Damascius stands at the very end of the period in which the Platonic tradition was passed from philosopher to philosopher in an unbroken line of teachers: he was head of the Athenian Academy (commonly known as Plato’s Academy) when the Emperor Justinian closed the pagan schools by an edict of 529 AD. His writing, therefore, rests upon over 1,000 years of development. Furthermore many of the ideas enshrined in his writings have been badly neglected, so that the modern reader will find many of his concepts difficult – they embrace the pagan understanding of the Henads, or Gods, as well a initiatory myth and ritual. I hope that by the end of our five sessions the basic concepts at least will be sufficiently aired to give the newcomer a reasonable grasp of late Platonic thought.

The Commentary on the Phaedo was preserved in a scroll which was originally identified as the work of Olympiodorus (the head of the Alexandrian Academy at the time of the Imperial Edict of closure): it was not until the mid-twentieth century that scholars realised that the scroll consisted of three works – two by Damascius, and one by Olympiodorus – all of which were commentaries (or possibly lecture notes) on Plato’s Phaedo.

It will be useful for participants to be familiar with Plato’s dialogue itself, although this is not absolutely necessary as we will take various points raised by Damascius on their own merits. The first session will look at ideas of Separation, Purification and Death – in other words, our exercise of what was known as cathartic arete, or virtue. An earlier writer, Porphyry (the pupil of Plotinus, and the editor of the great man’s Enneads), had this to say about these matters:

The soul is bound to the body by a conversion to the corporeal passions; and again liberated by becoming impassive to the body.

That which nature binds, nature also dissolves: and that which the soul binds, the soul likewise dissolves. Nature, indeed, bound the body to the soul; but the soul binds herself to the body. Nature, therefore, liberates the body from the soul; but the soul liberates herself from the body.

Hence there is a twofold death; the one, indeed, universally known, in which the body is liberated from the soul; but the other peculiar to philosophers, in which the soul is liberated from the body. Nor does the one entirely follow the other.

On the following pages are the extracts for our five sessions: The areas I hope to cover are:

1 - Separation, Purification and Death – Damascius I, 126-132 (with references to 1-13)
2 - On Initiation – Damascius I,165-175
3 - On Recollection – Damascius I, 253-261 & 266-271 (very similar to II, 4-28)
4 - The Essence of Soul – Damascius I, 407-430 (again similar material in II, 66-80)
§§ 126–137. On separation, purification, death:
Socrates’ conclusion. 67c5–68c4

126. [67e5–d2] Separation is not the same thing as purification; the body, indeed, is not purified when separated from the soul, but rather it becomes unclean and therefore causes uncleanness.

The statement made above [§124.1–2] also needs correction: in current usage a thing does not become cleaner when it is separated from the superior. The fact is expressed clearly in the Sophist [227d6–7]: ‘Purification is, of course, keeping the rest, while discarding anything that might be inferior’. The Curetes, too, surround the creative Gods, because they stoop to a lower level of being.

127. [67d4–5] Death is not identical with purification, only the death that detaches from the inferior is. For death is a process of separation, as

§§ 126–127. Ol. 7 § 2.12–15. On the relation between purification, separation, and death: (§ 126) not all separation is purification, despite Ph. 67e5–d2; (§ 127) not all death is purification, despite Ph. 67d4–5.

§ 126.1–2. Iambi., men. 241.12–17 ἔτι τοῖν τῶν μὲν ἄνθρωποις σωμάτων, ἐπειδὰν ἀπολλῆν ἅπα τῆς γὰρ θείας ζωῆς ἤκουσεν ἡ μέγα τῆς κατὰ τὸν θάνατον τῶν δὲ ἄλλων ζωῆς ἡ ἐνέχει ἀνάλογον πρὸς τὸν καθήμενον κατὰ τὸν θάνατον τῶν δὲ ἄλλων ζωῆς σωμάτων ἦν. 3–4. The use of ἀλλὰ, in spite of the fact that lines 3–6 simply confirm lines 1–2, indicates that this is an observation by Dam., who thinks that in view of lines 1–2 the preceding statement in § 124.1–2 should be revised also.

6–7. The Curetes found their way into Neoplatonic metaphysics via the Orphica (frgs. 150–151, 185–186). They are interpreted by Pr., theol. V 3, 253.36–51, and esp. V 35, 322.22–324.46, as the second triad of the intellective (or demiurgic) order, the first being formed by Kronos (Pure Intelligence), Rhea (Intelllective Life) and Zeus (Creative Form). The real purpose in introducing them was no doubt to expand the original intellective triad into a heptad with material taken from the same myth (the Seventh God is the τομή of Kronos), thus establishing the numerical pattern 1, 3, 7, 12, 10, corresponding to the intelligible, intelligible-intellective, intellective, supra-mundane and mundane orders respectively. Since in the myth the Curetes play the part of bodyguards, Pr. derives their name from the supposed adjective κορῆς = κορᾶς and assigns to them the function of protecting the transcendent world from contamination by genesis. They are identified with the ἄμαλλος τάξις of the Chaldean Oracles, another Neoplatonic flight of fancy (see Kroll p. 21). The text speaks of creative Gods generally (line 6), because in the Orphica the Curetes are also the bodyguard of Dionysus (frg. 34) and of Kore (frg. 161).

§ 127. The rather condensed argument can be summarized as follows: (1–3) death is purification only as far as the higher component is concerned; (3–5) separation and death differ in so far as death presupposes a prior union; (5–7) in the case of permanent separation, the ‘death of everlasting beings’ discussed in § 62, death does still not coincide with otherness, because death presupposes the existence of the other, which otherness brings about (otherness being a productive principle that constitutes things rather than supposes them already there: Dam., Parm. 163.7–8 ἄτιτλα γὰρ γόνυς πρόδοσις καὶ πρόδοσιν πάσης αἰτίας); (7–8) death thus understood remains nevertheless related to life, since the processes of integration and differentiation are precisely those characterizing transcendent life.
it was said in the definition given above [64c7–8]; this is why we speak of
death from above and death from below. Is being separate identical, then,
with being dead? No, for the latter follows a period of union, which union
is dissolved by death. But if there is permanent separation, there is perma-
nent dissolution and permanent death; then what difference is there be-
tween death and otherness? Death severs mutual relations, and so those
other things must exist already. And what has death still to do with life?
That both inclination towards a thing and withdrawal from it are vital
processes; now it is relations of this kind that are severed by death.

128. [67c5–d2] First, the soul must constitute an image of herself in
the body (that is what animating the body means); secondly, she must be
in sympathy with her phantom because of the likeness, since every form is
drawn towards its replica as a result of its innate concentration upon itself;
thirdly, having entered into the divided body, she must be torn asunder
with it and end in utter disintegration; until through a life of purification
she gathers herself from her dispersed state, unites the bond of sympathy,
and actualizes the primal life within her that exists by itself without the
phantom.

129. The myth [Orph. frg. 209] describes the same events as taking
place in the prototype of the soul. When Dionysus had projected his
reflection into the mirror, he followed it and was thus scattered over
the universe. Apollo gathers him and brings him back to heaven, for
he is the purifying God and truly the savior of Dionysus, and therefore
he is celebrated as the 'Dionysus-Giver'.

130. Like Kore, the soul descends into genesis, like Dionysus she is
scattered by generation, like Prometheus and the Titans she is chained to
the body. She frees herself by acquiring the strength of Hercules, gathers
herself together through the help of Apollo and of Athena the Savior, i.e.
by truly purifying philosophy, and she elevates herself to the causes of her
being with Demeter.

131. [67c6–d11] The syllogism can be constructed as follows:

   The philosopher frees himself from the body, separates himself
   from the body, prepares for death.

132. [67d7–8] 'Only to those who practice philosophy in the right way',
that is to say, steadfastly and in a spirit of purification, 'their own deliver-
ance is a matter of intense and incessant care', the 'care' [προμήθεια] coming
to them from Prometheus, the constancy and intensity from
Hercules; for it is to unceasing endeavor that the effort of liberation owes
its strength.

§ 129.1. ἐν τῷ παραθέματι: Dionysus, usually the cosmic intelligence, is some-
times the prototype of the human soul; Dam., Phil. § 228,7–8.
2. Dionysus and the mirror: texts from Plotinus (IV 3, 12.1–2) and Proclus
4. Διονυσόδότης: Pausanias I 31,4 mentions an altar 'Ἀπάλλωνος Διονυσόδότου
   in the Attic deme Phyla, which is generally taken to be the genitive from Διονυσόδότου,
   Proclus, to whom the present note is probably due, may have known the genitive
   only, in which case we may assume that he deliberately (and perhaps rightly)
   preferred the nominative in -της because of a supposed connection with the
   Orphic myth.

§ 130. The three phases of § 128 expressed in mythical symbols: descent and
return (Kore/Demeter), imprisonment and deliverance (Prometheus/Hercules),
disruption and reintegration (Dionysus/Apollo and Athena). There is no express
evidence that the chained Prometheus figured in the Orphica; he may have been
introduced here because no other instance of a delivered Titan was available, and
mentioned again at § 132 because the word προμήθεια (Ph. 67d7) suggested
his name. However, the Orphic epic did refer to the theft of the fire (frg. 143):
Servius, Aen. VI 392, cites Orpheus for an account of Heracles’ descent to Hades
and Charon’s punishment for admitting him (frg. 296, from the Καράβανας εἰς Ἀδόν
according to Kern). – Prometheus as Providence unbound by its own power:
Plotinus IV 3, 14.12–16; Pépin 200–201.
PART ONE: ON DEATH

I. FIRST PROBLEM: SUICIDE


1. [62b2–6] ... opinions and show what is the true interpretation. In the first place, then, the reason must be peculiar to the original problem and not of general application, since it says 'the reason given for this in esoteric doctrine.' Secondly it must not be obvious and within easy reach, or it would not be referred to as 'esoteric,' 'deep,' or 'not easy to grasp.' Thirdly, the mystic reason must command greater reverence than the philosophical account, which Socrates feels justified in revealing, because it is exoteric; accordingly, if the philosophical account proceeds from the multitude of the Gods, the other must have a monad as its starting-point. Fourthly, the multitude here must be continuous with the monad there, and the characteristics of ... should not be disparate, for abrupt transition is against scientific method. Fifthly, the ........ demonstration results in the particular ........ kept in custody ........ the reason should be visibly connected with ........ because even for the body custody ........ it is described as 'a certain' custody, i.e. as it were ............, either there is a possibility ........ or because being equipped for knowledge ........ In the tenth place, the reason belongs to the initiatory order of things and should be ranked neither higher nor lower.

§§ 1–13. The prolegomena to the dialogue and the commentary on the introductory conversation are lost. The commentary on the 'esoteric' argument seems to be nearly complete, though a general discussion of suicide corresponding to Ol. 1 §§ 1–2 and 7–9 may have preceded it. – Both Pr. and Dam. (who expresses disagreement on one particular point in §§ 4 and 11) follow Porphyry and Xenocrates in connecting the φρονεῖ with Dionysus. The myth of Dionysus according to the Orphic epic is outlined by K. Ziegler, RE, art. Orphische Dichtung, vol. 18.2, 1354.7–50 (frgs. 202–220, 232, 235 Kern; a few details overlooked by Kern can be added from Dam. 1 § 14.8, § 170.3–6 and II § 8.2, see notes): Dionysus, son of Zeus and Persephone, is enthroned by Zeus as king of the Gods; Hera plots against him with the Titans. Neglecting Apollo’s warnings he rises from his Father’s throne to join the Titans, who have disguised themselves as Bacchants, carrying the thrysus. They hand him a thrysus instead of his royal sceptre, and some toys, among which a mirror. While he is contemplating his face in the mirror, they attack him, tear him to pieces and devour his flesh. His heart is saved by Athena, Apollo gathers what is left of the limbs. The Titans are burnt by the lightning-bolts of Zeus, out of their ashes man is created. Dionysus is reborn from Semele.

1. § 1. The list is from Pr., for the fourth point (referred to in § 3) is contested by Dam. in § 4. Each point is either elided somehow from the text of the Ph. or deduced from general principles, and formulated so as to support Pr.’s interpretation of the ‘custody’. – The text is too badly damaged for reconstruction, even the division between points 5–9 is not discernible with certainty. The following is merely by way of an example: καὶ μὴ ἀπφίληθα τοὺς λόγους [τῶν τάξεων] οὐ γὰρ ἐπιστημονικὸν ἢ ἄμεσος μετάβασις. πέμπτος τὸ τῆς ἀμφισβήτητος καθολικοτέρων εἶναι, πέμπτος γὰρ ἢ απόδειξις τῶν μερικῶν εἶναι. [ἐκεῖνον ὦ πεί μὴ ἀκούσαις φρονής] τὸν ἐν φρονεῖ οὖν [αὐτός λόγος. ἐπιδομαὶ] δι’ ἡμας ὧν δεῖ τῇ καὶ σωματικὸς τε’] καὶ γάρ τῷ σώματι καὶ φρονεῖς [δεῖ. διδόομεν ὦ ... ἐκεῖνον ὦ] (ή M) φρονεῖς τε’ ἐστί καὶ οἷον (μερική καὶ ἄμεσος, ὦ δὴ δύναται τὶς ὧν πολλοῖσιν] ὡς γνωστικοι τῶν καθόλων οὖν τὰς φρονεῖς οὐ χρήσι αὐτοῦ διαβήσειν. “The characteristics of the [orders] should not be disparate, for abrupt transition is against scientific method. Fifthly, the [esoteric reason is more general, since by its nature] logical demonstration results in the particular. [Sixthly, it is with human souls] kept in custody [that the discourse is concerned. Seventhly,] the reason should be visibly connected with [corporeal being,] because even for the body custody [is needed. Eighthy, ... Ninthly,] it is described as a ‘certain’ custody, i.e. as it were [particular and individual; or this may be because there is a possibility [of escape,] or because, being equipped for knowledge [of the universal, souls cannot easily discern it.] Number nine is especially questionable, since Pr. is trying to delimit the character of the ‘custody’ by means of data from the text, so that a choice of possibilities is out of place. However, without more drastic changes in the extant words, I see no possibility of avoiding this.
2. Guided by these principles, we shall have no difficulty in proving that the 'custody' is neither the Good, as some think, nor pleasure, as Numenius [frg. 38] says, nor the Creator, as is the opinion of Paterius, but we must hold with Xenocrates [frg. 20] that it is of the Titanic order and culminates in Dionysus. Porphyry has already hinted at this in his commentary.

3. Creation being twofold, either indivisible or divided, the latter, according to the commentator, is ruled by Dionysus, and therefore divided, the former by Zeus; each of the two has his own multitude of subordinates, Zeus of Olympian Gods, Dionysus of Titans; and in both cases we have a monad as well as a triad of Creators.

§ 2. See P. Butzer, *Note sur la ἐννοία platonicienne*, Rev. de philol. 37, 1963, 7–11. – The first, anonymous, view is original in that it takes 'custody' to mean neither 'prison' (the prevailing opinion in antiquity) nor 'guard duty' (as many modern commentators do, following Cicero, Cat. 20,73), but 'divine protection'. Since it identifies this protective Providence with the transcendent Good, no doubt in order to accord the mystic character of the doctrine, it must be post-Ptolemaic.

– Numenius takes the usual view that 'custody' means imprisonment in the body, and makes pleasure the cause of the soul's downfall, a belief ascribed to the 'Pythagoreans' by Dam. Phil. § 229: 'souls fall down into genesis through honey'; cf. Porphyry, De antro 16–18, a passage probably depending on Numenius and Cronius. – Paterius, too, interprets the 'custody' as divine care, presumably that of the supreme Demiurge of the Titanae; Pr.'s objection to this is that it is too comprehensive and ignores the reference to an esoteric tradition. – For Porphyry's view, adopted by Pr., we have a parallel view in Macrobius, *somn. Scip.* I 12,12: "ipse autem Librum patrem Orphacii non θλιαόν suspicantur intelligi, qui ab illo individuo natus in singulos ipse dividitur,ideo in illorum sacris traditur Titano furono in membris discrētis et frustis sequitis, rursum unus et integer emersisse, quis nōcē, quem diximus mentem vocari, ex individuo praebendo se dividendum, et rursum ex disivo ad individuum revertendo et mundi impetum officia et naturae suae arcana non desiderat." Combined with the present text this shows that to Porphyry Dionysus symbolizes the world mind, and the Titans its vestiges in the material world. – Heinze, *Xenocrates* pp. 149–155, trying to decide in how far Xenocrates shared this interpretation, points out two possibly relevant texts: Phutarch, de erva sarm. 7, 96C看不到破旧的奥立克或 asynchronous πίθη τοῦ δομιλητῆρος καὶ τὰς Τιτάνους ἐν αὐτῶν τολμήματα γενομένης τοῦ φώτον κολλών ... καὶ κεφαλαίων. Ἀρνηκέθι (Ἀρνηκέθι MSS.) ἐστι μέθος ἐς τὴν παλιγγενεσίαν τὸ γάρ ἐν ἡμῖν θλιαόν καὶ ἄσκοπον καὶ βίαν, οὐ θείοι ἀλλὰ δαμασκών, οἱ παλαιοὶ Τιτάνας ἀνήμηται, τοῦτ’ ἐστι καλαιζόμενος καὶ θλιαύντας. Dio Chry. or. 30,10–11 ὅτι τοὺς τῶν Τιτάνων αἰμάτως ἱμέν ἡμεῖς ἀπαντοί εἰς ἄθροισιν. ὡς οὔ ἐκεῖον ἠχηθήν δεντον τούς θεάς καὶ πολεμήσαντο γαθένες ἡμεῖς φίλοι ἐγάμν. ἀλλὰ κολαζόμεθα τὸ ἐνα’ αὐτῶν καὶ ἐπὶ τιμοθεί γεγόμεν, ἐν προφαθῇ δὲ δίκαιος ἐν τῷ βίῳ τοσοῦτον χρῆνον δοῦν ἐκατομ ζάμεν. ... ἢν εἶναι δὲ τὸν μὲν τόπον τούτων, ἐν κόσμῳ ὑφαίσθησαν, διαματήτως ἐπὶ τῶν θεῶν κατασκευασμένον χαλεπόν τε καὶ δυσάρεστον. The ultimate origin of the second text is unknown (Antisthenes has been suggested, cf. Dio § 25), the first may derive from Xenocrates, who has been cited a few lines before (996A). It seems fairly certain that he used the symbols of the prison (the body or the material world), the Titans (guilt and disintegration of the individual soul) and also that of Dionysus (the world mind divided in creation); though he may have done so in direct reference to the *Phaedo*, a commentary in the proper sense is out of the question. Porphyry, who had some material from Xenocrates at his disposal (cf. H. Dörrie, *RE*, art. *Xenocrates*, ser. II, vol. 9, 1518.10–25), took up the suggestion.
4. What he says about a monad and a triad is true, but we must maintain that the Titans who plot against Dionysus belong to another divine character, because no manifold opposes or destroys its own monad, otherwise it would destroy itself also. Besides, it is not to the Titans, but to the other Gods that Zeus says [Orph. frg. 208]:

‘Hearken, ye Gods, this is the King I give you.’

So long, indeed, as Dionysus sits on the throne of Zeus, he is undivided to the Titans that he is divided and undergoes a metamorphosis in the way of, but in the Titanic way.

In fact, even when he is divided, he is still made whole is more according to his nature. Let us say, therefore the forms or of the whole, though only his own as Titanic because they are dispersed or intermediate and constitute the universe, but not the whole, as belonging to the sphere of Dionysus. Hence he can be said to be at the same time indivisible and divisible, for such is the nature of the universe, which has rather the character of an aggregate and is held together by a totality whose parts are distinct.

5. Why are the Titans said to plot against Dionysus? — Because they initiate a mode of creation that does not remain within the bounds of the multiform continuity of Dionysus.

6. Their punishment consists in the checking of their dividing activities. Such is all chastisement: it aims at restraining and reducing erroneous dispositions and activities.

7. Tradition knows three kinds of punishments inflicted on the Titans: lightning-bolts, shackles, descents into various lower regions. This last kind is in the nature of a retribution, as it aggravates their leaning towards division and uses their shattered remains for the constitution of individuals, human and otherwise; the second is coercive, checking their powers of division; the first is purificatory and makes them whole, though only by participation. All three should be regarded as imposed upon each, though the myth distributes them, for each possesses higher, intermediate and lower powers.

6–12. A tentative restoration of the damaged passage: ἔπαι καὶ ἦ Διονύσις ἐν μὲν τῷ θρόνῳ τοῦ Διός άμιρατος [μέτει, καταβαίνει δὲ] εἰς τοὺς Τιτάνες μεγίζεται [μεταμορφοφέται, καὶ τὸν τότο οὐ διονυσιακόν] ἀλλὰ Τιτάνες ἀμέλει και [διασάρμην καὶ] μεταμορφοφέται [οὐ διονυσιακόν] μᾶλλον πειρακόν. λέγη τούτον [ἡ τοῦ πατρός ἐναί] τὰ ἐδώ μὴ τὸ ἄλων ἐναί (εἰ καὶ Μ) μίνον ... τὸν θανόν, ὡς Τιτάνων [μέτατο] τὸ διασάρμην ἡ μέσα ἐναί καὶ τὸ πᾶν συμπληροῖ, ἀλλ’ οὐ τὸ ἄλων ὡς Διονυσιακόν. “So long, indeed, as Dionysus sits on the throne of Zeus, he is undivided, and it is only after his descent amid the Titans that he is divided and undergoes [countless] metamorphoses, [not in the Dionysiac,] but in the Titanic way. In fact, even [when he is torn and] divided, he is still made whole because [integrity] is more in agreement with his nature. Accordingly we can state that forms belong [either to the sum total] or to the whole only ... his own ... [but then] as Titanic forms, inasmuch as they are dispersed or intermediate (half-united) and constitute the sum total, but not the whole, as Dionysiac forms would.” Practically all the details are open to doubt: the passage Pr., Tüms. I 297.28–31, which contains some of the key words, does not help; there is no authority for ἄπειρος (for which cf. ἀγωνικός and πειρακός), but in Kretschmer-Locke, Rückläufiges Worterbuch (‘Göttingen 1963), there are no words in -αγωνικός, -πειρακός, -φασικός, -φασικός or -φασικός that could serve; I see no possibility of construing the singular τὸν ἔσοχον, which would suppose the mind or Dionysus as the subject and a masculine singular as the direct object. Yet the general purport must be to point out (against Pr.) that the Dionysiac and the Titanic orders are fundamentally different, Dionysiac form being characterized by unity, Titanic form by dispersal.
8. In what sense are men created from the fragments of the Titans? — From the fragments, because their life is reduced to the utmost limit of differentiation; of the Titans, because they are the lowest of Creators and in immediate contact with their creation. For Zeus is the 'Father of men and Gods,' the Titans of men only, not of Gods, and they cannot even be called fathers, but have become men themselves, and not simply themselves, but their dead bodies, and even of these only the fragments, the fragmentary condition of our existence being thus transferred to those who are its causes.

9. The Titanic mode of life is the irrational mode, by which rational life is torn asunder.

It is better to acknowledge its existence everywhere, since in any case at its source there are Gods, the Titans; then also on the plane of rational life, this apparent self-determination, which seems to aim at belonging to itself alone and neither to the superior nor to the inferior, is wrought in us by the Titans; through it we tear asunder the Dionysus in ourselves, breaking up the natural continuity of our being and our partnership, so to speak, with the superior and the inferior. While in this condition, we are Titans; but when we recover that lost unity, we become Dionysus and we attain what can be truly called completeness.

10. What is the 'kind of custody' [62b3-4]? — Viewed as the guarding power, it is Dionysus himself, who loosens the shackle for whom he will, since he is also the cause of individual life. Viewed as the object of the custody, on the other hand, it is the experience itself of being bound in the body, which has befallen us of necessity as an act of justice; for by actualizing her own separate existence the soul has been locked up in a body which, though her own, has also many wants, to make her feel her dependence on the common form and teach her what it is to be an individual.

11. Dionysus is the cause of deliverance only; therefore this God is also named Lyseus, and Orpheus says [frg. 232]:

'And men shall bring to thee rich hecatombs,
yearly, in season, and celebrate thy rites,
seeking deliverance from their forebears' sins;
and thou, their Lord, shalt free whomever thou wilt
from weary toil and agony unrelieved.'

The guarding power, however, in the most comprehensive sense, is Zeus, or, more immediately, the Young Gods, or, most directly, the generative Gods, who have also the power to destroy.

It should be observed that Dionysus, too, is a God in charge of creation, because of his connection with rebirth.

12. [62b4-5] It is the Gods who appoint the term of the imprisonment, as long as it is better for embodied souls to be under restraint, in view of the final goal, which is deliverance by Dionysus. This measure and this appointed term we can never know; therefore, if we free ourselves, such a way of gaining our freedom is not release, but flight, because we still need to be kept in custody.

13. [62b4] Socrates qualifies suicide now as 'unlawful' [61c10], then as 'impious' [62a6], then again as 'undue' [62b4]. The first term measures it by the standard imposed by the Gods, the second by the standard of what we owe to the Gods, while the notion of what is 'due' seems to include both.

§§ 10–11. The obvious relation between the two sections is that § 10 presents the view of Pr. as reported by Ol. 1 § 6 (Dionysus the Lord of death and life), whereas in § 11 Dam., insisting on the fundamental difference between Dionysus and the Titans (§ 4), opposes this and makes Dionysus the Deliverer only, while the creating Gods and esp. the Titans are responsible for the incarceration which is incarnation.

§§ 14–15. In § 14.1–5 Pr. makes two points: (1) the exoteric argument is a development of the esoteric one, analogous to the Titanic manifold, which is the development of the Dionysiac monad; (2) the relation Dionysus-Titans is analogous to that of Helios-Young Gods, since Dionysus and Helios meet in the triad Helios-Apollo-Dionysus. — Dam. § 14.6–8, instead of the latter, proposes a different triadic
§§ 165–172. Philosophy is initiation. 69c3–d2

165. Dialectical thought should either start from the divine riddles, developing the mysterious truth in them, or come to rest in them and derive its final confirmation from their symbolical indications, or it should combine the two, as Socrates does here. The whole discussion consisting of two problems, the ban on suicide, and, in spite of this, the necessity of detaching oneself from the body, he makes the divine mysteries the starting-point for the first [62b2–6] and the final point of the second.

166. In this, he imitates the mystic and cosmic cycle of souls. Having fled the undivided Dionysian life and fixed their actual existence on the level of the Titanic and confined way of life, they are in shackles and in 'custody' [62b4]; but when they submit to their punishment and take care of themselves, then, cleansed from the taints of Titanic existence and gathered together, they become Bacchus, that is to say, they become whole again, as the Dionysus who remains above is whole.

167. In the mysteries the first stage used to be general purifying ceremonies, followed by more secret ones, after which conjunction took place, then initiation, and finally vision. Analogous to these stages are the several degrees of virtues, the ethical and social virtues corresponding to the public purifying rites, the purificatory virtues, in which all the extraneous is discarded, to the more secret purifications, speculative activity on the reflective level to conjunction, integration of its results to form an indivisible whole to initiation, simple intuition of simple forms to vision.

168. The object of the initiatory rites is to take souls back to a final destination, which was also the starting-point from which they first set out on their downward journey, and where Dionysus gave them being, seated on his father's throne, that is to say, firmly established in the integral Zeussian life. It follows necessarily that the initiate will 'live with the Gods,' in accordance with the design of the initiating Gods. Initiatory rites are twofold: those here below, which are a kind of preparation, and those in the hereafter, of which there are, in my opinion, again two kinds, those that purify the pneumatic body (as rites here below do the 'shell-like' body) and those that purify the astral body. In other words, the way upward through initiation has three degrees, as also has the way through philosophy: the philosophers' way to perfection takes three thousand years, as it is said in the *Phaedrus* [249a3–5], the number thousand representing a full life and a complete period. Therefore the 'uninitiated,' because farthest remote from his destination, 'lies in slime,' both here and even more hereafter, where his place is in the 'dregs of creation,' Tartarus itself. Of course the text mentions only the extremes, but there is also a wide range of intermediate states. The ways by which philosophy leads us upwards can be

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§§ 165–166. Cf. 8 § 7. Socrates’ speech, by beginning and ending with the mysteries of Dionysus, has described a perfect circle, analogous to the cycle of the soul. On Dionysus see note on §§ 1–13.

§ 167. Norvin cites another passage paralleling philosophy and initiation from Tho Smyrn. (14.18–16.2). Tho’s stages are: 1 purification (mathematics); 2 instruction (logic, politics, physics); 3 ἐποπτεία (dialectic); 4 coronation (teaching ability); 5 happiness by living with the Gods (assimilation to God). Hermias 178.14–20 compares the terms τελετή, μύης and ἐποπτεία as applied to the philosophical life. Correspondences between the three texts are not particularly striking, they must have taken their cues independently from Pl. (Phaedr. 249b6–d3; 250b5–c6; Symp. 209e5–210a2; Epin. 980c5–d4). Cf. Pr., theol. IV 26, 77.9–19.

2. συντάξεις: see LSJ s.v. 1 and esp. Lewy 228–238, who gives the following description: “The term derives from the current vocabulary of the magical science and applies to the ‘conjunction’ of a magician with a god or with one of his ministering spirits . . ., who aids the theurgist by granting him the superhuman powers required for the accomplishment of the magical act. Thus the ‘conjunction’ precedes the main magical operation.” Examples from magical papyri in LSJ; principal occurrences in Neoplatonic texts: Porphyry, ap. Iamb., myst. 132.6; Iamb., ibid. 133.16–143.2; Pr., Tim. III 89.16–20; Marin., mit. Pr. 38.
thought of in analogous terms, though the communion achieved through
them is not perfect nor equal to the mystic union. If it is true that a man
who pursues philosophy without eagerness will not have the benefit of its
results, it is no less true that neither will a man who follows the way of
initiation without total commitment reap its fruits.

169. [696e] The word ‘to lie’ describes the helplessness that makes the
soul dependent on external impulses, because it has become like a body,
while ‘living with the Gods’ means belonging to their community and
sharing in their government. But if so, what is the sense of the Oracle [frg.
130.2]

‘They rest in God, breathing the midday rays’?
Here the condition is a higher one, surpassing all power of self-movement,
as it were a supernatural form of being moved from without.

170. [698c–d1] The fennel-stalk symbolizes matter-bound and divided
creation, because it is a spurious form, being ‘a tree, yet not a tree.’
A better reason is its utterly broken continuity, which has made the
plant an attribute of the Titans: they offer it to Dionysus instead of his
paternal sceptre, and thus they entice him into divided existence; further,
the Titans are represented as bearing the fennel-stalk and Prometheus
steals the fire in one, which means either that he forces down the celestial
light into the world of process, or that he leads forth the soul to incarnation,
or that he calls forth into the generated world the whole of divine illumina-
tion, which is itself ungenerated. This is, in fact, why Socrates too calls the
masses ‘bearers of the fennel-stalk’ with the Orphic term, because they lead
the Titanic life.

171. The first Bacchus is Dionysus, whose ecstasy manifests itself in
dancing [bassis] and shouting [iaché], that is, in every form of movement,
of which he is the cause according to the Laws [II 672a5–d4]; but one who
has dedicated himself to Dionysus, having become his image, shares his
name also. And when a man leads a Dionysian life, his troubles are already
ended and he is free from his bonds and released from custody, or rather
from the confined form of life; such a man is the philosopher in the stage
of purification.

172. To some philosophy is primary, as to Porphyry and Plotinus and
a great many other philosophers; to others hieratic practice, as to Iam-
blichus, Syrianus, Proclus, and the hieratic school generally. Plato, how-
ever, recognizing that strong arguments can be advanced from both sides,
has united the two into one single truth by calling the philosopher a
‘Bacchus’; for by using the notion of a man who has detached himself from
genesis as an intermediate term, we can identify the one with the other.
Still, it remains evident that he intends to honor the philosopher by the
title of Bacchus, as we honor the Intelligence by calling it God, or profane
light by giving it the same name as to mystic light.

169.

3–6. Cf. Orphic, frg. 235. The present passage adds to the story of the murder
of Dionysus two elements not found in Kern: first, the handing of the narthex
to Dionysus instead of the sceptre of Zeus, apparently to take away his royal power
(cf. Pr., Hes. 33.23 καὶ προσάγεται ὑπὸ τῶν Τιτάνων τῷ Διονυσῷ); secondly, the fact
that the Titans themselves carry the narthex, which combined with the quotation
from Nonnus at the end of frg. 209 (where they are said to have painted their
faces white) raises the question whether this masquerade can have provided the
original, sinister context for the line “Many carry the thyrus, few are Bacchants.”
See also Darn., Parm. 316.21–317.1, where the Titans are said to present themselves
as Dionysus (i.e. as Bakchoi). The sense suggested by Pl. (and confirmed by
Hermias 172.7–10) is of course the proverbial one, “Many are called but few
are chosen.”
§§ 173–175. The summing-up. 69d2–e5

173. [69d5–6] As the soul has a double origin, for it is constituted both by itself and by God, so it owes its perfection to two causes. Accordingly Socrates indicates both in the words ‘We shall know when we have arrived there, God willing’; he makes transition characteristic of the soul, and the power of directing all things solely by his will, of God.

174. [69d7–e5] There are two Defenses of Socrates, one addressed to the Athenian judges, the other to his most faithful friends; in the one he fights to save the living organism, in the other for the life free from the body that is really his own; in the one belief and opinion have their share, the other is based on intellection and knowledge; the starting-point is in the one case life in the community, in the other the life of detachment; in the one apparent death is stated to be a good thing, in the other real death.

175. [69e2] If he is to encounter divine ‘masters’ and human ‘friends,’ he is evidently to be a man among men under the guidance of the Gods in the hereafter. It is therefore an un-Platonic notion to make souls pass into genii or angels or Gods.

II. THE ARGUMENT FROM RECOLLECTION

§§ 253–261. On recollection in general. 72e3–78b3

253. Recollection is an activity, not of an appetitve, but of a cognitive faculty; further, it is not a first, but a second taking in of the object; nor does it occur when memory has remained unbroken, but only after forgetting (for anamnesis really means a renewal of memory, so that it must follow a state of obsolescence, i.e. of forgetting, which is the old age of knowledge); and finally, it cannot take place without recognition, for unless it recalls its object and ‘recognizes’ it, as we say, there is a first act of cognition, but no recollection.

254. To sum up: recollection is a second cognitive activity of the soul, which, after oblivion, takes up its object again and recognizes it as its own.
255. In the appetitive faculty, too, there is something analogous to recollection in the cognitive faculty, though there is no word for it: there exists a renewal of virtue after it has been lost.

256. What imperishability is to being and immortality to life, memory is to knowledge. Therefore memory, as the other attributes, exists primarily in intelligence, not, however, in so far as it thinks itself (since the thing remembered is by its very nature an object present in a different subject), but by virtue of the activity by which it preserves forever unchanged the participation in the intelligible reality that is prior to it.

257. Here we must question if the counterpart of being and life is really knowledge, rather than the entire nature of the living being; secondly, if the analogue of the two other attributes mentioned is really memory, rather than the negation of ignorance (for which we have no word), as the others are the negations of death and destruction. Furthermore, even granting that each is a kind of permanence, surely continuance of knowledge, which consists in knowing always the same thing, is different from memory: intelligence constantly knows itself, and yet, as the commentator says [§ 256], it does not remember itself. Besides, memory is characterized by a certain distance from the object, being apprehension and preservation of a kind of imprint of it, as Plato himself says [Theaet. 191e8–e1], whereas intelligence is also united forever with the intelligible reality beyond it, even more so than with itself, and instead of an imprint of that reality possesses that reality itself. Therefore there is no memory in intelligence; there is only intellection, not memory of it, except in the measure in which intelligence is separated and exists apart from its prior. Even the commentator himself realizes that memory in the proper sense belongs primarily to souls, because in them having thought is separated from thinking. The first souls, which know no oblivion, evidently have everlasting memory of all things, though their momentary activities extend to different objects at different times.

258. Where oblivion first occurs, is the beginning of recollection also, since renewal of memory is possible only after loss of it.

259. Knowledge proceeds by degrees: from single intellection, in which all its objects are forever present, to double intellection of things partly present, partly absent; from double to triple intellection, of things present, absent, or lost. Accordingly, knowledge is primary, secondary, or tertiary.

260. Its efficient cause is the God who is the source of all renascence and, in a more divided way, the genius subordinate of him (or, better, a particular God); its exemplary cause is the prototype existing in an intelligence of this kind; its final cause, a renewed endeavor to assimilate oneself to intelligence and, through this, to unite oneself with the Good.

261. The instrumental cause should also have been mentioned: this would be the whole of philosophy.

§§ 260–261. Dam. II §§ 7–11. On the standard list of three causes (final, exemplary, efficient) and three concomitant causes (formal, material, instrumental) see the passages cited at Ol., Gorg. 3.24–4.1.
§§ 266–273. Various questions concerning the argument. 72e3–77a5

266. Can it not be with souls as it is with individual natures, that they receive their formative principles in the process of coming-to-be? — No; for if souls have these principles as part of their essence, how can they lose them? and if they acquire them by learning, how can they do so during birth? Besides, learning must be recollection, and recollection must follow forgetting. Also, what sense is there in their acquiring this knowledge during birth, if they are to lose it after birth? For this much is evident, that children are ignorant from the moment of their birth until well on in age.

267. Perhaps we are born with the common notions implanted in us by nature, as irrational animals have their instincts. — But in that case everybody would have them, whereas in fact many people lose even these, at least a great part of them, through gross ignorance. And how, in that case, can man correct his natural irrational instincts? For the judging faculty, supposing it judges on the basis of reason, must have knowledge of these notions; if it can do so without reason, it must have possessed them and lost them, as critics who judge a literary work, but without remembering the standards by which they judge.

268. Why do we not remember the time together with the facts? — The same often happens in this life: no wonder, then, if after so radical a change the interior forces, i.e. universal notions, should still continue to act upon us, when the external and ever-changing influences have ceased to do so.

269. Why do we not realize, when recollecting, that it is recollection? In the present life this awareness comes with recollection itself. — In the first place, even this is not always true (often remembrance presents itself to us as newly acquired knowledge, since remembrance comes about more easily than awareness of it; for self-consciousness is apt to be diverted owing to its constantly varying direction, also because such awareness is attended with reversion upon oneself, while all other knowledge seems to go straight to its object); and there is all the more reason why it should be different after that deep fall the soul has made. Thus sick people, too, sometimes forget what happened to them while in good health, but those in good health are certain to remember what happened during their illness.

270. Why are conscious memories from former lives so rare? — Because conscious perceptions of particular things are external as regards their objects and their origins, while those of universals arise from within and are our own and at the same time present themselves to our consciousness with a less strong impact because they are familiar and not strange. Besides, those of universals are more numerous.

271. What is that which remembers that it remembers? — It is a faculty by itself beside all the others, which always acts as a kind of witness to some one of the others, as conscience to the appetitive faculties, as self-consciousness to the cognitive ones. Therefore it is not surprising that we should remember without being aware of it, just as we sometimes read without realizing the fact.
V. THE ARGUMENT FROM THE ESSENCE OF SOUL

§§ 407–415. Causes and contributory causes: comment on 95c7–100a7

407. [96c9–96d1] Why is it necessary, before coming to immortality, ‘to give a complete account of the cause of coming-to-be and passing-away’? — Because the discussion is a search for the principle of these processes, soul, and an attempt is made to approach the problem from this angle. Or because the soul, if it perishes, also has a beginning in time, and therefore we must first define the way these very processes take place and the causes or contributory causes by which they are brought about. The more immediate reason is that soul, being form and causing a certain effect in other things, must be inaccessible to the contrary of that effect. The same is true of all other things, whether simple or composite. Of both categories there are two kinds: of simple things some are separable, others inseparable; composite things, on the other hand, have simple things either as their elements or as consequents and accidents. However this may be, these are the kinds of subjects with which the discussion will deal.

408. [96e8] ‘Sublime’ in what sense? — Because it is a search for the cause, which transcends sensible phenomena.

409. [96b2–8] By depreciating the contributory causes Socrates supports his claim that the soul cannot be classed as such. He also points out in passing the absurdity to which this view leads: what, indeed, can be more preposterous than to derive true knowledge, which is universal, causal, transcendent, and in every respect superior, from sense-perception, which deals with the individual, fails to discern causes, cannot be separated from matter, and is in every respect inferior?

410. [96b8–c7] After we have learnt how to account for things in terms of contributory causes, a necessary step for further progress is to inquire into the higher causes, and the result will be that we unlearn and forget about those others, because we no longer acknowledge them. This is the stage of simple ignorance, which is the beginning of knowledge.

411. [96d8–97b7] With regard to the other contributory causes, too, Socrates includes, by implication, the proofs for their rejection. If forms are only what they are, the one itself can never become two, each form being only the one thing it really is, nor can one and one become two by being added to each other, for when a man and another man meet, the result is simply men and not another form, whereas two is a different form. Further, how can this same form be brought about by contrary processes, viz. addition and division? Nothing can, as such, be the efficient cause of opposite effects, nor a product of opposite causes. And even if we consider addition and division as forms, addition will only add, division only divide, but neither will produce a dyad or a monad.

412. [97b8–98e2] Anaxagoras, though he had a glimpse of the efficient cause, did not make use of it: in his account of the facts he puts forth the irrational, indefinite causes, which will take opposite directions by what appears to be a sudden change of mind. Intelligence, however, is essentially a limit and indeed a standard; it sets itself one goal only, the Good, which it defines by means of its faculty of judgment, and which it is stirred to make its own by its faculty of appetition, both faculties speeding it in its way thither, a way which is aspiration towards the Good with cognition and appetition as fellow-travelers.

413. [97c2–d3] Intelligence is the first to revert to the Good, because it is separated from it and yet closest to it of all separate existents and, in the phrase of the Philebus, its ‘kinsman’ [30e1]; because, having been projected as the ‘eye of love’ of the Good, it is the first of all beings that have detached themselves and therefore need such an eye. It is for a good reason, then, that Socrates links the efficient cause, intelligence, directly with the final cause, and cannot view intelligence apart from finality.
414. [98c2–99b2] Socrates demonstrates clearly by referring to himself and to human intelligence that the contributory causes tend in opposite directions and subserve contrary opinions, like a blind man, and that Intelligence, which has nothing in view but the Good, is superior to these; if this is already true of human intelligence, how much more of divine.

415. [99c6–100a3] He begins by presenting as the true causes of things sensible the efficient and the final cause. However, since the sensible world is indefinite and in it sense-perceptions and opinions take the place of pure reason, he resorts to 'reasons', i.e. universal forms (the fact that he calls them 'reasons' and considers them superior to sensible things proves that he locates them in rational soul), because on this level he expects to find more easily what he is seeking. So the 'alternative course' is after the final cause the exemplary cause, or after the world of intellection that of discursive thought, or else, starting from below, after the search in the sphere of sense-perception the approach in the sphere of discursive thought.

§§ 416–420. The ideas and the problem of participation: comment on 100a7–102a2

416. It is easier and simpler to assume and posit prototypes as the causes of sensible things and with the help of the copies form a notion of their character (they must, while showing the same qualities, be real, single in form and always constant in their state and condition, because they are prior to their images) than it is to understand the final cause. The latter is truly ineffable and is beyond having visible images (no image of it exists); moreover, in the world of process it disappears because of the infiniteness which is inherent in process and which causes all the evil that pervades it. On the other hand, the exemplary cause is also easier to approach than the efficient cause, in the first place because of the association of the efficient cause with the final cause, as shown above [§ 413]; secondly because of the far-reaching changes in the images, which belie the existence of intelligence as a changeless efficient cause, for which reason Aristotle attributes all efficient causality to the celestial beings; and thirdly because it is hidden behind the particular sensible causes, which are all but sufficient to account for the created world, since every form seems to be capable of reproducing itself. Prototypes, then, inasmuch as they are forms, are easier to grasp than the final cause, and inasmuch as they exist by themselves and have no contact with the world of process even for the purpose of creation, being beyond the Creator, they are simpler to understand. For the same reason they are also sooner underrated, because they do not create, but only exist, the assumption being that, as far as mere existence is concerned, the sensible world is sufficient.

417. [100b3–7] Once exemplary causes are posited, the efficient cause is somehow comprehended in them (things here below are what they are by participation in the prototypes), and so is the final cause. For there is also a prototype of the good, that is to say, of goodness as a form, and if we find the useful in this world, it will prove to exist by virtue of participation in that form; I believe that this is the reason why Socrates uses the beautiful as his example, because it includes the profitable, as it is laid down in the Gorgias [474d3–475a4].

418. [100d3–6] Plato has often raised the question of the participation of forms, but nowhere is the answer indicated more clearly than here. If it is by presence, then how can forms be separable from particulars, and how can they be indivisible? If by communion, other realities will be needed in which both forms and particulars can communicate, and this ad infinitum, so that forms are no longer primary. What Plato says, however, is 'or whatever the way': form is present, but only by participation, and there is communion, but only in the sense that particulars communicate in forms, not both in a third reality, and they communicate in the way of participation.
419. [100e8–101b2] Socrates shows that a man cannot be bigger or smaller than another 'by a head': first, how can the same cause have opposite effects? secondly, how can being bigger be brought about by what is small in itself? The following point might be added: how can one form be caused by another, 'bigger' or 'smaller' by 'head'? Further, if a thing is big by bigness and small by smallness rather than by a head, this must apply also where higher degrees of these qualities are concerned; for a 'higher degree' of a quality means more complete participation in the same form.

420. [101d5–e1] What succession of other grounds can there be beyond the exemplary cause? Surely only one remains, the final cause! — We must look deeper: prototypes are on the level of differentiated reality, so that we must assume as a prior ground that which is in process of being differentiated, a description properly applying to the life that is beyond intelligence; beyond this, again, is the undifferentiated, i.e. existence, which is prior even to life in the degree of its unity. Finally there are the two causes beyond these, that of differentiation and that of unification, and prior to these, as we conceive it, the One Principle.

§§ 421–430. Analysis of the argument. 102a10–107a1

Assumptions

421. [103e5–104b4] Not only detachable form is incapable of receiving its opposite while remaining what it is (this is implied in the notion of receiving), but so are immanent form and form that is detachable or not detachable depending on the point-of-view, such as in the instance given of number, even or odd.

422. [104b6–105b4] Not only opposites are incapable of sustaining each other's approach, but so are things that have either term of a pair of opposites as part of their essence; i.e. all things that carry the opposite quality, viz. that particular opposite quality that belongs to their essence, as heat does to fire, which is the reason why fire always brings heat with it.

423. [104b6–c1] Anything incapable of receiving its opposite must either perish on its approach or withdraw, whether it be simple or have that particular quality as part of its essence.

424. [105e9–d5] Soul is a substance which always brings life to its recipient; a thing is admittedly animate as soon as soul has taken possession of it, and therefore necessarily alive.

425. [105d6–11] The opposite of life is death, and therefore life, so long as it remains what it is, does not admit death, nor does soul, which always brings life with it.

Its height. 108c5–110b1

503. The earth of which Plato speaks here is incorporeal according to some, corporeal according to others; of the latter, Harpocrater [frag. 8] thinks the whole world is meant, Theodorus [test. 42] the sublunary world; of those who think of it as incorporeal, Democritus believes that it is the idea, Plutarch that it is Nature.

504. To all these views there is one common reply, namely that the earth of which Socrates speaks is simply the earth of our geography books.

505. Against those who believe it to be incorporeal, it should be pointed out that Socrates thinks of its inhabitants as having bodies and (possessing the faculty of sense-perception) and further says that animals there have a longer span of life. As for the two theories in particular: if it is an idea, how can it be ‘whiter than chalk,’ or have a temperate climate? If it is nature, how can it be an abode of blessed souls and how can it be ‘inhabited by Gods’?

506. Against those who maintain that it is the universe or the sublunary world we observe that Socrates describes it as situated under the heavens and surrounded by ether, as ours is by air.

507. That the size of the earth is ‘enormous’ [109a9] is indicated by Timaeus, who calls it ‘the most venerable being within heaven’ [40c2–3], apparently because it approaches heaven and has the other elements as integrating parts of itself; it is further indicated by the story of Atlantis, preserved in Egyptian tradition, according to which the isle of Atlantis alone was larger than Africa and Europe together [Tim. 24e6–7; Criti. 108e6–7].

508. Earth is a Goddess, according to Timaeus [40c2–3], to authorities on ritual, and to the theologians. Besides, if the world is a total made up of totals, it follows that it is a God made up of Gods; that it is a God is true, therefore so are its parts, therefore so is the Earth as one of its parts. Furthermore, if Earth is contradistinguished from Heaven, and Heaven is a God (as it certainly must be, if the Sun and the Moon are), the same holds true of the Earth. Furthermore, if the subterranean Gods are parts of the Earth, Earth itself is a fortiori a Deity. Now this Earth of ours is an intramundane being, since it has this lowest kind of body attached to it; but if even we, human beings, have the luminous body prior to the earthly body, this is all the more certainly true of the whole Earth, and consequently there is also a soul beyond it, and an intelligence beyond the soul.

509. The Pythagoreans, too, make the Earth one of the stars on plausible grounds, and Timaeus [42d4–5] says that the Creator determined the essences of souls by scattering some on the Sun, some on the Moon, others on the Earth, apparently because he regards Earth also as one of the divine sequences. Blessed, then, are all those souls that make their rounds under the guidance of Earth; so it cannot be this Earth which the more fortunate souls escape.

510. The height of the Earth is confirmed by the so-called Moon Mountains, which reach as high as the Moon; by mountain tops above the clouds, exposed neither to wind nor to rain; and by those ranges on which the sunlight falls at all hours except four, such as the Caucasus, which nevertheless belong to our part of the world.

511. What Socrates says about the Earth is partly seen from below, partly from the middle and in conformity with that level, partly from above, and in so far ‘a sight for the blessed to behold’ [111a3].
§§ 523–526. The four (three) levels. 109a9–110b4

523. There are four abodes for human souls in the world of process, while on Earth: the three discussed above and the one in Tartarus. Each of these is bounded by its specific element, one of the four: the first by ether, the second by air, the third by water, the fourth by earth itself; those in Tartarus dwell in a kind of cave. From a different point of view, again, there are three levels, one on the heights, one under the earth, one in between, which can be distributed among the three sons of Kronos.

524. [109b8–c1] Plato follows Homer in using the word 'heaven' for the ether, in which shooting stars appear; a heaven subject to process has also stars subject to process. It is by this heaven that the Earth is surrounded, not immediately by the ungenerated heaven. Perhaps it is this mortal heaven also that is the counterpart of earth, with its character of mortality, for generated earth can scarcely be on a par with ungenerated heaven; and perhaps, when Earth is called 'the most venerable Deity within heaven' [Tim. 40e3], this heaven is meant.

525. [110b1] Why do we enjoy stories? – Because we have innate notions that are pictures of reality. Or else, because our chosen level of life is dominated by generation and imagination, we have a preference for fictions.

You could also say that stories are a kind of casual and playful earnestness; and the reason why we like play is that we want to have pleasure without pains, in other words, illusory pleasure.

526. [110b1–2] Why this mixture of cosmography and mythology? – To point beyond physical science to a more divine reality, which has a more rightful claim to be the home of souls.