and Liddell & Scott, p.649.
- ²⁷⁶ *Timaeus* [30B], p. 55.
- ²⁷⁷ Ficino (1989), III.4.9-10, p. 259.
- ²⁷⁸ Although it is Jovial as well as Solar, cf. Ficino (1989), III.9.52-89, pp. 293-5.

- ²⁷⁹ cf. Ficino (1989), III.2.14, p. 251.
- ²⁸⁰ Ficino (1989), III.4.26 and 32, pp. 259 and 261.
- ²⁸¹ Ficino (1989), III.22.108-118, p. 369.
- ²⁸² Ficino (1989), III.20.36-42, pp. 351-3.
- ²⁸³ Ficino (1989), III.20.65, p. 353.
- ²⁸⁴ Ficino (1989), III.20.60-61, p. 353.
- ²⁸⁵ Ficino (1989), III.20.73-74, p. 353-5.
- ²⁸⁶ Ficino (1989), III.2.69-76, p. 253.
- ²⁸⁷ cf. dissertation p. 5 and Ficino (1989), III.2.10-12, p. 251.
- ²⁸⁸ cf. above, dissertation p. 7.
- ²⁸⁹ Yates, p. 66.
- ²⁹⁰ cf. Ficino (1989), introduction, pp. 28-9, for a discussion of this view.
- ²⁹¹ Corbin (1986), p. 135
- ²⁹² Corbin (1986), p. 140.
- ²⁹³ Baigent, p. 185
- ²⁹⁴ Baigent, p. 187.
- ²⁹⁵ Baigent, p. 185.
- ²⁹⁶ This is the expression that Ibn ‘Arabi also used to designate his theophanic form of prayer, cf. *Alone with the Alone*, p. 249.
- ²⁹⁷ cf. Corbin (1986), p. 141 and note 34 where he refers us to Pseudo-Magrīfī, *Das Zeil des Weisen*, I. Arabischer Text ed. Helmut Ritter, Studien der Bibliothek Warburg XII (Leipzig, 1933), pp. 195-228.
- ²⁹⁸ cf. Garin, p. 47 for a discussion of the Latin name which he considers a corruption of the name of the compiler of the book.
- ²⁹⁹ Corbin, p. 141.
- ³⁰⁰ Picatrix, p. xi.
- ³⁰¹ *Ghāyat Al-Hakīm* means ‘The Goal of the Wise,’ which might perhaps be a common title.
- ³⁰² Picatrix, p. 91.
- ³⁰³ Garin, p. 27.
- ³⁰⁴ Corbin (1986), p. 141, note 37.
- ³⁰⁵ Cornelius (2003) suggests the name *Neoplatonic* astrology is justifiable, p. 4.
- ³⁰⁶ Ficino (1989), III.I.107, p. 249.
- ³⁰⁷ For a comprehensive study of what is meant by *katarche*, cf. Cornelius (2003), particularly chapter 7, pp. 124-143.
- ³⁰⁸ cf. Cornelius (2003), pp. 308-9.
- ³⁰⁹ cf. Voss (2001) for a discussion of the divinatory nature of Ficino’s astrology.
- ³¹⁰ *Symposium* [203A], pp. 178-9.
- ³¹¹ Ficino (1984), introduction, p. 9.
- ³¹² Voss (2011), p. 9.
- ³¹³ Ficino (2003), Letter 48, p. 55.
- ³¹⁴ Ficino (1989), Apology, p. 399.
- ³¹⁵ cf. Ficino (1988), p. 62; the translation I have used is from Bullard, who quotes the letter.
- ³¹⁶ cf. above, dissertation p. 4, and Ficino (2003), letter 19, p. 21.
- ³¹⁷ Ficino (2003), letter 18, referring to letter 17, pp. 20-21.
- ³¹⁸ Ficino (2003), letter 19, p. 23.
- ³¹⁹ Ficino (2003), letter 19, p. 24.
- ³²⁰ Ficino (1989), III.23.8, p. 371. The Latin text reads: *Hoc est sane ad quod te coelum rectorque coeli genuit.*
- ³²¹ Ficino (1980), p. 169.
- ³²² Ficino (1989), III.23.8-9, p. 371; in Latin: *Eatenus igitur tuis favebit inceptis et aspirabit vitae, quatenus genitoris ipsius auspicia prosequeris...*
- ³²³ Ficino (1980), p. 169.
- ³²⁴ Line 57.
- ³²⁵ Firmicus Maternus, introduction, p. 1.
- ³²⁶ Ficino (1989), III.23.52-55, p. 373.
- ³²⁷ Ficino (1989), III.23.60-61, p. 373.
- ³²⁸ cf. Lilly, p. 104.
- ³²⁹ Firmicus Maternus, note 66, p. 311.
- ³³⁰ Ficino (1989), III.23.61-62, pp. 373-375.
- ³³¹ Part is a translation of the Latin *pars*, the name used to translate the Greek *kleros*.

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- ³³² Paulus Alexandrinus, translators preface, p. viii.
³³³ cf. Paulus Alexandrinus, p. 46, note 2.
³³⁴ Paulus Alexandrinus, p.46.
³³⁵ Paulus Alexandrinus, p. 47.
³³⁶ cf. Paulus Alexandrinus, p. 46-47.
³³⁷ cf. Paulus Alexandrinus, p. 48.