

fully and with all details. Listen now to those which concern our present discussion. He spent a very long time in Carthage.¹ . . . He there discovered certain sacred parchments which had been secretly withdrawn when the older city was destroyed, and had lain a long time in the earth unnoticed ; and he said that of all the Gods who appear to us we ought specially to honour the moon with all our substance (and so he charged me to do), because she was most potent in our life.

XXVII. 'When I marvelled at this, and asked for clearer statements, he went on : "Many tales, Sylla, are told among the Greeks about the Gods, but not all are well told. For instance, about Demeter and Cora, they are right in their names, but wrong in supposing that they both belong to the same region ; for the latter is on earth, and has power over earthly things, the former is in the moon and is concerned with things of the moon. The moon has been called both Cora and Persephone, Persephone because she gives light, Cora because we also use the same Greek word for the pupil of the eye, in which the image of the beholder flashes back, as the sunbeam is seen in the moon. In the stories told about their wanderings and the search there is an element of truth. They yearn for one another when parted, and often embrace in shadow. And what is told of Cora, that she is sometimes in heaven and in light, and again in night and darkness, is no untruth, only time has brought error into the numbers ; for it is not during six months, but at intervals of six months, that we see her received by the earth, as by a mother, in the shadow, and more rarely at intervals of five months ; for to leave Hades is impossible to her, who is herself a 'bound of Hades', as Homer² well hints in the words,

Now to Elysian plains, earth's utmost bound.

For where the shadow of the earth rests in its passage, there

¹ See n. (14), p. 312.

² *Od.* 9, 563.

Homer placed the limit and boundary of earth. To that limit comes no man that is bad or impure, but the good after death are conveyed thither, and pass a most easy life, not, however, one blessed or divine until the second death."

XXVIII. 'But what is that, Sylla ?' 'Ask me not of these things, for I am going to tell you fully myself. The common view that man is a composite creature is correct, but it is not correct that he is composed of two parts only. For they suppose that mind is in some sense a part of soul, which is as great a mistake as to think that soul is a part of body ; mind is as much better a thing and more divine than soul, as soul is than body. Now the union of soul with body makes up the passion or emotion, the further union with mind produces reason ; the former is the origin of pleasure and pain, the latter of virtue and vice. When these three principles have been compacted, the earth contributes body to the birth of man, the moon soul, the sun reason, just as he contributes her light to the moon. The death which we die is of two kinds ; the one makes man two out of three, the other makes him one out of two ; the one takes place in the earth which is the realm of Demeter, and is initiation unto her,¹ so that the Athenians used in ancient times to call the dead "Demetrians", the other is in the moon, and is of Persephone ; Hermes is the associate on earth of the one, of the other in heaven. Demeter parts soul from body quickly and with force ; Persephone parts mind from soul gently and very slowly, and therefore has been called² "Of the Birth to Unity", for the best part of man is left in oneness, when separated by her. Each process happens according to Nature, as thus : It is appointed that every soul, irrational or rational, when it has quitted the body, should wander in the region between earth and moon, but not all for an equal

¹ i. e. the words *τελεῖν, τελευτᾶν* are allied, see p. 215.

² Plato, *Tim.* 31 B and end.

time; unjust and unchaste souls pay penalties for their wrongdoings; but the good must for a certain appointed time, sufficient to purge away and blow to the winds, as noxious exhalations, defilements from the body, which is their vicious cause, be in that mildest part of the air which they call "The Meadows of Hades"; then they return as from long and distant exile back to their country, they taste such joy as men feel here who are initiated, joy mingled with much amazement and trouble, yet also with a hope which is each man's own. For many who are already grasping at the moon she pushes off and washes away, and some even of those souls which are already there and are turning round to look below are seen to be plunged again into the abyss. But those which have passed above, and have found firm footing, first go round like victors wreathed with crowns of feathers called "crowns of constancy", because they kept the irrational part of the soul obedient to the curb of reason, and well ordered in life. Then with countenance like a sunbeam, and soul borne lightly upwards by fire, as here, namely that of the air about the moon, they receive tone and force from it, as iron takes an edge in its bath; for that which is still volatile and diffuse is strengthened and becomes firm and transparent, so that they are nourished by such vapour as meets them, and well did Heraclitus¹ say that "Souls feed on smell in Hades."

XXIX. First they look on the moon herself, her size, her beauty, and her nature, which is not single or unmixed, but as it were a composition of earth and star. For as the earth has become soft by being mixed with air and moisture, and as the blood infused into the flesh produces sensibility, so the moon, they say, being mingled with air through all her depth, is endowed with soul and with fertility, and at the same time receives a balance, lightness set against weight. Even so the

¹ Fr. 38.

universe itself, duly framed together of things having some an upward tendency, some a downward, is freed from all movement of place. This Xenocrates apprehended, it would seem, by some divine reasoning, having received the suggestion from Plato. For it is Plato¹ who showed that every star has been compounded of earth and fire by means of intermediate natures given in proportion, since nothing reaches the senses into which earth and light do not enter. But Xenocrates says that the stars and the sun are compounded out of fire and the first density, the moon out of the second density and her own air, and earth out of water, fire, and the third density; and that as an universal law, neither the dense alone nor the rarefied alone is capable of receiving soul. So much then for the substance of the moon. But her breadth and bulk are not what geometricians say, but many times greater. The reason why she but seldom measures the shadow of the earth with [three of] her own diameters, is not its smallness, but her heat, whereby she increases her speed that she may swiftly pass through and beyond the dark region, bearing from out it the souls of the good, as they hasten and cry aloud, for being in the shadow they no longer hear the harmony of heaven. At the same time there are borne up from below through the shadow the souls of those who are to be punished, with wailing and loud cries. Hence comes the widespread custom of clanking vessels of brass during eclipses, with a din and a clatter to reach the souls. Also the face, as we call it, terrifies them, when they are near, so grim and weird is it to their sight. Really it is nothing of the kind; but as our earth has gulfs deep and great, one here which streams inwards towards us from the Pillars of Hercules, outwards the Caspian, and those about the Red Sea, even such are those depths and hollows of the moon. The largest of them they call the Gulf of Hecate, where the souls endure

¹ *Tim.* 31 B.

and exact retribution for all the things which they have suffered or done ever since they became spirits ; two of them are long, through which the souls pass, now to the parts of the moon which are turned toward heaven, now back to the side next to earth. The parts of the moon toward heaven are called " the Elysian plain ", those toward earth " the plain of Persephone Antichthon ".

XXX. ' However, the spirits do not pass all their time upon her, they come down here to superintend oracles, take part in the highest rites of initiation and mysteries, become guardian avengers of wrongdoing, and shine forth as saving lights in war and on the sea. In these functions, whatever they do in a way which is not right, from anger or to win unrighteous favour, or in jealousy, they suffer for it, being thrust down to earth again and imprisoned in human bodies. From the better of them, the attendants of Cronus said that they are themselves sprung, as in earlier times the Dactyli of Ida, the Corybantes in Phrygia, the Trophoniades in Udora of Boeotia, and countless others in many parts of the inhabited world ; whose temples and houses and appellations remain to this day. Some there are whose powers are failing because they have passed to another place by an honourable exchange. This happens to some sooner, to others later, when mind has been separated from soul ; the separation comes by love for the image which is in the sun ; through it there shines upon them that desirable, beautiful, divine, and blessed presence for which all Nature yearns, yet in different ways. For it is through love of the sun that the moon herself makes her circuit, and has her meetings with him to receive from him all fertility. That Nature which is the soul remains on the moon, preserving traces and dreams of the former life, and of it you may take it that it has been rightly said :

*Winged as a dream the soul takes flight away.*¹

¹ Od. II, 222.

Not at the first, and not when it is quit of the body does this happen to it, but afterwards when it becomes deserted and solitary, set free from mind. Of all that Homer has told us I think that there is nothing more divine than where he speaks of those in Hades :

*Next was I ware of mighty Hercules,
His ghost—himself among the immortals dwells.*¹

For the self of each of us is not courage, nor fear, nor desire, any more than it is a parcel of flesh and of humours ; it is that whereby we understand and think. The soul being shaped by the mind and itself shaping the body and encompassing it upon all sides, stamps its form upon it, so that even if it is separated from both for a long time, yet it possesses the likeness and the stamp, and is rightly called an image. Of these, the moon, as has been said, is the element, for they are resolved into her just as are the bodies of the dead into earth ; the temperate speedily, those who embraced a life of quiet and Philosophy ; for, having been set free by mind, and having no further use for the passions, they wither away. But of the ambitious, and active, and sensuous, and passionate, some are distracted as though in sleep, dreaming out their memories of life, as the soul of Endymion ; but when their restless and susceptible nature starts them out of the moon and draws them to another birth, she does not suffer it, but draws them back and soothes them. For no trifling matter is it, nor quiet, nor conventional, when in the absence of mind, they get them a body by passionate endeavour ; Tityi and Typhones, and that Typhon who seized Delphi and confounded the oracle there by insolence and force, came of such souls as these, deserted by reason, and left to the wild wanderings of their emotional part. But in course of time the moon receives even these unto herself and brings

¹ Od. II, 600.

them to order; then, when the sun again sows mind, she receives it with vital power and makes new souls, and, thirdly, earth provides a body; for earth gives nothing after death of what she received for birth; the sun receives nothing, save that he receives back the mind which he gives, but the moon both receives and gives, and compounds, and distributes in diverse functions; she who compounds has Ilithyia for her name, she who distributes, Artemis. And of the three Fates Atropus has her station about the sun and gives the first impulse of generation; Clotho moving about the moon combines and mingles, lastly Lachesis, upon the earth, lends her hand, and she has most to do with Fortune; for that which is without soul is powerless in itself and is affected by others, mind is free from affection and sovereign; soul a compound and a middle term, has, like the moon, been formed by the God, a blend and mixture of things above and things below, and thus bears the same relation to the sun which the earth does to the moon.'

'Such', said Sylla, 'is the story which I heard the stranger relate, but he had it from the chamberlains and ministers of Cronus, as he himself used to say. But you and your friends, Lamprias, may take the story in what way you will.'