



# **Deisidaimonia: a contribution to the knowledge of the religious terminology in Greek**

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# Δεισιδαιμονία

A contribution to the knowledge of the  
religious terminology in Greek

by

P. J. Koets

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## INTRODUCTION

In the Leipzig edition of Theophrast's Characters<sup>1)</sup>, O. Immisch, in his introduction to the sixteenth character, has, in a few words, described the development of the meaning of the words δεισιδαίμων and δεισιδαιμονία. He winds up by saying: 'Diese ethologische Entwicklung bedarf dringend einer Darstellung.' Although it is more than a quarter of a century ago, that this was written, as yet, to the best of my belief, no one has devoted a monograph to this subject. It is the aim of this thesis to supply that deficiency.

Everything that, up till now, has been written about these words treats of them more or less incidentally. Although, naturally, the authors differ in several points, still one may safely say there is a common opinion as to the evolution of the meaning of δεισιδαίμων etc.<sup>2)</sup>: originally it was used in a favourable sense, e. g. by Xenophon, to designate god-fearing, pious; very soon, however, in Theophrast f. i., its meaning deteriorates, and it denotes 'superstitious', 'excessively afraid of the gods', while Immisch and one or two others point out that the Christians use δεισιδαιμονία synonymous with ἀσέβεια.

What strikes one immediately on consulting the literature pertaining to the subject, is that this opinion, apart from

<sup>1)</sup> Leipzig 1897.

<sup>2)</sup> For the sake of brevity I have designated by δεισιδαίμων etc. the whole group of its derivatives: δεισιδαιμονία, δεισιδαιμόνως, δεισιδαιμονεῖν, ἀδεισιδαίμων, ἀδεισιδαιμονία, ἀδεισιδαιμόνως, συνδεισιδαίμων, ἀποδεισιδαιμονεῖν.



slight variations fairly general, is based on very few passages from the Greek writers, indeed. Not more than a dozen, all told, will be found quoted, here and there.

Because of this, the chief object of this study has been to bring together as many passages as possible in which the words: δεισιδαίμων, δεισιδαιμονία etc. are used, to ascertain as accurately as possible the shade of meaning in each case and in that way to test the opinions which are now generally held as regards the usage of these words and their history.

This investigation is semantic, as to its starting-point, in so far as it occupies itself with the meanings of a group of words and their development. At the same time, however, it is hoped, that it may be of some value to the study of Greek religion. The way in which a word, which can mean such divergent things as 'contemptible, exaggerated fear of the gods' and 'real piety' is used by a particular writer may show us something about his religious opinions in general.

The passages, which have been collected here, have, of course, mostly been found with the help of the different special lexica and indices verborum, as far as they were available <sup>1)</sup>. Where this was n't the case, or where the indices proved to be anything but complete, I have endeavoured to a certain extent to supply the deficiency, by a rapid reading of the writers themselves. <sup>2)</sup>

<sup>1)</sup> Although it may seem ungrateful, I should like to point out that only the most modern indices are complete and trustworthy. In passing I want to register the wish that every new edition have an index verborum, unless one is already available.

<sup>2)</sup> Among the writers which I have read through for my purpose, because no trustworthy index exists, I want to mention: Athenaeus, Diogenes Laertius, Diodorus Siculus, Flavius Josephus, Stobaeus, Strabo, besides those where the result was negative. As far as I know these words are not to be found in any of the poets, nor f. i. in Plato or the Oratores.



Completeness is, naturally, entirely out of the question, but an attempt has been made to neglect as little as possible of the principal material. When we however bear in mind that, apart from the fact that our research has only covered a small part of the Greek writers that have come down to us, much more has been lost than saved, it is at once obvious that a statistical method of handling the collected material is impossible. We can only treat it in a descriptive way and must leave undecided the question, which usage was predominant. Perhaps is not superfluous to add, that even if we had the whole of Greek literature, we would still remain ignorant of the way in which different words were used in every-day life, by the man in the street whose voice is rarely heard in literature, at least in that of the ancients.

A difficulty, which is still more important than the objection that the material has been brought together from only a small part of Greek literature, is that, by confining the investigation to a certain group of *words*, it is too formal in character to be of much value from the point of view of the history of religion. Although this is certainly a very real difficulty, and it would be methodologically preferable, and more attractive as well, to take an *idea* as starting-point, for instance 'fear', that is so obviously a task which the writer of a thesis cannot fulfill, that I have stuck to the investigation of the specified words. This may have its good points as well. When one notices how nearly all treatises on 'superstition in Greek religion' start by defining what the writer means by that word — and his opinion will always be subjective, as one man calls 'superstition', what is his neighbour's creed — one is inclined to think oneself justified in choosing an objective



even if somewhat formal, criterion. Be that as it is, I can only hope that this book may help to pave the way, by collecting some of the material, for a book on 'fear in Greek religion', which remains to be written.

## I — Δεισιδαιμονία ETC. USED IN A FAVOURABLE SENSE.

The etymology of the word, of which we are investigating the meaning, is quite clear: it is derived from the verb δέιδω, and the substantive δαίμων. In the same way the word δεισῆγωρ has been formed, which is found both as a proper name <sup>1)</sup> and as an adjective <sup>2)</sup>.

In its origin already this word, δεισιδαιμονία, offers possibilities of differentiation in opposite directions. As to the first part 'to fear' can both mean 'to be afraid of' and 'to stand in awe of'; 'fear' may be 'awe', according to Marett the fundamental religious feeling, and 'pure funk' <sup>3)</sup>. Already in Homer δέιδω is used to describe the feeling of reverence, which a human being feels towards the gods and there is no trace of any unfavourable criticism whatever <sup>4)</sup>.

With regard to the second part Babick says: 'neque vero cum θεός compositum est, quamquam id facile fieri potuit, sed cum vocabulo 'δαίμων' <sup>5)</sup>'. It has evidently escaped his notice that the proper name Δεισίθεος is frequently found, not only in Attica <sup>6)</sup>, but f. i. in Chios as well <sup>7)</sup>, even long after the word δεισιδαίμων had come to be used in an un-

<sup>1)</sup> Iliad 17 vs. 217.      <sup>2)</sup> Aeschylus Ag. 154.

<sup>3)</sup> Marett. Threshold of religion p. 13.      <sup>4)</sup> e. g. Od. 14.389.

<sup>5)</sup> Babick, de deisidaemonia veterum quaestiones. Diss. Leipzig, 1891 p. 1.

<sup>6)</sup> Kirchner, Prosopographia Attica. 3206, 's. VI. ut videtur'; 3207 med. s. IV; 3208 s. II.

<sup>7)</sup> Ditt. Syll. <sup>2</sup> 283<sup>1</sup>.



favourable sense by most writers. It is only natural to at once draw the conclusion that evidently the associations of the word δαίμων have influenced the meaning of δεισιδαιμονία too. Although this certainly may have been so to a certain extent, it is not in itself sufficient to account for the change of meaning δεισιδαιμονία underwent. Pollux, in his Onomasticum, mentions δεισιδαίμων and δεισιθεός in one and the same breath as both meaning: a person who worships the gods in an exaggerated way <sup>1)</sup>. More important is the fact that originally the Greek language hardly distinguishes between the words θεός and δαίμων <sup>2)</sup>. For us moderns it is difficult to free ourselves from the feeling that a δαίμων is a bit more uncanny, but the usage of the Greek authors shows that was n't necessarily the case with them. At the same time however, as has already been said, it is by no means impossible that the change of meaning, which δαίμων underwent, so that it became the designation of a being between gods and humans, exercised its influence on δεισιδαιμονία as well.

Etymologically there is nothing which argues against thinking that δεισιδαιμονία was originally used in a favourable sense and this is borne out also by the meaning with which it is used in literature, when first we meet with it there <sup>3)</sup>.

### Xenophon

It is in Xenophon that we first find the word δεισιδαίμων,

<sup>1)</sup> Pollux. 1. 20.

<sup>2)</sup> S. Tromp de Ruiter. de vocis quae est δαίμων.... significatione etc. Diss. Amsterdam V. U. 1918 p. 6, passim.

<sup>3)</sup> There is no foundation whatever for the hypothesis advanced by Hild (Daremborg — S. II p. 17b s. v. demon): Le mot δεισιδαιμονία .... semble devoir son origine au culte des démons mauvais, à la pratique des évocations et des conjurations.



in his *Agésilas* <sup>1)</sup> and his *Cyropaedia* <sup>2)</sup>. This writer, though originally a purist, in his usage of words shows traces of 'Könsierung' <sup>3)</sup>. It is, therefore, not impossible that he has really been one of the first to introduce this word into Attic. In respect to his religion Xenophon can be regarded as important because he is, as might be expected in a country-gentleman, so characteristic a representative of an old-fashioned type of piety <sup>4)</sup>, which was true to the traditional cult, with its prayers and sacrifices; it had remained practically uninfluenced by the new spiritual movements, which since the Sophists had widely spread in Greece and which regarded traditional religion with a critical and often hostile eye. Agesilaus, Xenophon's ideal, naturally also belongs to the traditional, old-fashioned type. Even in the enemy's country he respected temples, regarding it as useful to have the gods of this country as allies as well as those of his own. αἰεὶ δὲ δεισιδαίμων ἦν, νομίζων τοὺς μὲν καλῶς ζῶντας οὐπω εὐδαίμονας, τοὺς δὲ εὐκλεῶς τετελευτηκότας ἤδη μακαρίους. These words remind one of Solon's warning to Croesus, that no one can be called happy, while he is still living and subject to sudden changes. Agesilaus is 'always reverently aware of his dependence, being only a human being, on the gods'.

After Cyrus has given the word to his troops, drawn up near the enemy, he starts singing the usual paean, in which all his men join piously (θεοσεβῶς), at the top of their voices, for, Xenophon says, in suchlike circumstances οἱ

<sup>1)</sup> Ag. 11. 8.    <sup>2)</sup> Cyr. 3. 3. 58.

<sup>3)</sup> J. Schlageter, *Der Wortschatz der ausserhalb Attikas gefundenen Inschriften*. Strasz. 1912, p. 46. Rutherford, *The new Phrynichus*, p. 160. Immisch, *Apol. d. Xen. Neue Jahrb.* V (1900) p. 405.

<sup>4)</sup> Christ-Schmid I p. 495, 498.



δεισιδαίμονες ἤττον τοὺς ἀνθρώπους φοβοῦνται. Xenophon is evidently playing with the etymological meaning: the god-fearing men are not afraid of their (human) enemies.

#### Aristotle

Aristotle says <sup>1)</sup> that the subjects of an absolute ruler will be less afraid to be treated unjustly ἐὰν δεισιδαίμονα νομίζωσιν εἶναι τὸν ἄρχοντα καὶ φροντίζειν τῶν θεῶν and people are less inclined to conspire against a sovereign, if they think the gods are his allies. Aristotle had already said that one method for a ruler to insure the obedience of his subjects was τὰ πρὸς τοὺς θεοὺς φαίνεσθαι ἀεὶ σπουδάζοντα διαφερόντως <sup>2)</sup>. δεισιδαίμων is here used in the same sense in which we found it used by Xenophon: it is the god-fearing man, who reckons with the gods and is always exceedingly busy with everything pertaining to their worship. That gradually a change of meaning was taking place, however, is clearly proved by the words with which Aristotle qualifies the above statement: 'he must show himself such without fatuity (ἄνευ ἀβελτερίας) <sup>3)</sup>. This shows that δεισιδαιμονία was already beginning to be used as a designation for fatuous, extravagant piety.

In another chapter <sup>4)</sup> I have ventured to suppose that this new usage was first introduced by the different post-Socratic schools, more especially those of Cyrenaics and Cynics. This however, is merely a hypothesis, but we know

<sup>1)</sup> Pol. 1315a. 1

<sup>2)</sup> Cf. Dio Chrys. I 15: θεῶν ἐπιμελής καὶ τὸ δαιμόνιον προτιμῶν. III. 51 A good king first of all θεραπεύσει τὸ θεῖον οὐχ ὁμολογῶν μόνον, ἀλλὰ καὶ πεπεισμένος εἶναι θεοῦς.

<sup>3)</sup> Cf. Harrison, Prolegomena p. 4; Theophr. Char. ed. Jebb-Sandys p. 138.

<sup>4)</sup> Cf. p. 41 sqq.



for certain that Menander and Theophrast used it in this sense. One often finds the opinion expressed that this usage in an adverse sense has since then been the only one; the aim of this chapter is to show that this is not the case and that examples of the original usage are to be found fairly often.

### Diodorus Siculus

In chronological order Diodorus Siculus is the first writer since Aristotle by whom we find these words used in a favourable sense, but that leaves a gap of about three centuries. In Diodorus, however, we meet with a phenomenon which is without parallel in other writers: he uses the word δεισιδαιμων etc. in widely different senses, as it evidently sometimes has the meaning of 'godfearing, pious' and elsewhere that of 'excessively religious, superstitious'. Now his lack of originality is well-known and these differences of meaning may surely be regarded as a further proof, that he merely copied his sources, without even troubling to refashion their words <sup>1)</sup>.

In his Sicilian history Timaeus is his chief source; one of the arguments that prove this, is that writer's 'abergläubische Romantik' <sup>2)</sup>, which is very characteristic too for this part of Diodorus' history. Polybius had already very sharply criticised Timaeus, because he was δεισιδαιμονίας ἀγεννοῦς καὶ τερατείας γυναικώδους . . . πλήρης <sup>3)</sup>. Especially

<sup>1)</sup> R. E. p. 663 ff. Schwartz, the best and fullest analysis of Diodorus' sources. cf. Christ-Schmid II p. 408: Feinere Untersuchungen würden wohl ergeben, dass die Quellenscheidung auch durch sprachliche und stilistische Beobachtungen weiter unterstützt werden könnte.

<sup>2)</sup> Schwartz l. c.: Volquardsen, Unters. über die Quellen der gr. und sic. Gesch. bei Diod. Kiel 1868 p. 82, 83, 111 passim.

<sup>3)</sup> Pol. 12.24.5; cf. p. 58, 59.



in books XI—XVI Diodorus follows him, as Volquardsen has convincingly shown <sup>1)</sup>, but in other books he is often Diodorus' source as well.

It surely is n't a mere coincidence that in this part of the 'Bibliotheca' the word δεισιδαιμονία is to be found more than once to designate the feeling of human dependence and deficiency, which the writer evidently regards with sympathy.

Imilco, a Carthaginian general <sup>2)</sup> had plundered temples, but in due time was punished, as he deserved, for this sacrilege. The Carthaginian army was routed and it became clear to all men how people that unduly exalt themselves come to grief. Imilco, himself, after his return to Carthage, was always to be found in different temples, accusing himself of impiety until at last he committed suicide πολλήν τοῖς πολίταις ἀπολιπὼν δεισιδαιμονίαν: leaving behind him amongst his fellow-citizens the well-founded feeling that impiety and sacrilege are punished <sup>3)</sup>.

The Carthaginians are manifestly being fought (πολεμούμενοι) by the gods themselves, as their situation, after Imilco's death, goes on from bad to worse. Panic-stricken they already think the end of their state is there: πᾶσαν τὴν πόλιν δεισιδαιμονία κατέσχε καὶ δέος. But first they try to placate the gods that have been sinned against by Imilco; they introduce a new cult of Demeter and Kore, according to the Greek rites. They then concentrate all their powers on the war and, aided by external circumstances, are successful <sup>4)</sup>. The city had not only been a prey to panic (δέος)

<sup>1)</sup> Volquardsen l. c.; especially p. 83.

<sup>2)</sup> It certainly is not a coincidence either that the four examples which follow all treat of Carthaginian history.

<sup>3)</sup> D. S. 14.76.4.      <sup>4)</sup> 14.77.4.



but also to fear, born of a sense of guilt, for that is evidently the meaning of δεισιδαιμονία in this passage.

Once, when Agathocles and his army were drawn up near the Carthaginian forces, both parties were loath to begin the battle, as an ancient oracle had predicted that many men would be killed in that spot: συνέβαινε δεισιδαιμονεῖν τὰ στρατόπεδα <sup>1)</sup>. That they were quite right in 'feeling uneasy' is proved by the result: in the battle, which at last is fought, many Greeks perish.

A slightly different shade of meaning, which is nearer related to that in the first two examples is found elsewhere <sup>2)</sup>. A Carthaginian, who wants to seize the town and be ruler of it himself, is always putting off his plans, even when the chance is favourable: δεισιδαίμονες γὰρ οἱ μέλλοντες ἐγχειρεῖν ταῖς παρανόμοις καὶ μεγάλαις πράξεσιν. The pious historian sees the hand of God in this fact. This Carthaginian is n't 'foolishly susceptible to signs', but anxious <sup>3)</sup> because of his bad conscience.

The attitude of mind in all these passages reminds one of that of Herodotus and Xenophon, but there is a good deal more emotionality and less pluck. If we may really regard this usage as directly taken from Timaeus, it would give us already a link between the fourth and the first century.

In other passages δεισιδαιμονία clearly means the feeling a human being has when he regards a certain happening as a heavensent sign. While the Athenians were busily engaged in clearing Delus of all corpses, the Peloponnesian troops were ready to invade Attica, but when great earthquakes occurred they returned, frightened by this sign

<sup>1)</sup> 19.108.2.    <sup>2)</sup> 20.43.1.

<sup>3)</sup> Cf. the Dutch word 'angstvallig'.



(δεισιδαιμονήσαντες), to their own countries <sup>1)</sup>. Here Ephorus is probably Diodorus' authority and, if the quotation is literal, *he* may have meant the use of this word to be a sneer <sup>2)</sup>, but Diodorus need not have regarded it as such.

This δεισιδαιμονία — and that shows plainly that it is something quite different from what, say, Theophrast meant by it — need not be negative in its consequences, it does n't always act as a brake, but may urge one on as well. During the siege of Tyrus by Alexander an enormous sea-monster is washed ashore. Everybody was dumbfounded at this strange event and when the animal succeeded in swimming back again to sea: εἰς δεισιδαιμονίαν ἀμφοτέρους προηγάγετο <sup>3)</sup>; both parties thought it was a sign that Poseidon was with them. Many other paradoxical things happened as well, which caused agitation and anxiety amongst the masses <sup>4)</sup>. There is nothing to show Diodorus judges unfavourably about the feelings of these people, which he evidently shares.

In the first book Diodorus describes many Egyptian ceremonies and rites about which his information is derived from Hecataeus of Abdera. He tells how, early in the morning, the king offers sacrifice, while the high-priest prays; in that prayer he also praises the king 'because he is piously (εὐσεβῶς) inclined towards the gods and friendly towards mankind' <sup>5)</sup>. A curse is invoked against those, who might

<sup>1)</sup> D. S. 12.59.1.

<sup>2)</sup> Cf. other passages, where Eph. may have been the source e. g. p. 60, 61.

<sup>3)</sup> D. S. 17.41.6.

<sup>4)</sup> Cf. Matth. 7.28: ἐξεπλήσσοντο οἱ ὄχλοι; Diod. has: κατὰπληξιν παρείχετο and again: παράδοξα δυνάμενα.... φόβον τοῖς ὄχλοις παρασχέσθαι.

<sup>5)</sup> These same virtues are combined in the epitaph of Caracuttis (p. 30).



have incited the king to do wrong, whereas he himself was not held responsible. The priest treated the king in this way to exhort him εἰς δεισδαιμονίαν καὶ θεοφιλή βίον: towards piety and a god-fearing life <sup>1)</sup>. In this case there can be no doubt as to the meaning of δεισδαιμονία.

A few pages before it is used in a related, if somewhat different sense. The Egyptian kings used to wear all kinds of wonderful headdresses, to give themselves a majestic appearance and at the same time to bring others εἰς κατάπληξιν.... καὶ δεισδαίμονα διάθεσιν: a feeling of awe-struck reverence <sup>2)</sup>. Everyone will agree that we are very far away from the ridicule and more or less good-natured contempt with which δεισδαιμονία is treated by many writers. It is true that even here, where the word is clearly meant as a designation of 'religio', if we may translate in that way, there is always something a bit 'uncanny' about it, but that by no means need imply criticism.

Bocchoris, the mythical legislator, was said to have made a decree about people who had borrowed money without a bond. If they later on said they had n't received anything and repeated this on their oaths they were believed. This Bocchoris had done, with a somewhat unfounded optimism, one would think, ὅπως ἐν μεγάλῳ τιθέμενοι τοὺς ὄρκους δεισδαιμονῶσι: 'that they might keep their consciences clear, aware of the power of the gods', the meaning seems to be <sup>3)</sup>.

With the words ἡ πρὸς τὰ ζῶια ταῦτα δεισδαιμονία he describes the religious feeling, the reverence with which the Egyptians regard their holy animals <sup>4)</sup>. This was so great, that once in Alexandria a Roman citizen, who had inadvertently killed a cat, was murdered by the mob, although

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<sup>1)</sup> D. S. 1.70.8.    <sup>2)</sup> 1. 62. 4.    <sup>3)</sup> 1. 79. 1.    <sup>4)</sup> 1. 83. 8.



at the time the Egyptians did their utmost to maintain friendly relations with Rome. It at least doubtful whether it is permissible to translate 'superstition' <sup>1)</sup>; in my opinion nothing shows that Diodorus was entirely out of sympathy with the feelings of the lynchers.

It seems to me that the right translation of δεισιδαιμονία is harder to determine in the story of Medea, in the fourth book. With the aid of her magic art she manages to kill Pelias and put Jason in power in his kingdom. First she started by filling a hollow statue of Artemis with mysterious herbs and changing herself into an old woman, and then rushed into the town with the statue, which was done up καταπληκτικῶς εἰς ὄχλων δεισιδαιμονίαν <sup>2)</sup>. In exaltation (ἐνθεαζούσης) she tells the crowds which gather round her, that they must receive this goddess piously (εὐσεβῶς). The whole population joining in this ecstasy, praying and offering sacrifices, Medea hurries to the palace and strikes fear into Pelias (εἰς δεισιδαίμονα διάθεσιν ἐμβάλεῖν) <sup>3)</sup> and his daughters too she quite subdues to her will, with the well-known result. That Pelias is afraid, that his 'attitude of mind is anxiously reverent' is only natural; this again is the difference with f. i. Theophrast's Δεισιδαίμων, who is 'over-awed', overcome by religious anxiety without any reason whatever, because he regards ordinary happenings as portents. Surely it is obvious that Pelias' frame of mind is quite different; in the circumstances anyone would probably feel like he did and it is, therefore, erroneous to speak of his 'superstitious disposition' <sup>4)</sup>. And it is perhaps not with-

<sup>1)</sup> Cf. Liddell and Scott s. v.

<sup>2)</sup> D. S. 4. 51. 1.    <sup>3)</sup> 4. 51. 3.

<sup>4)</sup> There seems to be a certain stylistic unity in these passages; cf. the recurrence of δεισιδαίμων διάθεσις, the combination of κατάπληξις and δεισιδαιμονία etc.



out significance that Medea calls Pelias, when speaking to him, the 'most pious' (τὸν εὐσεβέστατον) of all kings and promises him everything that is necessary for a godly (θεοφιλῇ) life.

In the story of Eumenes it is very probable that Diodorus follows the same source as Plutarch in his life of that general <sup>1)</sup>. We find there, once more, δεισιδαιμονία used with the meaning of 'firm conviction, based on a sign, of divine help'. Eumenes, to strengthen his position, tells the other commanders, that Alexander had appeared to him and promised to be present during their deliberations; a throne is, therefore, always put ready for him and they all were filled with good expectations, as if a god was guiding them, τῆς κατὰ τὸν βασιλέα δεισιδαιμονίας ἐνισχυούσης <sup>2)</sup>. The result of this δεισιδαιμονία is positive, it urges these men on. Plutarch's choice of words, when telling this same story, shows he does n't admire these feelings: Eumenes, he says: ἐπῆγε δεισιδαιμονίαν <sup>3)</sup>.

Somewhat reminiscent of the 'stories with a moral', which have probably been drawn from Timaeus <sup>4)</sup>, is that about the sacrilegious plundering of a temple by Pyrrhus, the king of Epirus. He had committed this crime in Locri, as he was short of money with which to pay his soldiers, but very soon punishment followed, as he was nearly shipwrecked while attempting to cross to Greece and Pyrrhus, so the historian has it, δεισιδαιμονήσαντα τὴν θεὸν ἐξιλάσασθαι and he did n't try to cross again, until he had restored everything <sup>5)</sup>. Appianus has the same story. He tells how

<sup>1)</sup> Cf. Schwartz. R. E. I. c.    <sup>2)</sup> D. S. 18. 61. 3.

<sup>3)</sup> Eum. 13.    <sup>4)</sup> Cf. p. 10.

<sup>5)</sup> Exc. de virt. et v. I nr. 227; p. 267 ed. Boissvain- de Boor-Büttner-Wobst (the pages referred to of the Exc. hist. are those of that edition); 27. 4.



the king did his deed ἐπισκώψας τὴν ἄκαιρον θεοσέβειαν εἶναι δεισιδαιμονίαν, words which might almost serve as a definition of δεισιδαιμονία used in an unfavourable sense <sup>1)</sup>. Through his misadventures on the way home however — this historian adds a new pious trait viz. that the stolen votive offerings are safely washed ashore, while many of the ships sink — he became aware at last of his impiety and dedicated everything to the outraged deity.

In the epitome from Diodorus, quoted above, δεισιδαιμονήσαντα is nearly synonymous with Appianus': τῆς ἀσεβείας αἰσθόμενον.

In the same epitome another case of sacrilege, this time committed by a Roman general, is told. When the senate heard of it, it was profoundly uncomfortable, aware of the fact that the gods had been sinned against: οὐ μετρίως ἐδεισιδαιμόνει; envoys are at once sent to investigate into the matter. Another excerpt <sup>2)</sup> proves that the writer regards these qualms of conscience as quite right and justified. After the general, already mentioned above, has been punished, other persons guilty of sacrilege become anxious: ἐπὶ δεισιδαιμονίαν ἐνέπιπτον: they suffered from pangs of conscience. And the writer, piously and a bit self-sufficiently adds: in that manner a person who is aware he has committed a sin is secretly punished, even if he happens to have escaped the notice of others.

Elsewhere Diodorus tells how the senate, in alarm (δεισιδαιμονοῦσα) acting on the advice of the Sibylline books — either because of some portent or on account of a sense of

<sup>1)</sup> Exc. de virt. et v. 2, nr. 8, p. 221.

<sup>2)</sup> Exc. de sent. nr. 299 (p. 356); 27. 4.



guilt we may safely suppose — sent deputies to Sicily, who declared a certain spot sacred to Zeus <sup>1)</sup>).

Much more interesting is a curious excerpt, that has come down to us through Photius, which shows us something about the way in which the Oriental religions spread in Rome. Battaces, a priest of the Magna Mater, came from Pessinus to Rome, beautifully attired with a gold wreath on his head and brightly-coloured garments. He said the temple of the goddess had been defiled and that therefore rites of purification were imperative. Speaking on the rostra and 'striking fear into the hearts of the common people' (τὸ πλῆθος εἰς δεισιδαιμονίαν ἐμβάλων) he was given accommodation and presents by the authorities, but was forbidden to wear his wreath by one of the tribunes of the people. Questioned, in what way the temple could be purified, by another tribune ἀποκρίσεις ἐποιεῖτο δεισιδαιμονίαν περιεχούσας. Pompeius, the first-mentioned tribune, again takes action against him and Battaces says that not only he himself, but the goddess as well has been impiously (ἀσεβῶς) insulted. Pompeius fell ill and died within three days, which the masses regarded as a divine punishment σφόδρα γὰρ Ῥωμαῖοι δεισιδαιμονοῦσι: for the Romans are extremely religious, are very much inclined to regard certain happenings as a direct intervention of the gods <sup>2)</sup>. The historian's sympathy is evidently with the priest of the Great Mother and the pious Romans, who to him also are 'religiosissimi mortales' <sup>3)</sup>.

In the latter part of his Bibliotheca Diodorus, as is well-

<sup>1)</sup> Exc. de v. et v. nr. 336 (p. 306); 34/5. 10.

<sup>2)</sup> Exc. Photii p. 537/8; 36. 13.

<sup>3)</sup> Cf. Sall. Cat. 12. 3.



known <sup>1)</sup>, has made an extensive use of Posidonius, but we have n't, in most cases, sufficient evidence to show whether certain passages are literal quotations. That is however very probably the case in a description in one of the earlier books, where we know Posidonius to have been Diodorus' source. Speaking about the gold which abounds in Gaul, he says a wonderful thing is to be seen in that country. In the temples of the gods and on the sacred demesnes there is an abundance of gold, which has been dedicated to the gods. And, although the Celts are exceedingly covetous, nobody touches that gold διὰ τὴν δεισιδαιμονίαν <sup>2)</sup>. The same story is told in a shorter form by Strabo, who, quoting Posidonius, says the country was rich in treasure as the country was πολύχρυσος.... καὶ δεισιδαιμόνων ἀνθρώπων <sup>3)</sup>. Although Strabo may have said this sneeringly <sup>4)</sup>, it is certain that Diodorus admired this δεισιδαιμονία. An exact translation is difficult, as it can mean here as well 'the religious reverence or fear' of the Gauls as 'the religious holiness' inherent in what is sacred to the gods.

This uncertainty as to the exact meaning also exists in another passage <sup>5)</sup>, where a temple near Castabus, opposite Rhodus is described. Since times immemorial it had been surrounded by numerous votive offerings, which had been dedicated to the goddess, Hemithea, out of gratitude for the benefactions she had bestowed, especially on ill people. The Persians had n't touched the temple and even robbers respected it, although it and its offerings were not surrounded

<sup>1)</sup> Schwartz. R. E. 690.    <sup>2)</sup> D. S. 5. 27. 4.    <sup>3)</sup> 4. 1. 13 C. 188.

<sup>4)</sup> Cf. in the same passage: μηδενὸς προσάπτεσθαι θαρροῦντος. Caesar tells no one dared to touch which had been dedicated to the gods neglecta.... religione (B. G. 6. 17).

<sup>5)</sup> D. S. 5. 63. 3.



by a wall or guarded by watchmen, but only defended ὑπὸ τῆς συνήθους δεισιδαιμονίας. Except in these last two instances we have always found δεισιδαιμονία to be a quality of human beings, but, as will be presently shown <sup>1)</sup>, it can also denote the holiness of a certain spot, in the same way as the Latin 'religio'. In these two instances we have, as it were, a transition form, although in the last case the change of meaning has practically taken place.

The same can be said of another passage, where Timaeus is, once again, Diodorus' authority <sup>2)</sup>. The Palici had a temple near Palice, in Sicily, with a very mysterious source, which is so impressive, it seems the water bubbles up through a divine necessity <sup>3)</sup>. The most solemn oaths are sworn there, τοιαύτης .... θεοπρεπείας οὔσης περὶ τὸ τέμενος; perjurers are at once punished and some of them have been struck with blindness on the spot <sup>4)</sup>. People, who have controversies, come there to take their oaths: μεγάλης.... οὔσης δεισιδαιμονίας <sup>5)</sup>, which here is clearly altogether synonymous with θεοπρέπεια: awe-inspiring holiness. This same temple was a refuge for runaway slaves, who are entirely safe there. The masters come to the temple too and try to persuade them to return, by promising them different things, on their oaths. No one has ever been known to break his oath: οὕτω.... ἡ τῶν θεῶν δεισιδαιμονία τοὺς ὀμόσαντας .... πιστοὺς ποιεῖ <sup>6)</sup>. The 'awe of the gods' prevents them from breaking their promises, awe which is probably made up of real reverence, piety and fear of punishment, but it is clear, at a glance, that Diodorus, or Timaeus, regarded this awe as a very real virtue <sup>7)</sup>.

<sup>1)</sup> Cf. e. g. p. 20. <sup>2)</sup> Geffcken, Tim. Geogr. d. Westens p. 175.

<sup>3)</sup> ὑπὸ θείας τινὸς ἀνάγκης. <sup>4)</sup> D. S. 11. 89. 6. <sup>5)</sup> l. c. <sup>6)</sup> 11. 89. 8.

<sup>7)</sup> Other passages from Diodorus, where the meaning is unfavourable have been discussed on p. 60 sqq.



In an inscription, which is contemporary with Diodorus, we find *δεισιδαιμονία* undoubtedly used to designate the holiness of a certain temple. It is a decree of the senate, in which certain privileges, that have formerly been accorded to Aphrodisias, in Caria, are confirmed. With reference to the temple of Aphrodite it is stated: [ἄσυλον ἔ]στω ταύτῳι <τῷ> δικαίῳι ταύτῃι τε δεισιδαιμονίαι ὧι δικαίῳι καὶ ἡ δεισ[ιδαιμονίαι] that of Artemis in Ephesus <sup>1)</sup>. *δεισιδαιμονία* is, in this case, used exactly as 'religio' can be in Latin <sup>2)</sup>.

ps. Aristeas

We must now turn our attention to a writer, who in chronological order probably precedes Diodorus, viz. the author of the so-called letter of Aristeas <sup>3)</sup>. The Jewish apologist lets Aristeas mention certain usages of the Jews with regard to pure and impure food, about which he questioned the high-priest, who managed to defend them, very convincingly. As an explanation ps. Aristeas adds: *δεισιδαιμόνως γὰρ τὰ πλεῖστα τὴν νομοθεσίαν ἔχειν, ἐν δὲ τούτοις παντελῶς δεισιδαιμόνως*. It is, of course, quite obvious that to the writer *δεισιδαιμόνως* means 'religiose', with the greatest conscientiousness and implies no criticism whatever. The etymological sense has entirely vanished, but the new meaning can psychologically be explained by the fact that behind this scrupulousness there is the reverence, or perhaps, the fear of God <sup>4)</sup>.

<sup>1)</sup> C. I. G. 2737 b 11; Ditt. O. G. II 455<sup>12</sup>.

<sup>2)</sup> Cf. Mommsen in Bruns, *Fontes iuris romani* p. 185 n. 43.

<sup>3)</sup> 129; for his date cf. Christ-Schmid II p. 620/1.

<sup>4)</sup> It seems probable, that the fact that the Jewish religion to a large extent consisted of the scrupulous following of the Law, has something to do with the use of this word in this connection. The pagan *δεισιδαίμων*, too, is very strict in his observing of all the cult precepts.



Later on we shall see that pagan writers, even while admiring Jewish monotheism, looked down upon their ritual ceremonies as mere ridiculous exaggeration: δεισιδαιμονία <sup>1)</sup>. It is a very good example to show how the same word is used, both by admirers and critics, to designate a certain religious usage, in the first case without, in the latter with an unfavourable secondary meaning; it shows how the use of the word is determined by the attitude of mind of the writer.

### Flavius Josephus

Another Jewish author, Josephus, nearly always uses the word in the same sense as ps. Aristeas. Telling the story of king Manasse's conversion, he says that the king, when back in Jerusalem did all he could to banish even the memory of his former sins against God and ἐσπούδαζεν .... πάσῃ χρῆσθαι περὶ αὐτὸν δεισιδαιμονίαι <sup>2)</sup>, which he shows by purifying the temple and the town. If any doubt as to the exact meaning of δεισιδαιμονία still existed it would be dispelled by what Josephus adds, a bit further on viz. that, since his conversion, Manasse started to piously serve (εὐσεβεῖν) God.

'Religious zeal' is the meaning in another passage, which describes the indignation of the Jews, when a Roman soldier had torn up and burnt a law-scroll which he had found. The whole country instantly was in a state of commotion and the Jews all flocked to Caesarea, to demand the punishment of the miscreant καθάπερ ὀργάνωι τινὶ τῇ δεισιδαιμονίαι συνελκόμενοι <sup>3)</sup>.

With the aid of these two passages, where the meaning is beyond doubt we can now also interpret those passages,

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<sup>1)</sup> Cf. p. 65. <sup>2)</sup> Ant. Iud. 10. 42. <sup>3)</sup> de Bello Iud. 2. 230.



where there is room for more than one opinion. Alexandra had managed, though a woman, to acquire royal power, through her reputation of piety (διὰ δόξαν εὐσεβείας), as she was very strict in her observance of the Law. During her reign the Pharisees, a sect which had the name of being more pious (εὐσεβέστερον) and more strict in its observation of the Law than the other Jews gained greatly in influence. They even managed to persuade the queen to kill their enemies, and as she allowed them free play through her intense religiousness (ὕπὸ δεισιδαιμονίας), they made away with whom they wanted <sup>1)</sup>.

Herod once outraged the feelings of the Jews by erecting trophies in the amphitheatre he had built in Jerusalem, because the populace thought they were images and became perturbed at this supposed transgression of the Law. Herod, not wishing to use force to put down this unrest, went and talked with some of them τῆς δεισιδαιμονίας ἀφαιρούμενος <sup>2)</sup>: wishing to remove their scruples, not: 'to draw them away from their superstition' <sup>3)</sup>.

In about the same way Pilate fell foul of the Jews, when he wanted to force them to admit statues of the emperor in Jerusalem. On their refusing he has them surrounded by his soldiers and threatens to kill them. As they still refuse, he himself gives in and has the statues removed to outside the city, ὑπερθαυμάσας .... τὸ τῆς δεισιδαιμονίας ἄκρατον, wondering greatly at and admiring the power of their religious zeal <sup>4)</sup>. In this passage too, so at least it seems to me, Josephus, whose sympathy in this conflict is certainly with his countrymen, means us to admire this 'zeal', not to marvel at this 'superstition.'

<sup>1)</sup> B. I. 1. 113.    <sup>2)</sup> Ant. I. 15. 277.

<sup>3)</sup> Hatch, Essays in biblical Greek p. 43 sqq.    <sup>4)</sup> B. I. 2. 174.



It is interesting to note that where Josephus does use δεισιδαιμονία in an unfavourable sense, we have probably to deal with quotations. For instance, he tells how the Samaritans, wishing to make themselves agreeable to Antioch, wrote him a letter to say they had nothing in common with the Jews. Our ancestors, so they say, because of some calamity that had befallen them, παρακολουθήσαντες ἀρχαίαι τινὶ δεισιδαιμονίᾳ ἔθος ἐποίησαν σέβειν the day, which the Jews called the Sabbath <sup>1)</sup>. It is clear that Josephus here uses δεισιδαιμονία with the meaning: religious rite, or more probably even: superstitious practice, but that the unfavourable sense, if it is there, is due to the Samaritans, not to the historian. Elsewhere he mentions his source, so that there we can undoubtedly regard the unfavourable meaning as coming from the writer Josephus quotes <sup>2)</sup>.

Besides quotations from writers, however, Josephus has preserved for us several official documents, which are interesting and important, because they show that the word δεισιδαιμονία was one of the terms, used by the Roman authorities to designate the Jewish religion <sup>3)</sup>. Lentulus Crus, consul in the year 49 B. C. had been charged by the senate to raise two legions in the province of Asia, and he exempted Jews, who possessed Roman citizenship, from military service δεισιδαιμονίας ἔνεκα, religionis causa: because of their religion. This decree is quoted several times <sup>4)</sup>, together with communications of Roman officials or resolutions of towns, made in connection with the decree of Lentulus <sup>5)</sup>. Although the wording slightly varies from case

<sup>1)</sup> Ant. Iud. 12. 259. <sup>2)</sup> Cf. p. 65, 66.

<sup>3)</sup> Juster, Les Juifs I p. 252. See I p. 142 sqq. for a discussion of the edict of Lentulus Crus.

<sup>4)</sup> Ant. I. 14. 228; 232; 234; 237; 240. <sup>5)</sup> Juster I. c.



to case, the expression δεισιδαιμονίας ἕνεκα is found everywhere, which proves it was already to be found in the original document.

In an edict of the emperor Claudius<sup>1)</sup>, in which he confirms the ancient privileges of the Jews, he declares the Jews are free, in the whole empire, to observe their customs, but he appeals to them μὴ τὰς τῶν ἄλλων ἐθνῶν δεισιδαιμονίας ἐξουθενίζειν<sup>2)</sup>. We may safely conclude from these examples that in Roman law-style δεισιδαιμονία was used as one of the possible translations of 'religio' and that it was not confined to the Jewish religion alone we have already<sup>3)</sup> learnt from the inscription from Aphrodisias. One of the reasons why it was used may have been that it had a wider meaning than εὐσέβεια, which generally designated a certain attitude of mind, while δεισιδαιμονία covered the observing of all kinds of ritual ceremonies as well. However, this point is not to be stretched and the contrast is by no means absolute.

### New Testament

We are now able to judge better about the two passages in the Acts of the Apostles, where the words δεισιδαιμονία, δεισιδαίμων occur, the meaning of which has been a matter of controversy.

Festus, speaking to Agrippa about the disputings between St. Paul and the Jews says: ζητήματα δέ τινα περὶ τῆς ἰδίας

<sup>1)</sup> Juster p. 151; as to its authenticity, which had been attacked by A. Stein, Untersuchungen (p. 162) Idris Bell says 'there seems no adequate reason for rejecting it. (Jews and Christians in Egypt). Cf. also Stuart Jones, Claudius & the Jewish question at Alexandria. (Journ. Rom. St. 1926 XVI p. 17 sqq.) and P. Viereck, Sermo graecus etc. Diss. Göttingen 1838, p. 106 sqq.

<sup>2)</sup> A. I. 19. 290. <sup>3)</sup> Cf. p. 20.



δεισιδαιμονίας εἶχον πρὸς αὐτόν<sup>1)</sup>. The commentators are divided as to the meaning of δεισιδαιμονία here. Zahn<sup>2)</sup> thinks Festus regarded the Jewish religion as superstition and Hatch translates in that way<sup>3)</sup>, but the general opinion is, that he used a more or less neutral word, so as not to insult the king while reserving his own opinion<sup>4)</sup>. The psychological argument, which this last group advance, that Festus, a man of the world surely would n't have chosen a word which he thought was bound to offend the king, in itself seems to me quite sound. In the light of the usage we met, in ps. Aristeas and Josephus and on the other hand in Roman official documents, I think, however, we can undoubtedly accept as a fact that neither to the Jewish king nor to the Roman governor, the word δεισιδαιμονία meant anything else than 'religion'.

This makes it the more probable that in the passage, where St. Paul says to the Athenians: κατὰ πάντα ὥς δεισιδαιμονεστέρους ὑμᾶς θεωρῶ<sup>5)</sup>, the translation 'extremely religious', which also has been defended on psychological grounds, is to be preferred to 'very superstitious'<sup>6)</sup>.

Not only writers who belong to the Jewish-Christian world use δεισιδαιμονία in a favourable sense, but we find traces of this usage in the 'pagan' authors as well, even a long time after Diodorus.

<sup>1)</sup> Acts 25. 19.    <sup>2)</sup> Zahn, Kommentar z. N. T. p. 792/3.

<sup>3)</sup> O. c. p. 45.

<sup>4)</sup> Howson in Pulpit Comm.; Wendt in Meyer's Krit.-exeg. Komm. Cf. also Maclean s. v. demon and Tasker s. v. religion in Hastings' Dictionary of the Apost. Church.

<sup>5)</sup> Acts 17. 22.

<sup>6)</sup> Cf. The same commentators as quoted above.



## Heraclitus

To the first century A. D. probably <sup>1)</sup>, belongs Heraclitus, whose little book on the allegorical explanation of Homer has come down to us. If Homer did n't speak figuratively, he says, then he has committed all manner of impiety. Often, the writer adds, he has been astonished how pious people could recite those ungodly tales, how ὁ δεισιδαίμων βίος, ὁ ναοῖς καὶ τεμένεσιν καὶ ταῖς δι' ἔτους περὶ θεῶν προτροπόμενος ἑορταῖς <sup>2)</sup> has so passionately embraced the impiety of Homer. Surely the life which devotes itself to the temples and holy grounds, to the feasts of the gods, is that of the pious, not of the superstitious. There is no trace of adverse criticism.

It is generally thought that the author of a treatise 'on incredible things', also called Heraclitus, is a different person <sup>3)</sup>. He has collected, or written himself, as the case may be, a number of myths, which he interprets rationalistically and in a somewhat insipid way. For instance, the tradition about Orpheus, that he influenced animals and even inanimate objects by his music, he manages to explain in the following way. The bard, he thinks, fascinated his human contemporaries, while they were still little better than brutes, rock-like and tree-like (πετρώδεις.... καὶ δενδρώδεις); at the time they had neither customs nor laws and Orpheus gained the reputation he later had by enchanting them, εἰς δεισιδαιμονίαν ἀγαγών, καὶ ἐπὶ τὸ εὐσεβεῖν παρακάλεσας <sup>4)</sup>. These last words sufficiently show what is meant by the former.

<sup>1)</sup> Christ-Schmid II 367. <sup>2)</sup> Quaest. Hom. 1.

<sup>3)</sup> Christ-Schmid II 234; Festa, p. LIII. Mythogr. graeci III 2.

<sup>4)</sup> Incred. 23.



## Aelianus

Aelianus, the second-century sophist, is a man of a narrow-minded, often repellent <sup>1)</sup> piety and when we find him using δεισιδαιμονία in the meaning of 'religion, piety', it is exactly what we expect. It would be hard, indeed, to think of anything which this man, who calls the barbarians happy, because they have never known any doubts about the existence and providence of the gods, but firmly believed in the signs of the stars, the flight of birds etc. <sup>2)</sup>, could have regarded as condemnable superstition. After telling, with pious relish, the story of a little child, that had been put to death because of its inadvertent sacrilege, he heads his next chapter: περὶ Ἀθηναίων δεισιδαιμονίας: on the piety of the Athenians <sup>3)</sup>, which is introduced with the words: "Ὅτι τοσοῦτον ἦν Ἀθηναίους δεισιδαιμονίας, which piety is demonstrated by the fact that they executed anyone who cut down a tree in a heroön and put to death a certain Atarbes, who had accidentally killed a holy bird of Asclepius.

## Athenaeus

In Athenaeus we are once more up against the difficulty, that we cannot tell exactly how far he was dependent on his sources i. e. whether a quotation is literal or not. He mentions Antipater of Tarsus' book περὶ δεισιδαιμονίας <sup>4)</sup> and himself uses these words twice, in a favourable or, at least, a neutral sense. When telling the famous story of Hyperides, who suddenly uncovered Phryne's beauty to enforce his plea, he describes the result in the words: δεισιδαιμονῆσαι .... ἐποίησε τοὺς δικαστὰς τὴν ὑποφῆτιν καὶ ζάκορον Ἀφροδίτης ἐλέει χαρισαμένους μὴ ἀποκτεῖναι <sup>5)</sup>. The jurymen

<sup>1)</sup> Cf. e. g. V. H. 5. 16. <sup>2)</sup> V. H. 2. 31. <sup>3)</sup> V. H. 5. 17.

<sup>4)</sup> 8. 346D; cf. p. 46. <sup>5)</sup> 13. 590E.



are 'overawed' by this beauty, and remember the defendant is a priestess and servant of the goddess of love, but they are not 'ridiculously afraid'. And in the long story, which explains why the Carians use the willow to wreath themselves, Budaeus rightly translates 'religione': the Carians sent people to question Apollo, seized δεισιδαιμονίαι, by religious feeling, not by superstition <sup>1)</sup>).

### Heliodorus

According to Rohde <sup>2)</sup>, Heliodorus, the author of the *Aethiopica*, was not, as is often supposed, a Christian, but a pagan and even a very convinced one. As a very small indication in the same direction may perhaps be regarded the fact that he uses the word δεισιδαιμονεῖν in a favourable sense, at any rate certainly not with the meaning 'to fear the pagan gods, demons', as the Christian writers do <sup>3)</sup>. Chariclea, the heroine of the love-story is about to be sacrificed to the Sun and the Moon. All the spectators were struck by her beauty and chastity and would quite willingly have seen her saved by some agency or other καὶ δεισιδαιμονοῦντες: although full of religious zeal <sup>4)</sup>.

### Cassius Dio

Cassius Dio uses this verb in a different sense, which we have already noticed before, viz. to be 'awe-struck', when he relates how the Roman soldiers did not, when they were able to do so at once rush into the temple at Jerusalem διὰ τὸ δεισιδαιμονῆσαι <sup>5)</sup>; they are half shy, half afraid.

<sup>1)</sup> 15. 672D.    <sup>2)</sup> Gr. Roman<sup>3</sup> p. 453.

<sup>3)</sup> Cf. p. 86 sqq.    <sup>4)</sup> Aeth. 10. 9.

<sup>5)</sup> ed. Boissievain III p. 139; Epit. 66.



## Lucian

In an author who is no friend of excessive religious zeal and superstition, Lucian, who generally uses δεισιδαιμονία as a designation of these forms of piety which he despises <sup>1)</sup>, we have a rather interesting, indirect example of a favourable usage. In his essay 'Pro imaginibus' he defends his praises of Panthea, the wife of the emperor, Verus, against her own criticism that they were exaggerated. She did n't wish to be compared to goddesses or heroines, for, she said, as regards the gods πάνυ .... δεισιδαιμόνως καὶ φοφοδεῶς ἔχω <sup>2)</sup>. Lucian, who as we know, was anything but a pious worshipper himself, has more than once ridiculed the adepts of δεισιδαιμονία. It is, therefore, especially worthy of mention, that, while praising this great lady, he lets her describe her attitude towards the gods, in the words already quoted. In this same essay <sup>3)</sup> he argues that the gods do not mind at all, if human beings use divine names, as he shows in the case of a certain Leto, the wife of a king of Cyprus. And the Egyptians, οἵπερ καὶ δεισιδαιμονέστατοί εἰσι πάντων <sup>4)</sup>, have derived nearly all their names 'from heaven'.

If in the second century the highest lady in the empire could be thought of as speaking of her 'anxious scrupulousness' as regards the divine beings, we need not be surprised to find a man of the people described in his epitaph as 'δεισιδαίμων', very pious. As it is, with the exception of official documents, the only example known to us of this word used in an inscription, the rather lame verses may be very fitly quoted here in full <sup>5)</sup>.

<sup>1)</sup> Cf. p. 39.    <sup>2)</sup> pro imag. 7.    <sup>3)</sup> pro imag. 27.

<sup>4)</sup> Cf. Eusebius on the piety of the Egyptians p. 92.

<sup>5)</sup> I. G. 14. 1683; Kaibel, Epigr. ex lap. nr. 607.



Δαίμοσιν εὐσεβέσιν Γαίου Ἰουλίου Καρακουττίου  
 ποίησεν Κασία τῷ τειμίῳ καὶ ἀξίῳ ἀνδρί.  
 πᾶσι φίλος θνητοῖς εἷς τ' ἀθανάτους δεισιδαίμων <sup>1)</sup>  
 κοιμᾶται Καρακουττίς, ἔχων μνήμην διὰ παντός,  
 τέρψας σύνκλητον, ματρῶνας καὶ βασιλῆας,  
 εὐφρανθεῖς ἐφ' ὅσον Μοῖραι χρόνον ὥρισαν αὐτῷ,  
 εὐσεβίης ἔνεκεν δοξασθεῖς καὶ μετὰ λήθην.

Caracuttis, probably an actor <sup>2)</sup>, has left behind him a reputation for piety and the real meaning of δεισιδαίμων is here clearly shown by the last verse.

### Stobaeus

As it is by no means certain when Zaleucus, the celebrated law-giver lived, the part of the proemium of his laws, in which the verb δεισιδαιμονεῖν is used, and which Stobaeus has handed down to us, is quoted here.

If, so Zaleucus says, someone is tempted by an evil demon who urges him to do wrong, he should always remain near the temples and altars, praying the gods to help and seeking the counsel of wise men, that he may be deterred from doing evil δεισιδαιμονῶν δαίμονας ἀλάστορας. <sup>3)</sup>

### Suidas

Suidas, besides giving his own definition of δεισιδαιμονία, has several quotations from different writers in which the word is used. Crito, probably Trajanus' surgeon <sup>4)</sup>, tells how the kings of the Getes strove after great things ἀπάτη καὶ γοητεία δεισιδαιμονίαν καὶ ὁμόνοιαν ἐνεργασάμενοι αὐτοῖς; although they are not very particular as to their methods,

<sup>1)</sup> Cf. p. 12. <sup>2)</sup> Kaibel l. c.: 'mimus fuit'.

<sup>3)</sup> Ed. Hense IV. p. 125<sup>17</sup> (4.2.19).

<sup>4)</sup> R. E. s. v. Kriton.



the results are satisfying: 'awe and harmony' are implanted in the minds of their followers. Of Asclepiodotus, a disciple of Proclus, he says, probably deriving his information from Damascius <sup>1)</sup>: ὅσιος ἦν καὶ εὐσεβής· καὶ τὰ μὲν πρῶτα δεισιδαίμων ἐγεγόνει καὶ εὐλαβής to such an extent that he never stopped offering sacrifice, μήτέ τινας ἀπορρήτου μηδενὸς ἀκούειν.

### Conclusion

On the strength of the material which has been collected in this chapter we can confidently state that examples of δεισιδαιμονία δεισιδαιμονεῖν, etc. used in a favourable sense, are to be found in Greek literature from the fourth century B. C. to at least the third century A. D. <sup>2)</sup> Besides we have seen it used in official documents as a designation for the Jewish religion and practically synonymous with the Latin 'religio', while as late as the third century <sup>3)</sup> in an epitaph, outside literature proper, δεισιδαίμων is used with the sense 'god-fearing' and so links up with the oldest known usage, in Xenophon.

<sup>1)</sup> R. E. s. v. Asklepiodotos.

<sup>2)</sup> Many of the epitomes are, of course, of a much younger date. As to Heliodorus see Christ-Schmid.

<sup>3)</sup> Kaibel: Tertii fere saeculi.



## II — Δεισιδαιμονία ETC. USED IN AN UNFAVOURABLE SENSE.

As has been shown in the previous chapter the word δεισιδαιμονία was used by many people in its original meaning, that is synonymous, or very nearly so, with θεοσέβεια, for centuries after it had first been used, with criticism and condemnation implied, to denote 'excessive piety', 'superstition' etc. This change of meaning to the worse may be historically explained by the ever widening chasm that separated the educated 'elite' from the masses.

While the former drifted away from the traditional forms of piety and on the whole expected more from philosophy than from religion, the mass of the people sought for comfort in all kinds of new religions. It is well-known how, round about the end of the fifth century, Oriental religions began to gain a foothold in Greece and how especially those movements, that may comprehensively be described as Orphic, asserted or reasserted their influence, which probably even in the heyday of fifth century rationalism had not been negligible.

In its psychological aspects this change of meaning is also readily understood. Nothing is so contagious as fear, and the man who 'fears' God, who sees the hand of God in every little happening, especially if he regards it as a proof of impending disaster can easily pass the boundary that separates 'awe' from 'pure funk'. In this latter case it is only natural that he becomes an object of ridicule or contempt



to those who are more rational-minded, while religious men may try to clear his ideas and free his piety from what they too regard as undesirable elements. In this they are sometimes led by a kind of pity for their deluded fellowman.

We find, therefore, in the fourth century how many educated men begin to regard 'δεισιδαιμονία' as a term of reproach which they use to designate those forms of popular religion with which they are out of sympathy.

At the same time, however, we must bear in mind that all criticism of 'δεισιδαιμονία' can't be treated alike, as incidentally has already been remarked above. A rationalist like Polybius, in whose eyes practically all religion, as opposed to philosophy, is δεισιδαιμονία, which he only — and that warmly — defends as an instrument to curb the unruly instincts of less-enlightened men must not be lumped together with a deeply religious man like Plutarch, who from religious motives tries to educate men away from this 'δεισιδαιμονία' which he regards as a perversion of true religion.

The mentality of that rather superficial scoffer Lucian is diametrically opposed to that of the mystic emperor Julian. Up till the present however, it seems to me, those writers who have given attention to the development of this word in its different usages, have been content with stating that since the days of Theophrast and Menander δεισιδαιμονία is used in an unfavourable sense. They have not sufficiently pointed out that the δεισιδαιμονία of one adverse critic may be something entirely different from that of another, while the motives which cause the attacking of what each regards as δεισιδαιμονία often also differ very widely. In this chapter an attempt has been made to differentiate these critics. That is why this chapter has been divided into four subdivisions:



§ 1 — Δεισιδαιμονία ridiculed.

§ 2 — The criticism of the philosophers.

§ 3 — Polybius and other historians as critics of δεισιδαιμονία.

§ 4 — Plutarch and δεισιδαιμονία.

Of course this division only partially meets our needs, for it is obvious that the partition between ridicule and criticism often is largely imaginary, while f. i. the lumping together of all historians is a rather arbitrary division. Broadly speaking, however, I think these divisions will be found to correspond with different kinds of criticism, that arise from different sides. That Plutarch has been treated by himself is largely due to practical considerations. He is so rich in material that is of importance for our investigation that, treated in one of the other paragraphs, he would swell it beyond measure. At the same time he may be regarded as, to a certain extent, uniting all kinds of criticism, although it is true that that of the philosophical-religious type predominates.

#### § 1 — Δεισιδαιμονία RIDICULED

To the writers of comedy, who exercised their wit on everything and everybody, the exaggerated forms of piety and the new-fangled cults were a welcome object of ridicule. A rapid survey of titles and fragments will show how many of them treat of religious subjects. Babick has devoted the entire second part of his thesis to this subject: 'quomodo deisidaemones in comoediis veterum illusi sint' <sup>1)</sup>.

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<sup>1)</sup> o. c. p. 20 sqq.



## Theophrast

Theophrast was not, therefore, the inventor of the *Δεισιδαίμων* as a type, but his sketch certainly is the most amusing that has come down to us and anyhow it is one of our chief sources<sup>1)</sup>. His sixteenth 'Type' — perhaps a better translation than 'Character' — is largely responsible for our idea of a typical *δεισιδαίμων*. It will at once become clear, even to a casual reader, that this man is hardly 'superstitious' in our sense of the word or that he is, at least, a good deal more than that: he is very strict in his religiousness, a bigot with a streak of the cad.

Everywhere he sees 'signs', that point to imminent disaster. If a weasel<sup>2)</sup> crosses his way he dare n't go on without taking counter-measures; when he hears an owl hoot he calls in Athena's aid<sup>3)</sup> and in the case of his having a dream he runs about consulting every possible kind of oneirologist and sooth-sayer to inquire of him to which god or goddess he ought to pray.

If — supreme misfortune — a mouse gnaws a hole in the leather sack in which the *δεισιδαίμων* keeps his corn he rushes off to consult the *ἐξηγητής* what he thinks one ought to do in the circumstances and if this official<sup>4)</sup> gives him the

<sup>1)</sup> For a fuller treatment see: Bolkestein. Theophrastos Charakter der *δεισιδαίμωνία* als religionsgeschichtliche Urkunde, which will shortly appear in the Rel.gesch. Vers. u. Vorarb.

<sup>2)</sup> This superstition still exists in a large part of Europe. Cf. Kr. Nyrop, Gramm. historique IV p. 275: 'de nos jours il présage une mort inattendue s'il traverse le chemin devant vous etc.' He points out that owing to this belief the Old-French name: mousteile, moustoile has been superseded by the neutral: belette.

<sup>3)</sup> I follow the reading <ἀνακράγῳσι> which has been pretty generally accepted since Foss.

<sup>4)</sup> I feel confident the official *ἐξηγητής* is meant here. In the first place, as has been already said e. g. by Immisch, that not only gives



practical advice to take it to a cobbler and have it mended, he does n't do so, but tries to ward off the evil sign with the aid of magic. The commentators have shown, with a wealth of detail, that this belief in signs was very general; it is the overdoing it, the seeing of a portent in every ordinary thing that makes a man a *δεισιδαίμων*. We know from inscriptions that the fear of practically all these defilements against which this *δεισιδαίμων* so eagerly guards himself was rooted in popular conceptions, which were shared by all, but the most highly educated. It is his exaggeration again which makes this man ridiculous or contemptible. On certain occasions he sprinkles himself with holy water and walks about the whole day with a laurel leaf in his mouth. He thinks it better to be on the safe side and entirely avoid contamination, which might result from coming into contact with a corpse or with a woman that has just given birth to a child: one of his most unsympathetic traits, as it would mean his not being able to fulfil his duties as a neighbour, friend or relative. He would n't think of passing a holy stone without kneeling down, pouring out oil and praying; if he meets a lunatic or a person in an epileptic fit he spits to avoid becoming unclean himself. All these things may be regarded as common practices among a great part of the population, in fourth-century Athens as well as later, but the *δεισιδαίμων* combines and exaggerates them all to a fantastic degree. He sees a sign where no other person would think of it and he never tones down the strict demands of ritual purity to fit them to practical purposes. His whole life is under the cloud of 'this cowardice towards the unseen world', which checks him at every other step.

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the remark its point, but a private *ἐξηγητής* surely would n't have made fun of anyone who came to consult him. A quack always treats his patients seriously.



## Menander

About this time too it was, that Menander wrote his comedy entitled Δεισιδαίμων, a few fragments of which are still extant; from them we can gather that the picture he drew of this ridiculous bigot had much in common with that of Theophrast's 'Type'. The mouse, which struck terror into his heart, again pops up in the play and indeed it seems to have become a kind of recognized figure with the opponents of δεισιδαιμονία. At least we have a story about Bion of Borysthenes<sup>1)</sup> who ironically consoled someone, to whom the same terrible mishap had occurred as we met above in this connection, by remarking that it would have been a real portent if the sack had devoured the mouse. Menander's δεισιδαίμων sees signs everywhere even

ἀν μῦς διορύξει βωμὸν ὄντα πῆλινον

κἄν μηδὲν ἄλλ' ἔχων διατράγηι θύλακον<sup>2)</sup>.

In an other fragment someone tells a certain Phidias that if really something terrible had occurred he would indeed have been right in looking round for a real 'medicine' (φάρμακον), while now the speaker says, you have found κενὸν .... τὸ φάρμακον | πρὸς τὸ κενόν. If, he proceeds, you think that will help you, let women, standing round you in a circle cleanse you by rubbing you down and by using sulphur; sprinkle yourself with water from three sources, while you throw in salt and lentils.

In an amusing bit of dialogue we find the δεισιδαίμων praying to the gods for help; an awful thing has happened: while putting on his shoes the strap of the right one has

<sup>1)</sup> Cf. Theodoretus Therap. 6 p. 88 (Gaisf.).

<sup>2)</sup> Kock III p. 471 frgm. 341. Babick o. c. p. 27 denies that these verses are taken from Menander's Δεισιδαίμων, and says that it is n't even certain that Menander is the author.



snapped. His sceptic friend, however, is not in the least impressed and answers him: and 'quite natural too, you twaddler, as it was entirely rotten, and you so stingy, not wanting to buy new ones' <sup>1)</sup>. Perhaps it is n't superfluous to reiterate once again that the belief in portents was probably shared by many of these critics of δεισιδαιμονία. Many of them, too were of the opinion: εἰ μὲν τι κακὸν ἀληθὲς εἶχες .... ζητεῖν ἀληθὲς φάρμακον τούτου σ' ἔδει <sup>2)</sup>.

### Cynic philosophers

This is, however, less likely to have been the case with another group of critics: the philosophers of the Cynic school. We know that they ridiculed and criticized the popular religious conceptions of their day vehemently and wittily <sup>3)</sup>. Diogenes Laertius has preserved for us several anecdotes of his namesake's, the famous philosopher of the tub. Of course there is only the very slightest chance that we have a direct quotation of Diogenes' words, but perhaps the evidence may be regarded as convincing enough to establish the fact that in the Cynic school δεισιδαιμονία pretty soon came to be used as a term of opprobrium, especially as we have direct evidence in Plutarch that points in the same direction <sup>4)</sup>.

Once, so Diogenes Laertius, who quotes Zoilus of Pergae as his source, relates <sup>5)</sup>, the philosopher saw a woman, who was kneeling down to the gods in a rather undecorous position. Wanting to cure her τῆς δεισιδαιμονίας he went up to

<sup>1)</sup> Cf. Strabo's remark 16 2. 36 (p. 64, 65).

<sup>2)</sup> Alciphro (Epist. 2. 4. 50; 4. 19. 6 Sch.) in Glycera's letter to Menander mentions how everyone wants to see Menander and hear φιλαργύρων καὶ ἐρώντων καὶ δεισιδαιμόνων etc.

<sup>3)</sup> Zeller, Gesch. Phil. d. Gr.<sup>3</sup> II. 1 328 sqq.

<sup>4)</sup> Cf. Plut. περὶ δεισιδαιμονίας 168E. <sup>5)</sup> D. L. 6. 37.



her and asked: are n't you afraid (εὐλαβῆι), my good woman, to make a very unseemly impression, if a god should happen to be standing behind you, as is quite possible, everything being full of him? Two things are worthy of note: that here again we have a woman who is overdoing her expression of piety and that Diogenes, whoever it is, is probably using the word εὐλαβῆι with a certain irony, εὐλαβεῖσθαι being nearly synonymous, in many ways, with δεισιδαιμονεῖν. Another time a person who very firmly believed in miraculous signs (ἰσχυρῶς δεισιδαίμων) threatening to punch Diogenes' head the philosopher answered: I'll just sneeze to the left and make you tremble <sup>1)</sup>).

The Christian Fathers, in their fight against paganism, frequently borrowed their weapons from these witty critics and so we find e. g. Menander and Bion quoted more than once <sup>2)</sup>).

### Lucian

To Lucian, as might be expected beforehand, δεισιδαιμονία as one of the many human frailties, is merely a source of amusement and an object of mockery.

Alexander, the false prophet of dubious fame, strongly urges upon his comrades the necessity of choosing favourable hunting-ground for their intended religious swindle. He recommends very strongly to try the town of Abonutiches and the country round about, from where he hailed himself. For their aims, he added, they needed dull and stupid people, like his compatriots the Paphlagonians δεισιδαίμονας τοὺς πολλοὺς καὶ πλουσίους <sup>3)</sup>). One need only ap-

<sup>1)</sup> 6. 48.

<sup>2)</sup> Clem. Al. Strom. 7. 4. 24; Theodoretus Therap. 6 p. 88 (Gaisf.).

<sup>3)</sup> V. Alexandri 9.



pear there, Alexander continues, predicting the future, accompanied by someone playing a flute or clashing cymbals and the whole populace stand about, gaping open-mouthed as if they saw a divine being, descended from heaven.

In another of his essays <sup>1)</sup> one of the men who are talking together asks the other to stop telling all kinds of wonderful tales (τερατολογεῖν), because of the young people present: lest they, he says, without our noticing it be filled with terrors and wonderful stories (ἀλλοκότων μυθολογημάτων). If young people become accustomed to hear such gruesome and creepy stories they will never forget them and that will torment them all their lives. It will make them jumpy at the slightest sound (ψοφοδεεῖς) and make them full ποικίλης τῆς δεισιδαιμονίας. A good thing you reminded me, the other man answers, εἰπὼν τὴν δεισιδαιμονίαν. And turning again to his original partner he asks: what do you think of those things, I mean oracles and heaven-sent messages and the words men utter when carried away by divine inspiration (θεοφορούμενοι) <sup>2)</sup>. From all this it is already sufficiently clear what Lucian regarded as δεισιδαιμονία. We need n't entertain the idea that this light-hearted scoffer wished to reform those who suffered from that 'disease', although we can readily imagine so of men like Theophrast and Diogenes. This, however, would be entering into the regions of the merely hypothetical and we shall now turn from this group, who with all their enormous differences have in common that 'their foe was δεισιδαιμονία and their weapon wit' to the philosophers who in criticizing δεισι-

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<sup>1)</sup> Philopseudes 38.

<sup>2)</sup> Cf. p. 29, where other passages from Lucian are quoted.



δαίμονία generally offer something better to take its place <sup>1)</sup>.

## § 2 — THE CRITICISM OF THE PHILOSOPHERS

Quite early in the history of Greek civilisation we find philosophers criticizing the religious beliefs of their countrymen. Xenophanes' poetry f. i. is full of this criticism and since then, though at times it may be less virulent, it never vanishes.

It is only in the third century that we have an example of the word δεισιδαιμονία being used to denote the traditional religion as opposed to that of the philosopher. However it is not entirely impossible that this meaning came into use a bit earlier. There is some evidence which makes it more or less plausible that it was first used in this sense by some of the Socratic schools viz. the Cynics and the Cyreniacs. At the same time, however, it must be admitted that this evidence is of the slenderest and the idea largely hypothetical.

### Cynics and Cyrenaics

Diogenes Laertius has a notice about Aristippus that in his opinion the wise man will neither feel the longing of passion nor be subject to 'superstitious fears about the unseen', as here δεισιδαιμονήσειν can be translated <sup>2)</sup>. Shortly after, Diogenes quotes two philosophers, Meleager and Clitomachus, who said that the Cyrenaics devoted only very little attention to 'physics' and dialectics, regarding

<sup>1)</sup> Once more I want to point out that I am quite aware of the fact, that the division I have made is more or less arbitrary.

<sup>2)</sup> Diog. L. 2. 91.



them as useless: a man who has a philosophic knowledge of good and evil will be able to speak well — and so, evidently the Cyrenaics thought, won't need any dialectics — and at the same time 'can be δεισιδαιμονίας ἐκτός and escape the fear of death' <sup>1)</sup> — manifestly the two results that were expected from a study of 'physics'. Although δεισιδαιμονία is n't further described in this passage either, it is significant that 'fear of death' is mentioned in the same breath.

Menedemus of Eretria, a man τὰ δ' ἄλλα μεγαλόψυχος .... καὶ ἐλευθέριος, is described by Diogenes as having been δεισιδαιμονέστερος: something of a δεισιδαίμων. To illustrate this, he tells how Menedemus once in an inn had, without knowing it, partaken of 'meat that is thrown away' (ρίπτουμένων). After he had found this out he turned pale and felt sick, but was rebuked for this by his friend Asclepiades, who pointed out that the meat by itself had n't in the least inconvenienced him, but only his own ideas about it <sup>2)</sup>.

Although the meaning is n't quite clear, as we do not know for certain what is meant by 'meat, that is thrown away', it is obvious that δεισιδαίμων here is used in an unfavourable sense.

As had already been remarked in a former paragraph <sup>3)</sup> Diogenes' use of the word in this way is not to be regarded as a convincing proof that the philosophers quoted used it in the same way, but the possibility is there <sup>4)</sup>. That Xenophon used it in an entirely different sense would afford only another proof for the spiritual abyss that separated him, the old-fashioned, pious country-gentleman, from most other followers of Socrates.

<sup>1)</sup> 2. 92.    <sup>2)</sup> 2. 132.    <sup>3)</sup> Cf. p. 38.

<sup>4)</sup> Cf. Diels, *Elementum* p. XI on the different γένη and their usages of words.



## Teles

Teles, halfway the third century, certainly uses the word *δεισιδαίμων* in a derogatory way <sup>1)</sup>. To a person, who is suffering from dropsy one must n't give water, because he would drink himself to death sooner than quench his thirst. It is quite the same with a spendthrift: a man like that will never be satisfied, ὅταν ᾖ ἄπληστος καὶ δοξοκόπος καὶ δεισιδαίμων <sup>2)</sup> and again, partly in the same words: you will achieve nothing if you give someone much money having first made him ἀλαζόνα πολυτελῇ δεισιδαίμονα δοξοκόπον ἄπληστον <sup>3)</sup>. Evidently the *δεισιδαίμων* is here regarded as someone who has never enough money and at the same time is something of a braggart and a notoriety-seeker <sup>4)</sup>.

## Peripatetic School

Aristotle, in his extant writings, has only once used the word *δεισιδαίμων*. Later on, in Philo and Plutarch e. g., we repeatedly find 'real piety' regarded as a virtue, the golden mean between a too much: bigotry (*δεισιδαιμονία*) and a too little: godlessness. This, of course, is entirely in accordance with the Peripatetic method and Stobaeus, under the heading 'Aristotle and the other Peripatetics on questions of ethics' remarks: εὐσέβειαν μὲν οὖν εἶναι ἔξιν θεῶν καὶ δαιμόνων θεραπευτικὴν, μεταξύ οὖσαν ἀθεότητος καὶ δεισιδαιμονίας <sup>5)</sup>. Suidas, without attributing it to the Peripatetics, has a notice to the same effect <sup>6)</sup>. It is, clearly,

<sup>1)</sup> As to Bion we have, of course, no direct evidence, but in all probability his usage was the same as that of Teles.

<sup>2)</sup> Teles ed. Hense<sup>2</sup> IV p. 39<sup>7</sup>.

<sup>3)</sup> o. c. p. 41<sup>15</sup>.

<sup>4)</sup> Cf. Marc. Aur. I. 16. Cf. p. 69.

<sup>5)</sup> Stobaeus, ed. W.-H. II p. 147<sup>1-2</sup>. <sup>6)</sup> s. v.



yet another case where 'die Stoisch-peripatetische Schulsprache' has come into general usage <sup>1)</sup>).

### Epicure

Epicure, an enemy of traditional religion, is, as might be expected, no friend of δεισιδαιμονία either. He reproached the Stoics that they too suffered from it, in their belief in Providence and an omnipotent deity <sup>2)</sup>. Plutarch also tells us that the Epicureans attacked this Stoic doctrine: διαβάλλοντες τὴν πρόνοιαν ὥσπερ παισὶν Ἐμπουσάν ἢ Ποινὴν ἀλιττηριώδη καὶ τραγικὴν ἐπικρεμαμένην <sup>3)</sup>. We notice once again how pretty nearly every critic of δεισιδαιμονία has his own conception of what is to be regarded as such: Plutarch, a violent assailant of what he himself calls δεισιδαιμονία, would certainly have been regarded as a δεισιδαίμων by Epicure, to whom even a belief in Providence was 'childish superstition'.

### Philodemus

In an, unfortunately, very badly mutilated fragment of Philodemus, the tone is much more moderate. The master seems to urge his disciples not to abandon their 'purity of conduct' (δσιότης) along with the traditional religion: ὦ[ς] δ'οἱ λεγόμε[νοι δεισ]ιδάιμονες <sup>4)</sup> the bigots, the so-called 'deisidaimones' who are prone to throw from them all religious feeling, if once they can free themselves of their δεισιδαιμονία: they rush into another, undesirable extreme.

### Polystratus

In a curious passage of Polystratus the Epicurean <sup>5)</sup>,

<sup>1)</sup> Cf. Diels, *Elementum* p. 41.    <sup>2)</sup> *Epicurea* nr. 369.

<sup>3)</sup> *Plut. contra Epic. beat.* 21 p. 1101C.    <sup>4)</sup> *Epicurea* nr. 38

<sup>5)</sup> *Pol. ed. Wilke. (Diss. Kiel 1905), p. 9.*



which has only come down to us in a very fragmentary condition we can see he attacks those people who are very courageous when it only comes to words, but in reality are very much afraid and nervous: people who talk like that, he says, you will see *πρῶτον δει[σ]ιδαιμονοῦντας ἐπὶ τῶν ἔργων*: full of nervous fear when they really have to begin work. And, he goes on to say, if they ever find courage enough to act in accordance with their expressed views they are overwhelmed by fear and remorse, like the man of whom it is told that he killed the snake in the temple. This man, we gather from what Polystratus adds, seems afterwards to have repented of his rashness and to have offered an expiatory sacrifice, after which he erected a gold snake in stead of the one, that had been killed by him. We learn from this little story, a thing which, however, hardly needed proof, that there must have been many people who ridiculed *δεισιδαιμονία*, but were full of it themselves, as soon as something extraordinary happened to them.

In whatever sense, approving or the opposite, *δεισιδαίμονια* is used, in one way all writers are agreed viz. that a characteristic trait is the feeling of utter dependance, on God or the gods.

#### Stoics

The Stoic 'wise man', whose pride made him regard himself as 'of one race with God' <sup>1)</sup> naturally was out of sympathy with the humbleness of the *δεισιδαίμων*, notwithstanding the fact that the Stoa as a whole tried to turn popular religion to its own account f. i. by allegorical interpretation of myths etc. The Stoics regarded *δεισιδαιμονία* as an emotion, a passion and as such blameworthy. Among

<sup>1)</sup> Cf. Aratus, *Phen.* 5.



all kinds of fear we find it described as φόβος θεῶν ἢ δαιμόνων <sup>1)</sup> and about the same definition turns up in ps. Andronicus, who has: δεισιδαιμονία .... φόβος τοῦ δαιμονίου [ἢ ὑπερέκπτωσις τῆς πρὸς τοὺς θεοὺς τιμῆς] <sup>2)</sup>. The second part of the definition, which von Arnim <sup>3)</sup> rightly regards as not in its proper place here, is valuable for us nevertheless as expressing the well-known idea that δεισιδαιμονία is essentially an exaggeration of religious practices. Elsewhere all the evil consequences of different passions are enumerated: ὑπὸ δὲ τὸν φόβον ὄκνοι καὶ .... θόρυβοι καὶ δεισιδαιμονίαι καὶ δέος καὶ δέματα <sup>4)</sup>.

Antipater of Tarsus, Panaetius' master, even wrote a treatise περὶ δεισιδαιμονίας <sup>5)</sup>. In the only extant fragment he puts forward a rather insipid explanation of the fact that in Syria certain species of fish are regarded as sacred to Atargatis and are not eaten. Perhaps his book contained more of this rationalistic explanation of myths and rituals.

There is probably, according to some scholars <sup>6)</sup>, a slight influence of the Stoa to be found in a little treatise, that has come down to us among the writing of Hippocrates entitled, περὶ εὐσχημοσύνης. The language in which it is written is very obscure in many places and its meaning is by no means clear everywhere, but in a passage, where we find all the qualities which ἡ ἱερικὴ possesses extolled, along with modesty, judgment etc. ἀδεισιδαιμονίη is mentioned <sup>7)</sup>. This, as we have just seen, certainly is quite in keeping with the way in which the Stoic philosophers use δεισιδαιμονία. A good doctor should be free, too, from the love of money,

<sup>1)</sup> Stoic. Vet. Fr. ed. Arnim 408; cf. 411. <sup>2)</sup> S. V. F. nr. 409.

<sup>3)</sup> 'aliena seclusi'. <sup>4)</sup> S. V. F. nr. 394.

<sup>5)</sup> Athen. 8 p. 346D.; cf. p. 27. <sup>6)</sup> Ed. Jones (Loeb) p. 269.

<sup>7)</sup> Cap. 5.



so this writer says, and the same combination is to be found in Soranus <sup>1)</sup>, who wants a midwife to be ἀφιλάργυρον, so as not to give a φθόριον for money and ἀδεισιδαίμονα, to be sure she won't overlook what her patient needs: δι' ὄνειρον ἢ διὰ κληδόνας ἢ σύννηθές τι μυστήριον καὶ βιωτικὴν θρησκευίαν.

Most nurses, he says, do not like to cut the umbilical cord with an iron knife, because they regard that as a bad omen. That idea, according to Soranus, is ridiculous, for crying in itself is a bad omen too and all children begin life that way. In his opinion the best method is ἀδεισιδαιμονέστερον σμιλίωι .... τὸν ὀμφαλὸν κόπτειν <sup>2)</sup>).

In choosing a wet-nurse the selection should be made with great care: she should be between twenty and forty years of age, well-built, of Greek nationality: οὐδὲ δεισιδαίμονα δεῖ καὶ θεοφόρητον εἶναι τὴν γαλοῦχον, so as not to endanger the child παραλογισθεῖσά ποτε καὶ μανιωδῶς σαλευθεῖσα <sup>3)</sup>).

### Philo Judaeus

This Peripatetic-Stoic doctrine is to be found also in Philo Judaeus, who uses the word δεισιδαιμονία etc., rather often, to signify different kinds of objectionable religiosity. He warns against rushing from one extreme into the other and recommends to steer a middle course. All virtues can be regarded as a golden mean: courage f. i. of fool-hardiness and cowardice, δεισιδαιμονίας καὶ ἀσεβείας εὐσέβεια <sup>4)</sup>. It is worth noting that here ἀσεβεία is regarded as the opposite of δεισιδαιμονία, while we generally find ἀθεότης used as such.

Every virtue is so perfect in itself that the very slightest addition or subtraction will change it into something quite

<sup>1)</sup> περὶ γυν. ed. Ilberg p. 5. 28 (I. 4).    <sup>2)</sup> p. 58. 21 (II. 80).

<sup>3)</sup> p. 68. 20 (II. 88).    <sup>4)</sup> (Mangey) I. 297.



different. That is true too of the queen of all virtues, real piety: if you take anything away from it ἀσέβεια is the result and you must n't add anything either: γεννήσει γὰρ ἡ .... πρόσθεσις δεισιδαιμονίαν<sup>1)</sup>. Real piety is something to be sought for, being a 'knowledge of the service of God'<sup>2)</sup>. In the light of this definition it is not surprising to read in another passage<sup>3)</sup> that in the same way as every τέχνη is to be exercised τεχνικῶς and neither ἀτέχνως nor κακοτέχνως one must n't practice one's religion δεισιδαιμόνως. In Philo's sight δεισιδαιμονία is a lack of skill or a wrongly-used skill in the 'art and knowledge', if one may be allowed to translate τέχνη in this way, of serving God<sup>4)</sup>.

There are several other places where 'right' and 'wrong' piety (εὐσέβεια, δεισιδαιμονία) are opposed to one another<sup>5)</sup>. Most interesting is a passage<sup>6)</sup> where Philo enlarges upon the influence that unwise nurses and educators exercise on the character of young people. One of the chief sources of δεισιδαιμονία is there laid bare and at the same time we understand better why especially really pious men attacked δεισιδαιμονία quite often as leading to an impious throwing over of all religion (ἀσέβεια, ἀθεότης). When we are young, Philo says, we are subject to fiery passions: licentiousness, and many others, each of which nurses and 'educators' (παιδαγωγοί) foster and augment καὶ ἐθῶν καὶ νομίμων εὐσέβειαν μὲν ἐλαυνόντων δεισιδαιμονίαν δὲ πρᾶγμα ἀδελφὸν ἀσεβείαι κατασκευαζόντων εἰσηγήσεις καὶ θέσεις<sup>7)</sup>. It is the practice of these undesirable ἐθῶν καὶ νομίμων which especially raises Philo's wrath.

<sup>1)</sup> 2. 360.    <sup>2)</sup> 1. c.: ἐπιστήμην ἐμποιοῦσα θεραπείας θεοῦ.

<sup>3)</sup> 1. 195. 9.    <sup>4)</sup> Cf. Suidas' definition of piety.

<sup>5)</sup> e. g. 1. 166; 1. 195. 8; 2. 414.    <sup>6)</sup> 1. 166.

<sup>7)</sup> Cf. Luc. Philops. 38; p. 40.



Elsewhere δεισιδαιμονία is more or less identified by him with traditional, popular religion. He distinguishes the different, wrong ways in which people judge about the chief problems of life. Some flatly deny the very existence of any divine power, others are weakly sceptical and say they have no opinion in that matter, while a third group merely accept the opinions about the existence of God from their parents and teachers and don't trouble to think for themselves. But, according to Philo, these people ἔδοξαν εὐστόχως εὐσεβεῖν, δεισιδαιμονίαι τὴν εὐσέβειαν χαράξαντες <sup>1)</sup>).

It is quite in keeping with this judgment of his that, when explaining the old traditions of his people according to his allegorical method, he warns the δεισιδαίμονες to stop their ears or stand aside; the word here means evidently the believers in the literal truth of these stories, one might almost say 'the orthodox'. His teaching, he adds, is meant only for those who practise a real, true and unadorned piety, free from arrogance, and not for those who are subject to that irremediable evil τύφῳ ῥημάτων καὶ ὀνομάτων γλισχρότητι καὶ τερθρείαις ἐθῶν, an accurate if prejudiced and unsympathizing description of his orthodox co-religionists, from Philo's point of view <sup>2)</sup>).

The offering of sacrifices Philo regards as a good thing in itself, but an evil has sprung up next to it viz. δεισιδαιμονία, which ought to be exterminated as soon as possible. Some people are of the opinion that sacrificing as such is a form of piety (εὐσέβεια) and part of everything they secure they sacrifice on the altar, even if it has been gained by robbery or in some other criminal way, in the hope of assuring themselves impunity by doing so <sup>3)</sup>. We find here δεισιδαιμονία used in yet another way: it is the external form of religion

<sup>1)</sup> 2. 414.    <sup>2)</sup> 1. 146.    <sup>3)</sup> 1. 345; cf. p. 64 note 2.



that is characterized by its formality and its lack of moral feeling. An impediment to holy living (δσιότης) and a heavy punishment for those who suffer from it Philo calls δεισδαιμονία elsewhere <sup>1)</sup> and again a heavy burden, that one will be able to throw off on seeing that 'spirits and demons and angels', though differing in name are really one and the same <sup>2)</sup>.

Of his antithesis to the orthodox Jews we are once more reminded in reading that the real meaning of the holy scriptures cannot be grasped by everyone πολλοῦ τοῦ δεισδαιμονίας ῥυέντος <sup>3)</sup> παρ' ἡμῖν κακοῦ, submerging unmanly and weak spirits <sup>4)</sup>.

The verb δεισδαιμονεῖν is once used by Philo to signify the entertaining of unnecessary scruples, a meaning that is well-known: οὐ δεισδαιμονῶν περὶ τὴν θέσιν τῶν ὀνομάτων <sup>5)</sup>.

To recapitulate, we can say that Philo uses δεισδαιμονία as a denotation of those forms of religion which he thought wrong, because they differed from real piety as which, naturally, he regarded his own. While following the lead of the Peripatetics in calling δεισδαιμονία an excess, he gives it a meaning of his own when he obviously uses it to signify the, in his view, petty belief in the literal truth of the sacred books and the undue value attached to the outward practices of the Jewish religion.

### Cornutus

Cornutus, who was a follower of the Stoa, also used the allegorical method in explaining myths. Priapus, for instance, he regards as the god 'who brings everything to the light',

<sup>1)</sup> 1. 288.    <sup>2)</sup> 1. 264.

<sup>3)</sup> As to the word ῥέω in this connection cf. p. 77.

<sup>4)</sup> 1. 599.    <sup>5)</sup> 1. 655.



the ancients, according to his view, expressing in that way, what they thought about the nature of the universe δεισιδαιμόνως καὶ ἁδρῶς<sup>1)</sup>, a rather unusual combination. δεισιδαιμόνως here means practically: diffidently, full of religious awe. Taken by themselves these words would not prove that Cornutus condemned this feeling of awe, although the fact that he sees an allegory in what to the popular mind is a reality would make it probable. It is sufficiently proved, however, by his usage of the word δεισιδαιμονεῖν in another part of his treatise<sup>2)</sup>, where it is opposed to εὐσεβεῖν: he wants young men to be taught the traditional religion ὥς εἰς τὸ εὐσεβεῖν ἀλλὰ μὴ εἰς τὸ δεισιδαιμονεῖν; they must learn to sacrifice, pray, kneel and swear in the right way καὶ ἐν τοῖς ἐμβάλλουσι καιροῖς. These additional words are important as showing once again that most critics of δεισιδαιμονία thought of it merely as an exaggeration; the whole passage can be summed up in the words of Pyrrhus: ἡ ἄκαιρος θεοσέβεια δεισιδαιμονία ἐστίν<sup>3)</sup>.

### Marcus Aurelius

Marcus Aurelius describes his adoptive father as θεοσεβῆς χωρὶς δεισιδαιμονίας<sup>4)</sup>, god-fearing without exaggerated bigotry<sup>5)</sup> and in describing what he owes his father he enumerates, in an interesting parallel: τὸ μήτε περὶ θεοῦς δεισιδαιμον μὴτε περὶ ἀνθρώπων δημοκοπικὸν ἢ ἀρεσκευτικὸν ἢ ὀχλοχαρές, ἀλλὰ νῆφον ἐν πᾶσι καὶ βέβαιον<sup>6)</sup>. The δεισιδαίμων in his relation to the gods is like a popularity seeker, a man who bends down to suit the mob; 'sober and steadfast', like the proud Stoic, he never will be.

<sup>1)</sup> Nat. deor. 27.    <sup>2)</sup> N. D. 35.

<sup>3)</sup> Cf. p. 16; Suid. s. v. δεισιδαιμονία.    <sup>4)</sup> 6. 30.

<sup>5)</sup> Cf. 2. 5: εὐρουν καὶ θεουδῇ .... βίον.    <sup>6)</sup> 1. 16.



### Maximus Tyrius

A somewhat similar comparison is found in the emperor's contemporary Maximus of Tyre. In an oration of his in which he discusses the difference between a real friend and a flatterer, he says a real pious person is comparable to the first, ὁ δὲ δεισιδαίμων κόλαξ θεοῦ <sup>1)</sup>. He sketches them both in their relations to the gods: the pious man free of fear, courageous because he is conscious of his own moral worthiness, the other ταπεινὸς διὰ μοχθηρίαν μετὰ πολλοῦ δέους, δύσελπις and afraid of the gods as of tyrants. It is this element of fear which makes δεισιδαιμονία so intolerable and undignified in the eyes of Maximus as of Plutarch. Very little room for real religion is left, however, if all sense of 'awe' is gone, especially when one is so fully conscious of one's own perfection as this philosopher appears to be.

### Hermetica

One can even become blasphemous from undue religious zeal (ὑπὸ δεισιδαιμονίας) according to one of the anonymous 'philosophers' whose writings are collected in the Corpus Hermeticum <sup>2)</sup>. Some people, he says, in an exaggerated fervour to separate God as widely as possible from the material world have pronounced God to be ἀναίσθητος .... καὶ ἀνόητος, which is blasphemy, the Hermetic writer thinks <sup>3)</sup>.

### Julian the Apostate

Julian, the last of the pagan emperors, fights on two fronts: both against the superstitious practices of the pagans and against Christianity, and both these forms of 'perverted, exaggerated piety' he calls by the name of δεισιδαιμονία. In his zeal to restore the worship of the Hellenic gods he

<sup>1)</sup> 20. 6. 7.    <sup>2)</sup> Libellus 9 § 9.    <sup>3)</sup> Cf. Scott ad locum (2. p. 222).



wished passionately to abolish everything that could hinder this primary object of his life. In Alexandria a certain obelisk, which had lain there for some time and which previous emperors had already thought of transporting to Constantinople, was deeply venerated by the masses. In writing to the citizens about it Julian says he feels bound to have it fetched away τῆς δεισιδαιμονίας ἕνεκα ταύτης. And then, most interestingly, he shows his missionary motives by saying that people who see those worshippers lying about in the midst of dirt and all kinds of iniquities don't believe the obelisk to be divine in character at all and become themselves more unbelieving with regard to the gods διὰ τὴν τῶν προσεχόντων αὐτῶι (sc. τῶι ὀβελῶι) δεισιδαιμονίαν<sup>1)</sup>.

In another letter, which is also addressed to the citizens of Alexandria he urges them to return to the worship of Helios and refuses to allow Athanasius' coming back to the city, which the Alexandrians had requested. If he says, you want to remain faithful τῇ δεισιδαιμονίαι... καὶ κατηχήσει τῶν πανούργων ἀνθρώπων, at least hold your peace amongst one another and do not wish Athanasius back<sup>2)</sup>. Elsewhere he speaks about people who have given themselves up τῇ τῶν Γαλιλαίων .... δεισιδαιμονίαι<sup>3)</sup>.

It is interesting to note that the Christians used exactly the same word when talking about Julian and his 'fear of demons' as they called his belief in the pagan gods<sup>4)</sup>.

We are rather surprised to find him using the word ἀσεβείας with the meaning 'impious' although, to be sure, it occurs both times in the same oracle and may have been

<sup>1)</sup> 59 ed. Bidez-Cumont [ep. 58]; p. 68 l. 12, 16.

<sup>2)</sup> 111 [ep. 51]; p. 191 l. 5.    <sup>3)</sup> 54 [ep. 11]; p. 66 l. 9.

<sup>4)</sup> Cf. p. 93.



part of the old formula <sup>1)</sup>). The emperor upbraids a governor of Caria, who, it seems, has flogged a pagan priest. As the governor, who Julian thinks was perhaps applauded by the bishops and elders of the Galilaeans, probably regards Homer's stories as myths, he reminds him of an oracle of the Lord of Didymus. Anyone who sins against a priest of the immortal gods ἀδεισιθέοισι λογισμοῖς will be punished.

#### Proclus

In view of this usage of ἀδεισιθέος with the meaning of impious it is advisable to read also in Proclus' hymn

μηδέ μ' ἀποπλάγξειεν ἀδεισιθέων γένος ἀνδρῶν  
ἀτραπιτοῦ ζαθέης κτλ <sup>2)</sup>).

It is contrary to what we would have expected to find ἀδεισιθέος used in this way by pretty nearly the last pagan philosophers and poets, as f. i. Pollux identifies δεισιδαίμων and δεισιθέος, describing them both as 'a man who inordinately worships (ὑπερτιμῶν) the gods <sup>3)</sup>).

#### § 3 — POLYBIUS AND OTHER HISTORIANS AS CRITICS OF δεισιδαιμονία.

Two of the best-known men in the circle of philosophers and writers that gathered round Scipio Minor were Panaetius and Polybius.

The founder of the so-called Middle Stoa was a very liberal-minded thinker, entirely free from the traditional religion

<sup>1)</sup> ed. B. C. 88, [ep. 62] p. 150 l. 22; 89b [Frgm. ep. 288A-305D] p. 165 l. 15.

<sup>2)</sup> 3. 12 Several mss. have: δεισιθέων. Boissonade (apud Ludwig): Christianos tangit; forsan Christiani librarii epithetum sic facili opere lenierunt.

<sup>3)</sup> Pollux 1. 20.



of his contemporaries, which he regarded merely as an invention of calculating statesmen or a fiction of poets <sup>1)</sup>).

These opinions very deeply influenced the thought of the educated class in Rome. Lucilius e. g. ridicules the people, who are afraid of the ghost-stories which Numa had invented, and it is under Panaetius' influence again that Q. Mucius Scaevola formed his celebrated theory about the threefold theology <sup>2)</sup>).

### Polybius

Small wonder therefore that his philosophy deeply affected Polybius, the sober and rational-minded historian, in whose work the traces of this influence are very distinct. This is especially the case in the often-quoted passage, where he treats of the relation of the Roman state towards religion. That, according to him, is the point where the excellence of the Roman constitution above all others is apparent: καὶ μοι δοκεῖ τὸ παρὰ τοῖς ἄλλοις ἀνθρώποις ὀνειδιζόμενον, τοῦτο συνέχειν τὰ Ῥωμαίων πράγματα, λέγω δὲ τὴν δεισιδαιμονίαν. In their private and in their public life everything pertaining to religion has been so impressively decked out and exaggerated (ἐκτετραγώδηται) that it cannot be surpassed. Perhaps, Polybius says, many people will be surprised at this, but in his opinion it has been done because of the masses. If it were possible to form a state of wise men all these things could probably be dispensed with, but as the great mass of the people are full of lawless passions and desires they have to be kept in check τοῖς ἀδήλοις φόβοις καὶ τῇ τοιαύτῃ τραγωιδίαι <sup>3)</sup>. For that reason the states-

<sup>1)</sup> Cf. A. Schmekel. Die Phil. d. mittl. Stoa, p. 190, p. 227; on the circle round Scipio i. a. p. 440.

<sup>2)</sup> Schmekel o. c. p. 446. <sup>3)</sup> Pol. 6. 56. 6.



men of old who introduced the conceptions about the gods and the ideas concerning the nether-world are not to be blamed, as they knew what they were about; on the contrary, the people who want to destroy these opinions are foolhardy and thoughtless.

Polybius is about as sober and as haughty as one can be in this exposition of the influence of religion on the lower classes. What he thinks of δεισιδαιμονία is very clear, but perhaps it is not quite superfluous to draw attention to the fact that in his eyes the whole of popular religion and not only its excessive forms, deserves that name. The belief, for example, that the gods as it were exercise a kind of moral control and punish sinners after death, he condemns as a philosopher, but he regards it as indispensable to restrain less enlightened citizens<sup>1)</sup>.

The idea that religion is nothing but the invention of some shrewd statesman of old who wanted to curb the unruly masses through the fear of punishment in the next world, we already find in a famous fragment of Critias<sup>2)</sup> and it never entirely vanishes. Plutarch e. g. has a tradition that Epicure too was of the opinion that the great majority of men are only good because of their fear of punishment, so that one must make use against them τῆς δεισιδαιμονίας and apply τὰ ἐξ οὐρανοῦ καὶ γῆς δέσματα καὶ χάσματα καὶ φόβους καὶ ὑπονοίας. Panaetius therefore merely carried on a tradition, although the division of theology into three parts may be a personal invention of his<sup>3)</sup>.

Strabo is probably just following in Polybius' track in the sketch of the origin of religion in the beginning of his

<sup>1)</sup> Cf. Schmekel p. 64, 66; Christ-Schmid II. 1 p. 388.

<sup>2)</sup> Diels. Frgm. Vors. II<sup>3</sup> nr. 25 p. 319.

<sup>3)</sup> Non posse suav. etc. p. 1104B; cf. Reinhardt. Poseidonios p. 408.



book <sup>1)</sup>). Myths, he says, have been a means in the hands of statesmen both as an incitement to do good and as a warning to keep away from evil, in the same way as children are frightened by all kinds of ghost-stories. The masses are urged on to virtue, for instance by the myths concerning Heracles and Theseus and are deterred from evil through the fear of punishment by the gods. It is impossible to exhort the masses of women and ordinary people by the means of philosophy towards piety and holiness and faith ἀλλὰ δεῖ καὶ διὰ δεισιδαιμονίας. τοῦτο δ' οὐκ ἄνευ μυθοποιίας καὶ τερατείας <sup>2)</sup>). The real philosophical religion has to be reserved for the chosen few, the man in the street needs myths and stories of miracles. All these forms of the traditional religion Strabo regards as δεισιδαιμονία. It is interesting to see that he lumps women together with the ordinary people as persons for whom philosophy is not meant.

Perhaps we have another example of Polybius' influence in a passage from Diodorus. Striking instances of adversity, he argues there, have a pedagogical value. Even if many people doubt whether the gods have anything to do with misfortune, it is a useful thing for the state as a whole τὴν ἐκ θεῶν δεισιδαιμονίαν ἐντετηκέναι ταῖς τῶν πολλῶν ψυχαῖς <sup>3)</sup>). Only very few people are good from their own virtuous inclination (ἀρετή) and the others need to be frightened away from sin by legal punishments and the fear of the gods. In the same way as Strabo thinks δεισιδαιμονία a necessary incitement towards piety and purity, Diodorus here strikingly adds τὴν ἐκ θεῶν.

In his life of Numa, Plutarch relates how this wise king made use of religion to turn the Romans into a peace-loving

<sup>1)</sup> Reinhardt o. c. p. 411. <sup>2)</sup> Strabo 1. 2. 8. C. 19.

<sup>3)</sup> D. S. 34/35, 2. 47; Exc. de sent. 404 p. 385.



people. He civilized them by instituting sacrifices and religious ceremonies, that were both solemn and pleasant. Sometimes however, by telling them fearful things in the name of the deity, weird visions of demons and menacing voices, he cowed them (ἐδούλου) καὶ ταπεινὴν ἐποίησεν τὴν διάνοιαν αὐτῶν ὑπὸ δεισιδαιμονίας: the fear of the gods <sup>1)</sup>).

Lysander, too, according to Plutarch, when plotting to become king in Sparta, was aware that the speech he had made for him would be of no avail, unless he had a divine sanction: he could only hope for success φόβῳ τινὶ θεοῦ καὶ δεισιδαιμονίᾳ προεκπλήξας καὶ χειρωσάμενος .... τοὺς πολίτας <sup>2)</sup>).

All these examples show that for a group of free-thinkers at least the idea that the gods punished sinful behaviour stood condemned as δεισιδαιμονία, be it that this belief was a political necessity. This is a different thing from the 'excessive religiousness' that was criticized by Menander and Theophrast.

That Lycurgus consulted the oracle at Delphi and referred to the Pythia as sanctioning his reforms is not to be explained, so Polybius thinks, by any feeling of dependence on his part (δεισιδαιμονοῦντα), but solely because he saw that most people can only find courage for some big venture if they can hope that the deity is with them <sup>3)</sup>).

Not only the consulting of an oracle is to Polybius a thing he condemns, but also the attaching of credit to dreams and miracles. Bitingly he says of Timaeus that this historian is very strong in his criticism of others, but that in his own work he is full of dreams and miracles and incredible myths καὶ συλλήβδην δεισιδαιμονίας ἀγεννοῦς καὶ τερατείας

<sup>1)</sup> Num. 8.    <sup>2)</sup> Lys. 25.    <sup>3)</sup> Pol. 10. 2. 9.



γυναικώδους. The addition of ἀγεννοῦς reminds us of Aristotle's words that the δεισιδαιμονία of a ruler should be ἄνευ ἀβελτερίας, but in Polybius' case we need not think there was any form of δεισιδαιμονία he did not regard as 'sordid' <sup>1)</sup>).

A typical δεισιδαίμων is Nicias, the celebrated Athenian general; not only Polybius but Diodorus and Plutarch as well characterize him as such.

Polybius narrates how, when the mooneclipse occurred as he was on the point of raising the siege of Syracuse δεισιδαιμονήσας ὥς τι δεινὸν προσημαινούσης (sc. τῆς σελήνης) ἐπέσχε τὴν ἀναζυγὴν <sup>2)</sup>). It was a regrettable coincidence, Plutarch says, that only a little while before his soothsayer Stilbides τὸ πολὺ τῆς δεισιδαιμονίας ἀφαιρῶν had died <sup>3)</sup>). He extensively describes how, during the eclipse, Nicias and the others who either through ignorance or through δεισιδαιμονία feared such phenomena became panic-stricken. At that time, he continues, people were as yet largely ignorant about eclipses and regarded them as miracles, by which the gods predicted that terrible things were about to happen. Anaxagoras had already clearly and courageously written about these things, but his doctrines were only known to a small circle and these enlightened spirits dared only speak about them in hushed tones (μετ' εὐλαβείας) <sup>4)</sup>). In striking contrast to Nicias' fear is Pericles' demonstration to his soldiers of what an eclipse really is <sup>5)</sup>).

Diodorus in his description of the expedition to Syracuse is probably directly or indirectly dependent on Ephorus and so, indirectly, on Thucydides <sup>6)</sup>). As soon as the eclipse

<sup>1)</sup> 12. 24. 5.    <sup>2)</sup> 9. 19. 1.    <sup>3)</sup> Plut. Nic. 23.

<sup>4)</sup> Nic. 23.    <sup>5)</sup> Pericles 35.    <sup>6)</sup> Schwartz R. E. 681.



was seen Nicias καὶ φύσει δεισιδαίμων ὑπάρχων καὶ διὰ τὴν ἐν τῷ στρατοπέδῳ νόσον εὐλαβῶς διακείμενος, 'already by nature susceptible to divine signs and at the time in a nervous state because of the illness in the army', called together the soothsayers. On their declaring that a delay of some time was necessary, Demosthenes and his men also saw themselves obliged to wait because of this nervous fear with regard to the divine powers (διὰ τὴν πρὸς τὸ θεῖον εὐλαβείαν) <sup>1)</sup>.

It is perhaps not a mere coincidence that Thucydides, the primary source of all these writers, describes Nicias as ἄγαν θειασμῶι τε καὶ τῷ τοιούτῳ προσκειμένος, words which might serve as a definition of δεισιδαίμων <sup>2)</sup>. That this last word is n't used might be explained by the theory that for Thucydides, as for Xenophon, it still had its original meaning of 'god-fearing', but it seems less far-fetched to regard it as an indication that it first appeared in Attic only in the 4th century. This however, is only a hypothesis and is by no means sure; the general value of an argument ex silentio is slight. How natural this word came to later Greek writers in this sphere is proved by the fact that an ancient scholiast explains the historian's ἐνθύμιον ποιούμενοι in the same passage as ἀποδεισιδαίμονήσαντες ἢ ἐκλογισάμενοι, κατὰ νοῦν σχόντες τὸ τῆς σελήνης <sup>3)</sup>.

### Diodorus Siculus

We have already seen <sup>4)</sup>, that different passages of Diodorus' which disapprove of δεισιδαιμονία have probably been largely drawn from Ephorus. This may well be the case also where he describes the battle of Leuctra <sup>5)</sup>. As the

<sup>1)</sup> D. S. 13. 12. 6.    <sup>2)</sup> Thuc. 7. 50.    <sup>3)</sup> Scholion ad Thuc. 7. 50.

<sup>4)</sup> Cf. p. 12.    <sup>5)</sup> D. S. 15. 53/54.



Boeotians were marching out, a number of portents had taken place, about which the older soldiers were much concerned, while the younger men only held their peace so as not to be taken for cowards, in case Epaminondas should have to abandon the expedition because of them. This general, a man steeped in philosophy and wisely using his wisdom <sup>1)</sup>, as Diodorus puts it, takes counter-measures. On seeing his soldiers δεισιδαιμονοῦντας ἐπὶ τοῖς γεγονόσι σημείοις he did all he could to take away their scruples (εὐλαβείας) by his own insight and strategy <sup>2)</sup>. He spreads all kinds of rumours that are capable of encouraging his men, e. g. that the heroes will come to their aid, and after his making a final speech to them their feeling changes entirely. They bravely get themselves ready for the fight καὶ τῆς . . . δεισιδαιμονίας ἀπελύθησαν <sup>3)</sup>. If the author is here dependent on Ephorus for the choice of his words too, a quite conceivable thing in Diodorus' case, we should have an example from a fourth century historian also in which δεισιδαιμονία is used to denote popular religious ideas and more especially the belief in miraculous and ominous signs. This, of course, would fit in very well with what we know of the sense in which this word is used by men like Menander and Theophrast about the same time.

In a very curious passage from Diodorus, which Photius has preserved for us <sup>4)</sup>, we have an example of a scientific writer who uses his knowledge to fight this exaggerated attaching of credit to signs, which are, to the insider, just natural phenomena. Caustic spirits had ridiculed it and Anaxagoras had, for a few people at least, as we have just heard Plutarch tell us <sup>5)</sup>, taken away their awe-inspiring

<sup>1)</sup> 15. 52. 7.    <sup>2)</sup> 15. 53. 4.    <sup>3)</sup> 15. 54. 1.

<sup>4)</sup> D. S. 32. 12; Phot. p. 519-522.    <sup>5)</sup> Cf. p. 59.



character from eclipses f. i., by a scientific demonstration of their nature. We find the same kind of spirit in this passage from Diodorus, but unfortunately cannot tell who is his informant <sup>1)</sup>. He tells of several cases of hermaphroditism, 'not for mere entertainment, but for instruction' as he says, contrasting these two in a way we find elsewhere also <sup>2)</sup>. For many people regard such things as divine signs and are afraid (δεισιδαιμονοῦσιν), not only private persons, but cities and sometimes a whole people as well. In the beginning of the Marsyan war f. i. such a hermaphrodite was born in Italy. The senate, on hearing this, very much afraid that some evil was predicted by it (δεισιδαιμονήσασαν) acted on the advice of the haruspices and had the creature burnt to death, a shameful thing caused by ignorance of this pathological abnormality. He adds the story of some other cases as well and winds up by saying: let that be said πρὸς διόρθωσιν δεισιδαιμονίας, to correct this 'ignorant regarding of a natural phenomenon as a divine sign'. Perhaps nothing shows better Diodorus' utter lack of originality than the diametrically opposed meanings in which he uses this group of words. Other writers may have slight differences but they use δεισιδαιμονία either in a condemnatory or in a commending way, while in Diodorus' language it may mean everything from 'praiseworthy religious feeling' to 'ignorant belief in portents' <sup>3)</sup>.

Sulla, at a time when he badly needed money, took away a number of votive offerings from temples. He gave the gods pieces of land from which they derived a yearly income to make up for their losses. One of the historians <sup>4)</sup>

<sup>1)</sup> Cf. Schwartz. R. E. 690.

<sup>2)</sup> Cf. e. g. Jacoby F Gr Hist II p. 530<sup>22</sup> ψυχαγωγία × ὠφελεία (Dion. Hal.).

<sup>3)</sup> Cf. e. g. p. 19. (11. 89). <sup>4)</sup> D. S. 38/39. 7; Exc. de virt. 1. p. 322.



who tells this says that Sulla made this exchange ἀδαισιδαιμόνως: without undue scruples.

The same tale turns up again in Plutarch's life of Sulla <sup>1)</sup>. There it is a friend whom he sends to Delphi to seize the offerings. This man, however, hesitates to follow his instructions and sends a message to Sulla about a cither which had been heard in the temple, either believing it himself or because he wanted τὸν Σύλλαν.... ἐμβαλεῖν εἰς δαισιδαίμονίαν, to awaken his scruples. He was unsuccessful however, if that was his object, as the dictator jokingly answered that he need n't fear to carry out his mandate ὅτι χαίροντος οὐ χαλεπαίνοντος εἴη τὸ ἄιδειν.

### Strabo

Strabo, the philosophic geographer, was something of a Stoic <sup>2)</sup> and no friend of excessive forms of religion. Indeed, as we have seen already <sup>3)</sup> he was rather inclined to regard all religion as a superfluous thing for the real philosopher.

His contempt is not clearly shown in a passage where he speaks about a certain perfume that is largely used by the δαισιδαίμονες, but we may be sure it is there, all the same, as he was no friend of sacrifices either <sup>4)</sup>. In describing the Avernian lake, enclosed by hills that used to be set with high, dense woods αἱ κατὰ δαισιδαίμονίαν κατάσκιον ἐποιοῦν τὸν κόλπον <sup>5)</sup>, a place where passing seamen used to worship the 'subterranean demons', we are safe in saying that he neither joined in this worship, nor shared that feeling of awe.

Posidonius had handed down a tradition that the Mysians from religious motives abstained from the eating of meat and that they therefore were called 'godfearing and

<sup>1)</sup> Sulla 12.    <sup>2)</sup> Cf. Christ-Schmid. 2 p. 409.

<sup>3)</sup> Cf. p. 57.    <sup>4)</sup> 12. 7. 3; C. 571.    <sup>5)</sup> 5. 4. 5; C. 244.



καπνοβάται', while among the Thracians a holy sect existed, the members of which lived without women. This Strabo can't believe, as it is entirely contrary to the general opinion<sup>1)</sup>. Everybody, he says, regards women as τῆς δεισιδαιμονίας ἀρχηγούς. They exhort their menfolk towards τὰς ἐπὶ πλέον θεραπείας τῶν θεῶν καὶ ἐορτὰς καὶ ποτνιασμούς; it is very seldom that a man, living by himself, is so excessively pious. To prove his point he quotes two passages from Menander, in one of which a married man complains that the gods make life especially difficult for men who have wives, because there is always some celebration on, and in the other a woman-hater describes how he had to sacrifice about fifty times a day, with the women standing around wailing<sup>2)</sup>.

This page of Strabo's is both important in showing once again to what an extent all these more or less nervous forms of religion found adherents among women and in defining δεισιδαιμονία as 'an exaggerated service of the gods'. This is another proof that the word, even when used in an unfavourable sense cannot always be translated by 'superstition' and that it need not necessarily have anything to do with 'demons'<sup>3)</sup>.

The thrifty pater familias in Menander's comedy probably was chiefly concerned about his wife's penchant for religious festivities as it involved him in expenses. It is amusing to read in Strabo's account of the exodus from Egypt that

<sup>1)</sup> 7. 3. 3; C. 297.

<sup>2)</sup> A scholiast (ad Aristoph. Vesp. 81) remarks: Φιλοθύται εἰσὶν οἱ δεισιδαίμονες; they are always sacrificing to the gods, in the hope they will remain unharmed, because of that. Another scholiast, (in R., on line 83) explains the oath μὰ τὸν κύν' by saying: οὕτως διὰ δεισιδαιμονίαν ὤμνουν.

<sup>3)</sup> Cf. p. 100.



Moses promised the Jews a religion that would not burden them οὔτε δαπάναις .... οὔτε θεοφορίαις οὔτε ἄλλαις πραγματείαις ἀτόποις <sup>1)</sup>). Strabo rather admires Moses' monotheistic religion, as it originally was, but it quickly degenerated, he says, for overzealous (δεισιδαίμονες) men becoming priests, all sorts of rites like the abstention from certain forms of food, circumcision etc. came into use ἐκ τῆς δεισιδαιμονίας <sup>2)</sup>). It is not fortuitous that it is the ritual side of the Jewish religion which Strabo condemns, by regarding δεισιδαιμονία as its source, while he expresses his admiration for the conception of the world that is embodied, according to him, in its original form.

#### Agatharchides of Cnidus

The extreme punctuality with which the orthodox Jews followed the (ritual) precepts of their religion often evoked the criticism and ridicule of unsympathetic onlookers and accordingly we find the word δεισιδαιμονία frequently used to stigmatize it. Josephus relates <sup>3)</sup> how the historian Agatharchides of Cnidus, ὀνειδίζων .... δεισιδαιμονίαν, mocked at the Jews on account of their not defending themselves against Ptolemy on a Sabbath, when he had come into Jerusalem on the pretence of bringing a sacrifice: διὰ τὴν ἄκαιρον δεισιδαιμονίαν they lost their liberty and had to put up with a hard master. In a slightly different form Josephus elsewhere repeats this story <sup>4)</sup>, where he quotes Agatharchides as a source for the history of queen Stratonice. Although she had the opportunity to flee when her enemies were approaching, she remained, in obedience to 'a dream that kept her back', so that she was taken prisoner and lost

<sup>1)</sup> 16. 2. 36; C. 761.    <sup>2)</sup> § 37.

<sup>3)</sup> Ant. Iud. 12. 5/6.    <sup>4)</sup> C. Apionem. 1. 208.



her life. After telling this, Josephus adds, and ridiculing Stratonice, for this 'superstitious belief in dreams' (δαισιδαιμονία), Agatharchides uses the story about us as an example and tells how Ptolemy seized Jerusalem. We may be pretty sure that the word δαισιδαιμονία, used in this sense, belonged to Josephus' source, as it is not in keeping with the way he himself uses it. In his counter criticism of the unfriendly critic the Jewish historian makes it clear how the same thing, that is to the one a ridiculous superstition may be a real form of piety to another. To anyone who is in sympathy with the Jews, Josephus says, it must be a very impressive fact that people prefer, even to liberty and country νόμων φυλακὴν καὶ τὴν πρὸς θεὸν εὐσέβειαν.

In some of the Christian authors we find the word δαισιδαιμονία or one of its cognates put to this same use viz. to designate in a depreciatory way the Jewish religion, especially as regards its ritual side.

Origenes describes <sup>1)</sup> the vision of St. Peter, that came to him ἔτι δαισιδαιμονοῦντα, 'while he still felt himself bound by the Jewish law', so that he refused to follow the command of the voice, that urged him to partake of the meat.

p s. Justinus

Finally the writer of the Epistle to Diognetus also uses it in this way. Already in his introduction he remarks <sup>2)</sup> that Diognetus is much interested to know more about the Christians, why they do not believe in the so-called gods of the Greeks οὔτε τὴν Ἰουδαίων δαισιδαιμονίαν φυλάσσουσιν. A little further on <sup>3)</sup> his language is still more trenchant; Diognetus can learn from him how ridiculous all

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<sup>1)</sup> Orig. 1. 800. A. (Migne).    <sup>2)</sup> 1.494. B.    <sup>3)</sup> 4. 496B.



these Jewish practices are; their excessive anxiety (τὸ .... ψοφοδεὲς) about their food and their imposture (ἀλαζονεία) about circumcision καὶ τὴν περὶ τὰ σάββατα δεισιδαιμονίαν: their excessive scrupulousness with regard to the keeping of their Sabbath.

Of a peculiar usage of δεισιδαιμονία we have two examples, one in Lydus, who quotes Aristodemus<sup>1)</sup> and one in ps. Plutarch, whose source is a certain Dorotheus<sup>2)</sup>. Lydus tells how in Lacedaemon every year, since a famine, a noble young maiden was sacrificed θεοῖς ἀποτροπαίοις; the Delphic oracle had said this was the only way to end the famine. Once upon a time it happened that Helen was marked out to be sacrificed, τῆς δὲ ἀνόμου δεισιδαιμονίας κατὰ πᾶν φθινόπωρον τελουμένης. This time, however, as Tyndareus was about to kill his daughter (καταρχομένου .... τῆς ἀνόμου θυ>σίας) an eagle snatched his sword away and let it fall down near a white heifer. In the story from Dorotheus the word δεισιδαιμονία is used in the same way of a human sacrifice. There is a wonderful, black stone in the river Araxes. When an oracle has ordered a human sacrifice, two girls carry the stone to the altars of the apotropaeic gods; a priest then touches it with a sword and streams of blood flow from it. They thereupon go away, carrying the stone to the temple τούτῳ τῷ τρόπῳ τὴν δεισιδαιμονίαν τελῶσάντες.

This change of meaning, from abstract to concrete, has been proved for the Latin word 'religio' by W. Otto<sup>3)</sup>, who i. a.

<sup>1)</sup> De mens. 4. 147. p. 165<sup>20</sup> Wue.; Jacoby F Gr Hist p. 186.

<sup>2)</sup> de fluv. 23. 3; Jacoby F Gr Hist p. 814.

<sup>3)</sup> Religio u. Superstitio. Archiv f. Rel. XII (1909) p. 533 sqq. His conclusions were attacked by Kobbert in his diss. (Königsberg 1910) de verb. 'religio'.... usu, but in a second article Archiv XIV, (1911)



points to 'σέβας', which can mean not only 'awe' but 'awe-inspiring object' as well. It seems to me this evolution of the meaning of δεισιδαιμονία is further proof for his hypothesis.

#### § 4 — PLUTARCH AND δεισιδαιμονία.

In devoting a separate paragraph to Plutarch, instead of treating his views along with those of the other philosophers, we have been led by practical considerations exclusively. His writings give us as much material for our investigation as those of many other writers combined, as he not only uses the words δεισιδαιμονία etc. very frequently, but also has written a separate treatise on this subject. We can, in his case, form for ourselves a very clear idea of what he understood by δεισιδαιμονία. Nearly everywhere he uses the word in a condemnatory sense: δεισιδαιμονία is to him a wrong frame of mind with regard to the gods, and although we sometimes find him mocking and ridiculing those who suffer from it, he generally tries to convert them to a better form of piety, his own of course, which he calls εὐσέβεια or, a significant name: εὐλάβεια.

This at once proves the difference between Plutarch and, say, Polybius, who nevertheless are too often mentioned in one and the same breath as using δεισιδαιμονία in its later, adverse meaning. Plutarch, the devout priest of Apollo,

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p. 406 sqq. Otto, to my belief, has convincingly maintained his assertions.

On p. 55 Kobbert quotes from Lydus de ostentis p. 46. 3 ed. Wachsmuth: οἱ δεισιδαιμονίαις τισὶν ἀναδεδεμένοι-ταύτηι γὰρ καὶ βελιγιῶνες παρ' Ἰταλοῖς καλοῦνται κτλ., an interesting passage which shows how δεισιδαιμονία and religio, in some of its usages, were identified.



with his leaning towards mysticism, his belief in prodigies and dreams was a deeply-religious man <sup>1)</sup>, whom the rationalistic friend of Panaetius would probably have regarded as suffering from δεισιδαιμονία himself.

Although Plutarch was very well-read and of course quite often must have followed the writers, who were his source, in their usage of different words too, we need n't think in his case of a slavish imitation like in that of Diodorus Siculus. It is only very rarely that Plutarch does n't attach an obviously adverse meaning to the word δεισιδαιμονία and we find no striking examples of inconsistency as in Diodorus, who uses the word with widely different meanings in accordance with the usage of his source.

Δεισιδαιμονία is an illness, which one ought to expel from the conceptions about the gods, but that must n't be done at the expense of the popular religion, any more than one would blind a man to end some eye-trouble <sup>2)</sup>. An illness he calls it more than once, frequently using the word σφυγμός to illustrate his meaning by a simile <sup>3)</sup>.

Repeatedly <sup>4)</sup> he mentions δεισιδαιμονία among other vices or bad habits. Of a certain man he tells that he was καθαρός δεισιδαιμονίας, ἔτι δὲ μᾶλλον ἀλαζονείας <sup>5)</sup>. A flatterer, he says, only imitates his so-called friend's vices: his bad temper, lack of friendliness and his δεισιδαιμονία <sup>6)</sup>. As to virtues he is quite content with the second place, but in vices he wants to be first and foremost: if his friend is peevish, he calls himself a hypochondriac, ὃν ἐκεῖνος δεισιδαίμων, αὐτὸν θεοφό-

<sup>1)</sup> Cf. e. g. R. Hirzel. Plutarch. p. 9 sqq.

<sup>2)</sup> Non posse suaviter vivi. 1101C.

<sup>3)</sup> de occ. viv. 1128D; non posse suav. 1101DE.

<sup>4)</sup> e. g. de aud. poet. 34E.

<sup>5)</sup> Coriol. 24. Cf. Teles (p. 43).

<sup>6)</sup> de adul. et am. discr. 53D.



ρητον<sup>1)</sup>. In the same way a προσβολή δεισιδαιμονίας is mentioned alongside of a bitter quarrel with one's inmates or an extreme passion of love<sup>2)</sup>. Scipio, true to the teaching of Panaetius, on finding in the camp at Numantia, when he came there to assume the command, much disorder, licentiousness καὶ δεισιδαιμονίαν at once set to work to put matters right. He banished forthwith all μάντεις .... καὶ θύτας καὶ πορνοβοσκούς; this unsavoury company shows plainly what he thought of priests and soothsayers of that kind<sup>3)</sup>.

In the famous story of Sertorius and his white doe Plutarch says the Roman used this ruse to impress the Spaniards, well aware that barbarians (τὸ βαρβαρικόν) were by nature εὐάλωτον εἰς δεισιδαιμονίαν<sup>4)</sup>. This is one of the very rare examples where this superstitious belief in miraculous happenings is attributed especially to 'barbarians'<sup>5)</sup>.

On the contrary several passages can be quoted which prove that Plutarch did regard δεισιδαιμονία as especially a failing of women. In the night before the murdering of Caesar, his wife has many ominous dreams and entreats her husband not to leave the house or at least to consult the soothsayers. Caesar himself became afraid, and suspected something was amiss, because never before had he seen in her any γυναικισμὸν ἐν δεισιδαιμονίαι and he was aware she was very nervous and afraid through these dreams<sup>6)</sup>.

In the little book in which he gives precepts for people who want to have a happy marriage he argues that a wife ought not to have other friends than her husband's and, the gods being everybody's first and principal friends, she

<sup>1)</sup> o. c. 54C. <sup>2)</sup> de audiendo 43D. <sup>3)</sup> apophth. reg. 201B.

<sup>4)</sup> Sert. 11. <sup>5)</sup> Cf. Aul. Gell. N. A. 15. 22. <sup>6)</sup> Caesar 63.



must n't worship other gods than he does. She must shut the door to περιέργοις .... θρησκείαις καὶ ξέναις δεισιδαιμονίαις, for no god takes delight in sacrifices which married women secretly offer up to them <sup>1)</sup>).

Tullus Hostilius ridiculed the 'careful piety' (εὐλάβειαν) of Numa as womanish, until he was taken seriously ill and εἰς δεισιδαιμονίαν ἐνέδωκεν οὐδέν τι τῇ κατὰ Νουμᾶν εὐσεβείαι προσήκουσαν, and being killed by lightning ἔτι.... μᾶλλον ἐνεποίησε τοῖς ἄλλοις τὸ τοιοῦτον πάθος <sup>2)</sup>). Plutarch regards this feeling as πάθος, an undesirable thing and his criticism is also shown by the fact that he describes Tullius as 'giving way to' δεισιδαιμονία: an obvious example of 'the failure of nerve'. At the same time it is clear that his sympathy is n't with the scoffer either. It is significant for his own religious point of view that he uses εὐλάβεια practically synonymous with εὐσέβεια <sup>3)</sup>).

A very characteristic passage is that where he speaks about images of gods, that have sighed or perspired. We could tell of many wonderful happenings, he says, and it is n't right at once to refuse to believe in them. In things like that neither excessive incredulity nor exaggerated credulousness is the right thing, the first leading to disdain and contempt of 'the divine', the second εἰς δεισιδαιμονίαν καὶ τύφον. And then, in words which might be used as his motto: ἡ δ' εὐλάβεια καὶ τὸ μηδὲν ἄγαν ἄριστον <sup>4)</sup>).

Far from being a rationalist, Plutarch would certainly have been dubbed a δεισιδαίμων himself, if men like Polybius could have read the above passage or the one in which the death of Brutus is described <sup>5)</sup>. He tells there how both

<sup>1)</sup> praec. conj. 140C.    <sup>2)</sup> Numa 22.

<sup>3)</sup> Cf. Rohde. *Psyche*. II p. 238, note 1; *Kleine Schriften* II p. 326.

<sup>4)</sup> Camillus 6.    <sup>5)</sup> Dio 2.



to Dio and to Brutus their death was predicted by a ghostly apparition. Some people laugh at that idea and say no right-minded person has ever seen a phantom, but only women and children, and men, who because of spiritual or physical infirmity did n't dispose of all their faculties, δαίμονα πονηρὸν ἐν αὐτοῖς τὴν δεισιδαιμονίαν ἔχοντας. Plutarch does n't agree with these scoffers, but is inclined to think that really evil spirits in this way tried to frighten and perturb good men, so as to make them stray from the path of virtue.

This religion of the golden mean, that reminds one of the Peripatetic doctrine where it opposes δεισιδαιμονία and ἀθεότης as two extremes which should both be avoided <sup>1)</sup>, is Plutarch's ideal. It is not, of course, entirely without discernment; as he says one should n't δειλῶς μηδὲ.... ὑπὸ δεισιδαιμονίας ἐν ἱερῷ φρίττειν ἅπαντα καὶ προσκυνεῖν <sup>2)</sup>; but we are far away from the spiritual atmosphere of Scipio's circle.

Though at times not too unfriendly towards the philosophers of the Garden, on the whole Plutarch is no friend of them. The Epicureans said the object of philosophy was to be liberated from the 'fear' (φοβεῖσθαι) of god, but Plutarch attacks this doctrine <sup>3)</sup>. If that were true, he says, those people would be best off who have no idea even of the existence of gods: not only are they free from δεισιδαιμονία, but they have never even suffered from it. The Epicureans look down upon the δεισιδαίμονες who, according to them, join in all kinds of religious celebrations out of fear, but Plutarch thinks they are no better themselves, as they do the same merely because they are afraid of the masses. And they don't even gain that 'good hope' which at least the others do manage to get out of their religious practices <sup>4)</sup>.

<sup>1)</sup> Cf. p. 43.    <sup>2)</sup> de aud. poet. 26B.

<sup>3)</sup> non posse suav. vivi. 1092C.    <sup>4)</sup> non posse suav. vivi. 1102C.



It must n't be supposed however that Plutarch often defends δεισιδαιμονία; on the contrary, we have already seen how he frequently attacks it and it is only against absolute impiety or godlessness that he backs it as the lesser evil <sup>1)</sup>. Compared to real piety it is always looked upon as a vice, or at least a bad habit. For instance, in the story of Fabius Maximus, who urged the Romans to greater reverence for the gods, by pointing out that their former defeats were due to neglect and lack of consideration for the divine (τὸ δαιμόνιον) on the part of their commander, the historian adds he did that οὐ δεισιδαιμονίαν ἐνεργαζόμενος ἀλλὰ θαρρύων εὐσεβεῖαι τὴν ἀρετὴν <sup>2)</sup>.

Plutarch, though firmly believing in portents himself <sup>3)</sup>, retained his faculty of criticism in his belief, as we have already seen, and quite often uses the word δεισιδαιμονία of those, who lack this discernment and are inclined to see a portent everywhere.

Timoleon, for instance, manages by his presence of mind to explain an occurrence which his soldiers regarded as ominous, in a favourable way βουλόμενος.... αὐτοὺς ἀπαλλάξαι τῆς δεισιδαιμονίας <sup>4)</sup>. A somewhat similar story is told of Marcellus, who was afraid that a certain happening would cause a panic amongst his soldiers ἐκ δεισιδαιμονίας <sup>5)</sup>.

Nicias, as we have already seen <sup>6)</sup>, had not been influenced by the teachings of Anaxagoras, who on the contrary had had a very deep influence on Pericles, as he through him became δεισιδαιμονίας .... καθυπέρτερος; this δεισιδαιμονία is found in those people who know nothing about natural

<sup>1)</sup> In his treatise περὶ δεισιδαιμονίας, as is well known, he regards atheism as the lesser evil.

<sup>2)</sup> Fab. Max. 4.    <sup>3)</sup> Cf. e. g. Camillus 6; Dio 2.

<sup>4)</sup> Tim. 26.    <sup>5)</sup> Marcellus 6.    <sup>6)</sup> Cf. p. 59.



phenomena, and through this ignorance are nervous and panicky about them. This lack of knowledge is expelled by the study of nature, which gives people ἀντι τῆς φοβεῖας καὶ φλεγμαινούσης δεισιδαιμονίας τὴν ἀσφαλῆ μετ' ἐλπίδων ἀγαθῶν εὐσέβειαν <sup>1)</sup>).

In another case people who witness the fact that a huge snake appears on a corpse are seized by δεισιδαιμονία, until better-informed persons (σοφώτεροι) point out to them that that is an entirely natural thing to happen, like the bees that arise from the carcasses of cattle <sup>2)</sup>).

Before the battle of Philippi all kinds of portents happened, so that the priests took counter-measures ἀφοσιούμενοι τὴν δεισιδαιμονίαν, which had affected even Cassius so much that he forgot his Epicurean philosophy, while the common soldiers were entirely overwhelmed <sup>3)</sup>).

Once Alexander's 'nerve failed him' (ὥς ἐνέδωκε.... πρὸς τὰ θεῖα) there was nothing so insignificant or ordinary that he did n't interpret as a portent. His whole palace was filled with sacrificers, purifiers and soothsayers. Such a dreadful thing, Plutarch says, is unbelief and contempt of the divine, δεινὴ δ' αὖθις ἡ δεισιδαιμονία <sup>4)</sup>).

He takes care to explain that the Romans, though punctilious even in the minutest matters as regards religion, did not act like that from δεισιδαιμονία <sup>5)</sup>), obviously not a virtue, no more than elsewhere, when he attacks a doctrine as leading πρὸς ἀπεράντους.... δεισιδαιμονίας <sup>6)</sup>).

All these passages have one thing in common: that Plutarch uses the word δεισιδαιμονία to describe a mentality with regard to the gods that he condemns and looks upon as a disease, a vice, a proof of mental feebleness or a parody

<sup>1)</sup> Pericl. 6.      <sup>2)</sup> Cleom. 39.    <sup>3)</sup> Brut. 39.

<sup>4)</sup> Alex. 75.      <sup>5)</sup> Marcellus 5.    <sup>6)</sup> Aem. Paul. 1.



of real, true piety. At the same time, however, he would not change this spiritual outlook if entire lack of religion, ἀσέβεια or ἀθεότης were to be the result. Once more perhaps, one may be allowed to point out the difference between Polybius and Plutarch: the latter, feeling the 'cure of souls' to be his pleasant duty, on seeing someone suffering from δεισιδαιμονία is moved to pity and would do everything in his power to remedy, by his kindly counsels, this grievous disease. Polybius, on the other hand, would probably be at once thankful for his own enlightenment and rather proud, while wishing to maintain the victim's δεισιδαιμονία, as being the only way to curb the ordinary man's lawless instincts.

We will now turn our attention to a few passages, where Plutarch's usage of the word δεισιδαιμονία is not, at first sight, quite obviously condemnatory, although a second reading will generally decide it is. When he speaks about a law in Sicyon that no one should be buried within the town, ἰσχυρᾶς .... τῷ νόμῳ δεισιδαιμονίας προσούσης <sup>1)</sup>, the word has the meaning of the Latin 'religio', that can be used in the same way <sup>2)</sup>. The fact, however, of Plutarch's using this word, with which, as we have seen, he nearly always signifies a species of religious feeling which he by no means admires, probably proves that he himself did n't share the 'shivery feeling' in this case. Lycurgus, by allowing burial within the town, took away from the graves τὴν δεισιδαιμονίαν ἅπασαν <sup>3)</sup>. The same story is told elsewhere

<sup>1)</sup> Aratus 53.

<sup>2)</sup> Cf. Cicero epist. 4. 12. 3: 'ab Atheniensibus, locum sepulturae intra urbem ut darent, impetrare non potui, quod religione se impediri dicerent etc.' (apud Kobbert. de verb. "religio" .... usu etc. p. 51).

<sup>3)</sup> Lac. Inst. 238D.



and Plutarch is evidently in favour of Lycurgus' action: 'as regards the graves he took excellent measures', he says, 'for through them young people were no longer afraid, as if death rendered them impure, when they touched a corpse or passed graves' <sup>1)</sup>. We can safely conclude that Plutarch, not admiring this taboo, on purpose called it a name, which implied criticism to him, though it did n't necessarily to all others <sup>2)</sup>.

After Cylon and his followers had been murdered Athens was torn asunder by civil discord, Salamis was lost καὶ φόβοι τινὲς ἐκ δεισιδαιμονίας ἄμα καὶ φάσματα κατεῖχε τὴν πόλιν <sup>3)</sup>. To put matters right Epimenides, the well-known prophet was sent for, a man, as the historian puts it, wise as regards the divine matters, in the enthusiastic and mystic rites. He simplifies all kinds of ceremonies, more especially the funeral rites, which he deprived of their harsh and barbaric character, that formerly especially oppressed most women. Δεισιδαιμονία is here used as a name for that frightened and rather nervous form of religion, that arises in times of crisis, but Plutarch sympathizes with the reformer, who more or less smooths it down and liberates it of its excesses.

In his life of Marcellus, where Posidonius is perhaps his source, Plutarch tells the story of a certain Nicias, an inhabitant of a little Sicilian town, who is in danger of being extradited, by his fellow-citizens, to the Carthaginians on a charge of pro-Romanism. On purpose he now starts blaspheming the 'Mothers', the locally venerated divinities and at last, during a meeting, in the middle of his speech, he suddenly falls down and lies motionless, while all others

<sup>1)</sup> Lycurg. 27.    <sup>2)</sup> Cf. the senatusconsultum p. 20.    <sup>3)</sup> Solon 12.



stand about in fearful silence. Unexpectedly he jumps up, throws off his clothes, calls out he is being pursued by the Mothers and, looking like a madman, runs out of the city-gate and so makes good his escape, no one daring to touch him διὰ δεισιδαιμονίαν<sup>1)</sup>. It is more than probable that the writer joined in the laugh at the expense of these outwitted Sicilians.

It is perhaps not just by chance that those passages, where our doubt as to the exact meaning of the words δεισιδαιμονία etc. is most justified, all have some relation to the Romans, whose εὐλάβεια πρὸς τὸ θεῖον was a frequently recurring theme in the ancient historians.

Speaking about the 'black days' of the Romans he tells the story of the Fabians and how the day they were massacred was one of the blackest to their countrymen, and because of it two other days in each month: τῆς πρὸς τὸ συμβᾶν εὐλαβείας καὶ δεισιδαιμονίας ἐπὶ πλέον, ὥσπερ εἶωθε, ῥυείσης<sup>2)</sup>. Although there is certainly a critical undertone in these last words, still it is rather surprising to find δεισιδαιμονία used practically synonymous with εὐλάβεια, a word to which we have seen<sup>3)</sup> Plutarch did not generally attribute an unfavourable meaning. It is noteworthy, too, how he starts by saying that he will not now investigate further whether one is really justified in admitting ill-omened days.

Ateius, a tribune of the people, had tried to prevent Crassus' expedition to the East and cursed him, when he left, with frightful and horrible curses, invoking awful and portentous gods. The Romans say that the power of these ancient curses is so great that no one can escape it, but that they also bring misfortune to him who uttered them. That

<sup>1)</sup> Marcellus 20.    <sup>2)</sup> Camillus 19.    <sup>3)</sup> Cf. p. 71.



is why they are used only very seldom and why everyone was angry with Ateius that he, having quarrelled with Crassus because of the city εἰς αὐτὴν ἀρὰς ἀφῆκε καὶ δεισιδαιμονίαν τοσαύτην <sup>1)</sup>). In this case we have no evidence of Plutarch's criticizing this 'uneasy feeling', which is the result of a bad conscience; on the contrary the issue of the expedition seems to have more than justified it.

Very few Vestal Virgins avail themselves of the permission to lay down their priesthood and to marry, after serving thirty years. The few who do marry generally become unhappy, tormented by remorse and throw the others εἰς δεισιδαιμονίαν: into a state of mind, half fear, half awe, it probably is, but here, too, the meaning is not directly unfavourable <sup>2)</sup>).

Once again the word turns up in relation to the mysterious Vestal Virgins. Perhaps the Vestal, who has sinned, is buried alive, because no one dares lay violent hands on her sacred person and even so those who bury her don't escape 'a guilty feeling' (τὴν δεισιδαιμονίαν), but up till now the priests go there and offer sacrifices (ἐναγίζουσιν) <sup>3)</sup>.

These examples, where δεισιδαιμονία is not used in a sense that is clearly condemnatory, although it is by no means impossible that it is, are so few that we can state as an undoubted fact that wherever Plutarch uses the word δεισιδαιμονία he means a religiosity which he disapproves of.

Although an analysis of his treatise περὶ δεισιδαιμονίας will hardly add any entirely new elements to the conception we have now formed of what Plutarch meant by δεισιδαιμονία, it is nevertheless full of interesting and instructive detail, that makes the picture more vivid and life-like.

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<sup>1)</sup> Crassus 17.    <sup>2)</sup> Numa 10.    <sup>3)</sup> Quaest. Rom. 287A.



Besides, while all his other remarks on δεισδαιμονία are made more or less in passing, this little essay is a theoretical exposition of his ideas and as such deserves our attention.

In some ways this treatise, probably written when Plutarch was still young, differs in its criticism of δεισδαιμονία from what we have met with in his other works. To a large extent this may be explained by the fact that he here follows a Cynic diatribe, hugging his original rather closely <sup>1)</sup>, and the youthfulness of the author can also have been the cause of his radical views.

The chief distinction is that here he backs impiety (ἄθεότης) against δεισδαιμονία as the lesser evil, whereas we have seen that in his other writings he would like to free people from their δεισδαιμονία but not if 'impiety' would be the result <sup>2)</sup>.

In the introductory paragraph he mentions 'godlessness' and 'anxious piety' as the two forms in which the lack of knowledge and ignorance concerning the gods manifests itself and at the very end, in a few words Plutarch warns his readers that, fleeing δεισδαιμονία, they must n't rush into the opposite extreme, but should seek the golden mean, 'real piety'. We have here a reminiscence of Peripatetic doctrine<sup>3)</sup>; elsewhere in this treatise the comparison between these two always turns out favourable to 'utter disregard of the gods'.

Δεισδαιμονία, Plutarch remarks, is, as is already shown

<sup>1)</sup> On his sources, and in general on this essay, consult the thesis of Abernethy. *De Plutarchi qui fertur de superstitione libello*. Diss. Königsberg. 1911.

<sup>2)</sup> Cf. p. 69.

<sup>3)</sup> Paton ad locum: 'certe hic Plutarchus Peripateticorum doctrinam secutus mediam.... viam commendat etc.'



by its name, an emotional conception and an idea that causes fear, which oppresses a person and consumes him, as he believes that gods do exist, but that they are dangerous and cruel. Fear is the worst of 'emotions' (πάθη) as it checks one's actions and is a source of helplessness and perplexity and of all species of fear δεισιδαιμονία is again the most awful in its consequences. Nobody is afraid of war when he is n't campaigning and all fear of the sea vanishes when one is on land, slaves can find a short rest for their troubles when asleep, but the δεισιδαίμων is always afraid. Even in his sleep he is tormented by horrible dreams <sup>1)</sup> and once awake he does n't laugh at all those horrors as unreal, but runs to all sorts of begging priests and wizards, which costs him lots of money and, following their advice, he bathes himself in sea-water or sits on the ground a whole day or tries to purify himself in some other way. All kinds of barbaric and horrible religious rites have been created by the inflamed imagination of the δεισιδαίμων.

Tyrants or cruel masters one can flee, but a δεισιδαίμων can never find a moment's rest, for a person who is afraid of the gods of his fathers naturally fears all other gods as well.

He has horrible conceptions about life in the hereafter, where he imagines there are flaming rivers in a darkened country, many judges and 'punishers'. The ungodly are much better off than a man who thinks the gods are cruel and hard-hearted. The δεισιδαίμων believes the gods to have human shapes as the sculptors portray them and he ridicules philosophers and better-informed men when they tell him that the divinity is both good and great.

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<sup>1)</sup> Cf. de virt. et vit. 100F.



He is afraid of the gods but at the same time he seeks them, he flatters and he reviles them, prays to them and utters reproaches. An atheist may blame blind coincidence when misfortune overtakes him, but the δεισιδαίμων sees God's hand everywhere. If he falls ill, loses a child or has bad luck in his political life he regards the godhead as the cause of everything and he does nothing to ward off or ameliorate his misfortune. The doctor who wants to help and the philosopher who comes to offer consolation are both shut out<sup>1)</sup>. 'Let me suffer my punishment, he says, me, impious man (ἄσεβῃ), cursed by the gods and hated by the demons'.

If he suffers from a mild form of δεισιδαιμονία he will try to have himself purified by sulphurating, and old women that he calls in will hang on him, as on a peg, Bion says, whatever they happen to have with them. In misfortune he at once loses all hope, because he regards it as a heaven-sent punishment and he won't be helped. Lots of people have perished through their δεισιδαιμονία, Nicias for one, although an eclipse of the moon is nothing awful at all, while an eclipse of the spirit which blinds all rational thinking where it is most necessary, is terrible. Other people pray the gods to help them when in distress: ἀρετῆς γὰρ ἐλπίς ὁ θεός ἐστίν, οὐ δειλίας πρόφασις; the Jews however, caught in their δεισιδαιμονία as in a net, did n't defend themselves at all when the enemy attacked their city on a Sabbath.

In the cheerful things of life δεισιδαιμονία is n't able either to hold its own against ἀθεότης. The most pleasant things in life are, of course, festivities and banquets near the temples, initiations and offerings to the gods. An atheist takes part

<sup>1)</sup> It is hardly necessary to point out that this type of piety is well-known in the present time as well, at least in Holland.



in all of them, even if he does n't believe in them at all; he may perhaps smile ironically in his sleeve and say to his friends that people who worship the gods in this fashion must be a bit crazy, but for the rest he can enjoy them. The δεισιδαίμων on the other hand wears a wreath above a deadly-pale face, he is anxious while he sacrifices, he prays with a quavering voice and trembling hands. In a temple he is more afraid than anywhere else. Is n't all that much worse than disbelieving in the gods? Plutarch would much rather have people deny his existence than have them say about him that he is untrustworthy, fickle, bad-tempered, petty-souled. And the δεισιδαίμων believes things like that of the gods, f. i. that Artemis killed Niobe's children because she had been insulted and that the Syrian goddess punishes anyone who eats her holy fishes by striking him down with a horrible disease <sup>1)</sup>.

Because the δεισιδαίμων thinks the gods are like that: capricious, not to be trusted, cruel, small-minded, vindictive he hates them and is afraid of them. The atheist believes there are no gods, the δεισιδαίμων wishes there were none, but believes in them willy-nilly, because he lacks the pluck to disbelieve. If he could only screw up his courage he would like to be an atheist himself.

Atheism never leads to δεισιδαιμονία, but that is n't true the other way round, for when people see the ridiculous rites, the magic and sorcery, the barbarian punishments and impure purifications some say: better no gods, than gods who have to be worshipped in that way. Much better be a Scythian and not have any notion whatever about the existence of gods than a Carthaginian and offer children in sacrifice.

<sup>1)</sup> Cf. de Stoic. repugn. 1051E.



However one should not rush away from the extreme of δεισιδαιμονία to the other extreme of atheism, but choose the golden mean, real piety: εὐσέβεια.

This end, added, as it were, as an afterthought, is in keeping with Plutarch's doctrine as explained elsewhere <sup>1)</sup>, but the violent character of his onslaught on δεισιδαιμονία is mostly due to his Cynic predecessor, who, it should be noted, while ridiculing many extravagant religious ceremonies, attacks as the greatest evil the wrong conceptions about the nature of the gods, the anxious fear with regard to them.

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<sup>1)</sup> Cf. e. g. de adul. et am. 66C.



### III — Δεισιδαιμονία ETC. AS USED BY THE CHRISTIAN AUTHORS.

If we now turn to an investigation of the meaning in which δεισιδαιμονία is used by the Christian authors we will see that, under the influence of the new religion, a change has taken place.

It is well-known that Christianity has deeply influenced both Greek and Latin <sup>1)</sup>, especially, as has been pointed out i. a. by Deissmann <sup>2)</sup>, by the fact that the Christians used old words with a new meaning. Words like ἀπόστολος, ἄγγελος and many others were, of course, well-known and much-used long before the Christian era, but they acquired a new sense in the group-language of the Christians. The same holds good of the words we are investigating in this thesis, for, as will be shown, δεισιδαίμων becomes, with the Ecclesiastical writers, a common designation for 'heathen'.

We have here one of the causes that bring about changes in the meanings of words. When a hitherto unknown conception has to be designated, either a new word must be formed to fulfil this task or, as is quite often the case, someone may use an already known word in a new sense and it may then pass into general usage <sup>3)</sup>.

<sup>1)</sup> Cf. Schrijnen. Handleiding bij de studie der verg. Indog. Taalwetenschap.<sup>2</sup> p. 156.    <sup>2)</sup> Licht vom Osten.<sup>4</sup> p. 86.

<sup>3)</sup> Cf. the Dutch word 'luistervink', which of late, under influence of the radio-wave, has changed its meaning from 'eavesdropper' to 'listener-in'.



It is obvious that the Christians, aware of the difference between themselves and those who did not profess their religion, needed a word to designate these 'pagans'. Who it was that first used *δαισινδαμονία* in this new sense of 'paganism' we do not know, but we already find it in Justin and it seems to have been generally accepted pretty soon.

That especially this word came to mean 'heathen' is undoubtedly connected with the fact that the ancient Christians did not deny the existence of the heathen gods, but regarded them as evil spirits, demons <sup>1)</sup>.

Traces of this idea are already to be found in Jewish popular belief <sup>2)</sup>. In one of the Sibylline oracles e. g. we read a threat to those who have left the true and eternal God and who, instead of praising him and sacrificing to him have sacrificed *δαίμοσι* .... *τοῖσιν ἐν "Αιδη"* <sup>3)</sup>.

From the Jews this belief has passed to the Christians. 'It would seem that St. Paul regarded the heathen gods as demons, having a real existence, though they were not gods' an English scholar <sup>4)</sup> has said and he quotes a text like I Cor. 10<sup>20</sup> where St. Paul says of the offerings of the pagans: *αὐτοὶ θύουσιν, δαιμονίοις καὶ οὐ θεῷ. θύουσιν.*

A clearer proof that a Christian did not deny the existence of the heathen gods we have in the case of Justin. When the demons showed their might, he says <sup>5)</sup>, the pagans did not recognize them as demons, but carried away by fear, they called them gods, not aware *δαίμονας εἶναι φάσιν*.

Clemens Alexandrinus <sup>6)</sup> speaks of the gods of the pagans

<sup>1)</sup> Cf. e. g. Nilsson in Gercke-Norden, *Einleitung*. 2<sup>a</sup> p. 283; Zeller, *Phil. d. Gr.* 3. 2. p. 345 sqq. etc. <sup>2)</sup> Cf. Zeller, *l. c.*

<sup>3)</sup> *Orac. Sib.* ed. Geffcken. *Fragm.* 1 vs. 22 sqq.

<sup>4)</sup> Maclean in: *Hastings, Dict. of the Ap. Church.* s. v. *Demon.* cf. also: Obbink en Brouwer, *Inleiding tot den Bijbel*, p. 376.

<sup>5)</sup> *Apol.* 1. 5. <sup>6)</sup> *Protr.* 3. 42. 1.



as 'inhuman and misanthropic demons' and St. Augustine calls them 'inutilia simulacra vel immundos spiritus et perniciosae daemones' <sup>1)</sup>. The real character of these gods has been revealed by the only, true religion: per hanc .... religionem .... potuit aperiri deos gentium esse immundissimos daemones.... <sup>2)</sup>.

Finally, to quote an example from a non-literary source, in a Syrian inscription of a very late date, erected in honour of the fact that a pagan temple had been turned into a Christian church, we read:

Θεοῦ γέγονεν οἶκος τὸ τῶν δαιμόνων καταγώγιον <sup>3)</sup>.

It may be readily accepted that, where we find even men like Clemens and St. Augustine believing in the reality of these 'demons', the great mass of the Christians shared this idea and were fully convinced not only of the existence but of the power of the heathen gods.

Of course, now and then, we come across an utterance which denies the existence of any gods but one, but, as has been shown above, the other opinion seems to have been more widely spread.

We understand now how the word δεισιδαίμων came to be used in its new sense by the Christians: a pagan to them was 'one who feared the demons'. It is to be noted that, while for instance Plutarch's criticism of δεισιδαιμονία aims chiefly at the element of fear, it is the second part of the word that gives it its unfavourable sense when used by the Christians. As the Etym. Gudianum puts it: οὐ τοὺς δαίμονας .... δεδιέναι χρὴ ἀλλὰ τὸν ὄντως ὄντα θεὸν <sup>4)</sup>.

<sup>1)</sup> Civ. dei 6, praefatio.

<sup>2)</sup> Civ. dei 7. 33.

<sup>3)</sup> C. I. G. 8627.

<sup>4)</sup> S. v. δεισιδαιμονία, p. 137.



## Justin Martyr

The first examples of this new usage that we have are to be found in Justin Martyr. In his *Apology* he appeals to his readers to form an honest opinion about Christianity, uninfluenced by prejudice or the wish to please 'the fearers of the demons': ἀνθρωπαρσεσκέαι τῇ δεισιδαίμονων <sup>1)</sup>. Elsewhere he uses the same word to denote the ancient religion of their fathers, when speaking to the pagans. They can learn from Orpheus that there is only one god, if a certain hesitation or παλαιὰ τῶν προγόνων .... δεισιδαιμονία as yet prevents them from reading the prophecies of the holy men <sup>2)</sup>.

## Clemens Alexandrinus

Clemens of Alexandria passionately hated the 'inhuman and misanthropic demons', and his language shows a certain fierceness when he attacks the stupidity of those who fear them. To a large extent he is dependent on the ancient philosophers who had already been criticizing the popular religion of their countrymen since the days of Xenophanes, as we have seen in an earlier chapter. He loses sight of the fact that to them δεισιδαιμονία meant something entirely different from what he understood by it himself.

His usage has an especial interest for us because in his writings we see, as it were, the change of meaning taking place.

When he calls atheism and δεισιδαιμονία two excessive forms of ignorance <sup>3)</sup> this is the ordinary Peripatetic doctrine and when, before quoting some verses of Menander's *Δεισιδαίμων*, in which he ridicules the people who see a sign in every little thing, Clemens says εἰκότως τοίνυν δεισιδαί-

<sup>1)</sup> *Apol.* 1. 2.    <sup>2)</sup> *Coh. ad gent.* 36 (p. 34C).

<sup>3)</sup> *Protr.* 2. 25. 1 S. 7.



μονες περί τούς εὐοργήτους γινόμενοι πάντα σημεῖα ἡγοῦνται εἶναι τὰ συμβαίνοντα this is quite the same usage as we have found in the non-Christian authors <sup>1)</sup>. In other passages there is only a slight, if any, difference between his usage and that of the pagan critics of δεισιδαιμονία.

After telling how Erechtheus and Marius offered their daughters in sacrifice he ironically adds that that shows how the demons love human beings and asks πῶς δὲ οὐχ ὅσοι ἀναλόγως οἱ δεισιδαίμονες sc. καταφαίνονται <sup>2)</sup>. In the same way the Greek philosophers had protested against human sacrifices and Plutarch e. g. uses them as an argument to show what a degrading and horrible thing this wrong conception of the gods was <sup>3)</sup>.

There is nothing to show of which especial group he is thinking when he says that the δεισιδαίμονες in spite of themselves become aware of their errors in regard to the gods <sup>4)</sup>. In the passage where he tauntingly remarks to his adversaries that fire is not afraid of demons as it attacks and destroys their temples and statues, so that it may be regarded as a δεισιδαιμονίας ἰατρικόν <sup>5)</sup>, also, although it is evident that he denounces it, we can't be sure that this usage of the word is original. It may have been used by one of the pagan philosophers who criticized the worship of images, although there is, I believe, no example of their calling it with this name.

Following the lead of the Stoics <sup>6)</sup> he calls fear an 'emotion' (πάθος), but he expounds his Christian doctrine in what he adds, viz. that not all fear can be regarded as such: ἡ γοῦν δεισιδαιμονία πάθος, φόβος δαιμόνων οὐσα ἐκπαθῶν τε καὶ ἐμπαθῶν, while the fear of the God, who is untouched

<sup>1)</sup> Strom. 7. 4. 24. 1 S. 302. <sup>2)</sup> Protr. 3. 42. 8 S. 12.

<sup>3)</sup> Cf. περί δεισιδαιμονίας 171 C. D. <sup>4)</sup> Protr. 2. 38. 1. S. 11.

<sup>5)</sup> o. c. 4. 53. 1. S. 16. <sup>6)</sup> Cf. Arnim. Stoic. Vet. Fragm. nr. 411.



by emotion, itself also is free from it: one is n't afraid of God, but of losing him<sup>1)</sup>. Here we find traces of the by-meaning: fear of the wrong gods, the evil demons.

This is the case in several other passages, where the condemnation of δεισιδαιμονία is obvious, but where it is not unambiguously identified with paganism as such, although to all probability Clemens meant it that way. Once it is contrasted with real piety<sup>2)</sup>, while elsewhere it is pointed out that a good man must needs also have right conceptions about the gods<sup>3)</sup>. That is why the man of royal spirit and real insight, θεοσεβής καὶ ἀδεισιδαίμων, is aware that only the one and only god exists.

The barbarians thought their gods to be wild and cruel; those of the Greeks are more human, it is true, but emotionable (ἐμπαθεῖς) and only the Christians have the true ideas. Clemens then refers the reader to his book entitled Protrepticus, as he has there spoken circumstantially περὶ... τῆς Ἑλληνικῆς δεισιδαιμονίας<sup>4)</sup>.

We are hardly surprised to find that Clemens, who cordially hated and condemned the mysteries regarded them as δεισιδαιμονία. In expressing his utter detestation he even ventured an etymological explanation of their name; they are, he says, mere idle talk (μυθήρια): θηρεύουσι γὰρ .... οἱ μῦθοι οἱ τοιοῦδε (about the mysteries, that is) the most barbarian Thracians, the silliest Phrygians, Ἑλλήνων τοὺς δεισιδαίμονας<sup>5)</sup>. What his opinion of these last is, is sufficiently proved by their company. A bit further on<sup>6)</sup> he curses and execrates those who have first made man acquainted with the mysteries, who-ever they may have been.

<sup>1)</sup> Strom. 2. 8. 40 S. 162.    <sup>2)</sup> Protr. 10. 108. 3 S. 30.

<sup>3)</sup> Strom. 7. 4. 22. 2 S. 302.    <sup>4)</sup> l. c.

<sup>5)</sup> Protr. 2. 13. 2 S. 5.    <sup>6)</sup> l. c. § 3.



They planted this seed of all unrighteousness and perdition in human life; them, he says, he would call the mischief-beginning fathers μύθων ἀθέων καὶ δεισιδαιμονίας ὀλεθρίου. That ἄθεος and δεισιδαιμονία are here used, as it were, in one and the same breath is significant of the change in meaning that has taken place.

We find the two connected again in an impassioned protest against the stage on which adulteries and orgies of the gods are shown <sup>1)</sup>. O impiety! he exclaims. Heaven you have made a stage-setting and the divine has become a subject for the drama, what is holy you have mocked at with the masks of demons τὴν ἀληθῆ θεοσέβειαν δεισιδαιμονίαι σατυρίσαντες. Here we have once more the contrast between θεοσέβεια and δεισιδαιμονία, which is at the same time a form of godlessness.

Examples in which it is at once obvious that the pagans as such are called δεισιδαίμονες abound as well. He calls animals happy above men: οὐ δεισιδαιμονοῦσιν ἰχθύες, οὐκ εἰδωλολατρεῖ τὰ ὄρνεα <sup>2)</sup>.

In defending the Christians against the charge of atheism, the atheist is opposed to the δεισιδαίμων who is described as ὁ δεδιὼς τὰ δαιμόνια, ὁ πάντα θειάζων, even wood and stone <sup>3)</sup>. In the same way they are called οἱ δεισιδαίμονες, οἱ τῶν λίθων προσκυνηταί <sup>4)</sup>. 'Image-worshippers' is Clemens' designation in a passage in which he, with fiery eloquence, exhorts the pagans not to listen to what this vulgar scum, δεισιδαιμονίας ἄθεοι χορευταί .... εἰδώλων ποιηταὶ καὶ λίθων προσκυνηταί tell them, these men, who have even dared to deify Alexander, although Babylon saw his corpse <sup>5)</sup>.

<sup>1)</sup> Protr. 4. 58. 4 S. 18.    <sup>2)</sup> o. c. 10. 108. 1 S. 30.

<sup>3)</sup> Strom. 7. 1. 4. 3. S. 298.

<sup>4)</sup> Protr. 4. 52. 1. S. 15.    <sup>5)</sup> o. c. 10. 96. 4. S. 27.



Characteristic of Clemens' bitter invective, and instructive for our purpose as well, is a passage which we shall quote more fully <sup>1)</sup>. In passionate astonishment he asks himself: carried astray by what kind of phantasies men first δεισιδαιμονίαν ἀνθρώποις κατήγγειλαν, δαίμονας ἀλιτηρίους νομοθετοῦντες σέβειν, for whom, according to tradition, they built temples and altars and introduced sacrifices. Be that as it may, rising from somewhere ἡ δεισιδαιμονία .... κακίας ἀνοήτου γέγονε πηγή; afterwards increasing all the time δημιουργὸς πολλῶν καθίσταται δαιμόνων, ἐκατόμβας θύουσα καὶ πανηγύρεις ἐπιτελοῦσα καὶ ἀγάλματα ἀνιστᾶσα καὶ νεῶς ἀνοικοδομοῦσα, temples that could better be called graves, and therefore, he winds up his exhortation: δεισιδαιμονίας ἐκλάθεσθε, τοὺς τάφους τιμᾶν αἰσχυρόμενοι. Here it is clear to every one that Clemens regards the whole so-called Olympian ritual with its sacrifices and temples, its altars and festivals as δεισιδαιμονία, an abomination and a sin.

### Eusebius

Eusebius very often uses the word δεισιδαιμονία. 'Hellenism', according to him, one might define as τὴν .... εἰς πλείονας θεοὺς δεισιδαιμονίαν <sup>2)</sup>. Often a further qualification is added: τῇ πολυθέῳ δεισιδαιμονίᾳ <sup>3)</sup> for instance and ἐπὶ τὴν πολύθεον .... δεισιδαιμονίαν <sup>4)</sup>; in these cases the whole expression can be translated by 'polytheism'. He calls it τὴν ἄθεον καὶ πολυπλανῆ δεισιδαιμονίαν <sup>5)</sup>, a phrase that would have been a contradiction to Plutarch, and elsewhere he adds ἀμφὶ τὰ εἰδῶλα or περὶ τὰ ἀγάλματα or some such expression <sup>6)</sup>.

<sup>1)</sup> o. c. 3. 44. 1 and 3. S. 13. <sup>2)</sup> Dem. Evang. 1. 2. 2.

<sup>3)</sup> o. c. 1. 2. 5. <sup>4)</sup> o. c. 1. 6. 32. <sup>5)</sup> o. c. 1. 6. 63.

<sup>6)</sup> o. c. 1. 4. 6; 1. 5. 3; Hist. Eccl. 2. 3. 2; 2. 13. 6. etc.



An addition like that, however, is not absolutely necessary. He describes his method of evangelization in respect to Ἑλλήνων τοῖς δεισιδαίμοσιν, which consists of first putting forward refutations τῆς εἰδωλολάτρου πλάνης and demonstrating that there is only one God <sup>1)</sup>. Eusebius praises Constantine that he, in opposition to former emperors who embellished the temples, destroyed those that were especially in honour παρὰ τοῖς δεισιδαίμοσιν <sup>2)</sup>. In a certain town Constantine did away with all idolatry, so that there no longer were found images, festivals or any of the other things that are customary τοῖς δεισιδαίμοσιν <sup>3)</sup>.

Abraham, ἐκ πατέρων ὁρμώμενος δεισιδαιμόνων, changed his life <sup>4)</sup>; he was converted τῆς πατρικῆς δεισιδαιμονίας, as it is put elsewhere <sup>5)</sup>.

Eusebius calls the Egyptians of all men τοὺς .... δεισιδαιμονεστάτους <sup>6)</sup>; they had been regarded as such by non-Christian writers as well <sup>7)</sup>, but that to the ecclesiastic it means something different is shown by his saying of other people αἰγυπτίαζουσι κατὰ τὴν δεισιδαίμονα πλάνην <sup>8)</sup>.

Many other examples <sup>9)</sup> from Eusebius could be quoted, but those already mentioned are sufficient proof that he calls every form of religion apart from orthodox Christianity by the name of δεισιδαιμονία. On the other hand he uses θεοφοβία as a synonym of εὐσέβεια in a favourable sense, of the θεοφιλεῖς, the god-fearing Jews of the Old Testament <sup>10)</sup>.

<sup>1)</sup> de eccl. theol. 2. 22. 3.    <sup>2)</sup> Vita Const. 3. 1. 5.

<sup>3)</sup> V. Const. 3. 48. 2; cf. also 3. 55. 5.; 3. 57. 1, etc.

<sup>4)</sup> περὶ τῆς θεοφανείας frgm. 5.    <sup>5)</sup> Dem. Ev. 1. 2. 15.

<sup>6)</sup> Dem. Ev. 6. 20. 21.    <sup>7)</sup> Cf. Her. 2. 37; Luc. pro imag. 27.

<sup>8)</sup> Dem. Ev. 1. 6. 50.

<sup>9)</sup> Cf. i. a. Dem. Ev. 1. 2. 14; 1. 5. 4; 2. 3. 72; Vita Const. 3. 58. 3 etc.

<sup>10)</sup> Dem. Ev. 1. 9. 11; cf. the proper name Θεόφοβος.



## A t h a n a s i u s

Athanasius speaks of Greeks, that are converted to Christianity ἀφιέντες τὴν τῶν εἰδώλων δεισιδαιμονίαν <sup>1)</sup>).

## E p i p h a n i u s

Plato is reproached by Epiphanius for having believed in the migration of souls καὶ πολυθεταῖς καὶ ταῖς ἄλλαις εἰδωλο-  
λατρίαις καὶ δεισιδαιμονίαις <sup>2)</sup>).

It is a matter of general knowledge how Julian the Apostate was hated and detested by his Christian contemporaries and their successors. It is interesting that he, to whom the creed of the Christians was δεισιδαιμονία <sup>3)</sup>, was in his turn attacked in the same way by the Fathers.

## G r e g o r i u s o f N a z i a n z u s

Gregorius of Nazianzus, in defending Christianity against him, argued that all the wisdom of the Greeks was due to foreign peoples. Astronomy they had adopted from the Babylonians, the Persians had taught them magic, to the Thracians they owed their θρησκεύειν and so on; at last, all these elements uniting ἐν δεισιδαιμονίας συνέστη μυστήριον <sup>4)</sup>).

## C y r i l l u s

To hear a true opinion about his 'demons', Cyrillus refers him to his 'fellow-pagan' Porphyrius: τὸν .... συνδεισιδαί-  
μονα Πορφύριον <sup>5)</sup>).

Porphyrius, being a renegade, came in for a good deal of

<sup>1)</sup> Or. contra Arianos. 3. P. 407.

<sup>2)</sup> Adv. haer. 1. 1; Diels, Doxogr. p. 588. 23.

<sup>3)</sup> Cf. p. 53.

<sup>4)</sup> Or. contra Iul. 3. 92; ed. Prunaeus 1, p. 100D.

<sup>5)</sup> Contra Iul. 4. 125B; Migne P. Gr. 76. p. 691.



abuse. He is mentioned by a scholiast <sup>1)</sup> as one those 'who returned like a dog to their vomiting', πρὸς τὴν ἀρχαῖαν δεισιδαιμονίαν ἀποκλίναντες.

It may be the same anonymous writer who elsewhere <sup>2)</sup> in expressing his loathing of paganism even hazards a rather feeble pun: πρὸς τῇ λοιπῇ δεισιδαιμονίαι, μᾶλλον δὲ μανίαι τῇ περὶ τοὺς λεγομένους θεοὺς καὶ Πρίαπὸν τινα θεὸν εἶναι "Ελληνες μεμυθολογήκασιν.

### Theodoretus

After quoting a few verses of Menander, in which the exaggerated belief in portents is ridiculed, Theodoretus remarks that in this way even οἱ τῷ τῆς δεισιδαιμονίας πλάνῳ δεδολευκότες jeered at those miraculous signs, in which the masses believe even now <sup>3)</sup>. This is a very striking proof of the change in meaning that has taken place: Menander who mocked at what he regarded as 'δεισιδαιμονία' is looked upon by the Christian writer as himself enslaved by the errors of 'paganism', what he evidently means by the word.

In his Ecclesiastical History <sup>4)</sup> he tells about a young man, a priest's son, who having grown up in 'impiety' (δυσσέβεια) joined the group of the godly (τὸν τῶν εὐσεβῶν .... χορὸν). A friend of his mother's, a lady well-known because of her piety (εὐλάβεια) tried to convert him and with success, as the young man took her admonishments to heart and enquired of her in what manner he might flee τὴν τοῦ πατρὸς δεισιδαιμονίαν. It is noteworthy that δυσσέβεια and δεισιδαιμονία are here practically regarded as synonyms, while

<sup>1)</sup> ad Luc. de morte Peregrini 11.

<sup>2)</sup> ad Luc. Iupp. trag. 6.

<sup>3)</sup> Therap. 6. ed. Gaisf. p. 88<sup>1</sup>; Migne P. G. 83 p. 961.

<sup>4)</sup> Hist. Eccl. 3. 14. 2.



the word εὐλάβεια, used by Greek critics of δεισιδαιμονία more or less along with that word, here has the same meaning as εὐσέβεια.

### Hesychius

It is only natural that we meet with this change of meaning in the lexicographers as well. Hesychius explains δεισιδαιμονία by the word φοβοθεΐα and further has: δεισιδαίμων· ὁ τὰ εἰδῶλα σέβων, εἰδωολάτρης. ὁ εὐσεβῆς καὶ δειλὸς περὶ θεούς. This definition is, as it were, a short history of the word's meaning; its first part records the favourable and unfavourable sense in which it is used by the 'pagans' and the second part the meaning the word had come to have for the Christians. θρεσκὸς· περιττός. δεισιδαίμων is another explanation of Hesychius while in the Excerpta Cyrilli Gloss. we find: δεισιδαιμονίας· λατρίας δαιμόνων <sup>1)</sup>.

Photius has a curious and not entirely comprehensible notice 'ὁλόλους' τοὺς δεισιδαίμονας ἐκάλουν οἰωνιζομένους <sup>2)</sup>.

### Etymologicum Gudianum

In the Etym. Gud. we read δεισιδαίμων· ὁ δεδίως τοὺς δαίμονας, and (s. v. εὐδαιμονία) δεισιδαιμονία .... ἡ φοβοθεΐα ἢ τὸ δεδιέναι τοὺς δαίμονας. The Etym. Magn. (s. v. δεῖδω) has the same double explanation of δεισιδαίμων as Hesychius viz. ὁ εὐλαβῆς καὶ δειλὸς περὶ θεούς and elsewhere δεισιδαίμων· θεοσεβῆς ἢ ἀμφίβολος περὶ τὴν πίστιν καὶ οἶνει δεδοικώς.

Rather more interesting is a notice that the Etym. Gud. has s. v. δεισιδαιμονία and that here is quoted in full:

δεισιδαιμονία εἴρηται παρὰ τὸ δεδιέναι τοὺς δαίμονας. καὶ

<sup>1)</sup> Hesychius ed. Schmidt 4. p. 349.

<sup>2)</sup> s. v. ὁλόλους; I follow Babick (cf. o. c. p. 30) in adopting the reading οἰωνιζομένους.



παρὰ μὲν τοῖς Ἑλλησιν ἐπὶ καλοῦ λαμβάνεται ὡς δέον δεδιέναι τοὺς θεοὺς αὐτῶν. παρ' ἡμῖν δὲ τοῖς Χριστιανοῖς ἐπὶ τῆς ἀσεβείας λέγεται τὸ τῆς δεισιδαιμονίας ὄνομα. οὐ τοὺς δαίμονας γὰρ δεδιέναι χρὴ ἀλλὰ τὸν ὄντως ὄντα θεόν. καὶ ἐκείνους μὲν μισεῖν ὡς ἐχθροὺς καὶ πολεμίους καὶ ἀσπόνδους αἰεὶ τὸν δὲ θεὸν τὸν τοῦ κόσμου παντὸς ποιητὴν τε καὶ κυβερνήτην ἀγαπᾶν τε καὶ σέβεσθαι.

#### Etymologicum Magnum

Worded a bit differently — δεισιδαιμονία is defined as ἡ πρὸς τοὺς πονηροὺς δαίμονας ἐπιμέλεια καὶ φόβος — the same notice is also found in the Etym. Magnum. What at once attracts our notice is not the fact that here δεισιδαιμονία is identified with paganism but that according to these lexicographers it is used in a favourable sense by 'the Greeks', as this is only very partially true.

#### Suidas

Suidas finally, who quotes several instances of the word, noticed elsewhere <sup>1)</sup>, adds no new element in his own definition to what we have found in the other lexicographers.

#### Phavorinus

In his lexicon, which forms as it were a termination of Byzantine 'etymological' studies, Phavorinus defines δεισιδαιμονία in nearly the same way as the other etymologists, but it is interesting to find amongst others these definitions τὸ πάντα σέβειν καὶ τὰ μὴ σεβάσμια and ὁ ἄλογος φόβος τῶν θεῶν, which prove, once again, that it was especially the exaggeration of the δεισιδαίμων that came in for criticism. The worshipping and fear in itself are not criticized, but to worship what does n't deserve it and to fear in an irrational way.

<sup>1)</sup> Cf. p. 30, 31.



## RECAPITULATION

If we now endeavour to summarize in a few words the results of the foregoing investigation, at the same time comparing them with the opinions of others as to the history of these words, I think it can be confidently stated:

I. The original meaning of δεισιδαιμονία undoubtedly was 'piety, awe, reverence towards the gods' and no criticism whatever was implied in the word. According to Heerdegen <sup>1)</sup> three tests should be applied to ascertain the original sense of a word viz. its etymology, its usage and if possible, an ancient definition. The existence of the proper name Δεισιθεός is sufficient etymological proof that the first element of the word δεισιδαιμονία need not mean 'cowardly or ridiculous fear' and though there certainly is a difference between θεός and δαίμων, originally it is so slight, that we are not forced to accept a difference in meaning between δεισιθεός and δεισιδαίμων.

This opinion is borne out by the 'usus' of Xenophon and Aristotle, where we first meet δεισιδαίμων and where it simply means 'god-fearing, pious'. As to a definition from antiquity, we have several i. a. in Theophrast, Pollux and Hesychius. It is only natural that these definitions vary, but they nearly all agree in regarding δεισιδαιμονία as something different from real piety, as cowardice or exaggerated fear of the gods. This does not, however, disprove the assertion that the original sense was favourable. Every author naturally defines what he himself regards as δεισιδαιμονία

<sup>1)</sup> Lateinische Semasiologie p. 99.



and I can not agree with Heerdegen that in a case like this these definitions help us to understand the original meaning. It is, for instance, obvious, that the definition of the Etym. Magnum: 'δεισιδαιμονία means the worship and the fear of the evil demons' is only true for the 'usus' of the Christian authors. Hesychius however, explains δεισιδαίμων as 'idolater, worshipper of idols' but he also has: ὁ εὐσεβὴς καὶ δειλὸς περὶ θεοῦς, which shows that he — or his sources — knew the usage of the word in a favourable sense as well.

There is nothing whatever to justify Hild's idea <sup>1)</sup>, that the word δεισιδαιμονία owes its origin to the cult of evil spirits; on the contrary it can be regarded as certain that the word, as used by the non-Christian writers, never had anything to do with 'evil spirits' and originally merely expressed, as has been said before: 'piety, reverence towards the unseen'. At the same time it is true that the mental attitude which is described as δεισιδαιμονία, even where the word is used in a favourable sense, lays especial stress on that element of religion, that can be called 'awe'. As to the original meaning nearly every one is in agreement, but, it is added, the sense of the word deteriorated and since Theophrast and Menander it is only used in an unfavourable sense. This opinion, as has been shown in our first chapter, is erroneous. Examples have been found throughout the whole period of Greek literature of a usage in a favourable sense and besides the significant fact has come to light, that where we find these words used in inscriptions the meaning is always favourable.

It has been ascertained moreover that these words, used in a favourable sense, can have various shades of meaning, which will be noticed below <sup>2)</sup>.

<sup>1)</sup> Cf. p. 6 note 3.    <sup>2)</sup> Cf. p. 104 sqq.



II. Although the idea that δεισδαιμονία is used exclusively in an unfavourable sense since Theophrast<sup>1)</sup> is mistaken, it is nevertheless true that the majority of Greek writers, who were mostly 'enlightened' and out of touch with popular religion, used it in that way, to designate those forms of piety which they regarded as ridiculous or exaggerated. But here, once again, we have noticed that there are many shades of meaning and that it is inexact to translate δεισδαιμονία by 'superstition', as it very seldom means that, if we take this word in the modern sense.

Many modern scholars in defining δεισδαιμονία lose sight of its manifold meanings and give definitions which only fit the usage of certain writers. When for instance Toutain says<sup>2)</sup>: 'de même que Cicéron opposait religio à superstitio, de même en grec, au moins sous l'Empire, on opposait εὐσέβεια à δεισδαιμονία' he is evidently thinking of Plutarch, and the same is even more true in the case of Schoemann<sup>3)</sup>.

It is quite inexact to speak of 'the' unfavourable meaning, as it is clear that though e. g. both Polybius and Plutarch use δεισδαιμονία with a derogative connotation, the enlightened historian regards the whole of popular religion as such while Plutarch means only a form of piety, that he regards as cowardly or exaggerated.

The change of meaning from favourable to unfavourable, from 'awe' to 'funk', if we may once more use Marett's term-

<sup>1)</sup> Ast was wrong in thinking (Characteres, 1816) that the word δεισδαιμονία was first used in this way in the time of Polybius; he even regarded this usage in Theophrast as a proof that the 16<sup>th</sup> Charact. could n't have been written by him. Jebb has pointed to Menander (ed. Jebb-Sandys p. 138) and we can add the example from Polystratus (cf. p. 45).

<sup>2)</sup> Dar.-Saglio s. v. religio IV p. 831b.

<sup>3)</sup> Schoemann-Lipsius, Gr. Alt. II p. 149.



inology, can be explained both psychologically and historically. The man, who is always keenly aware of his dependence on 'τὸ δαιμόνιον', 'the divine powers', who tries with all his might to placate these 'powers' and to avoid all ritual defilement, very easily changes into the δεισιδαίμων as depicted by Theophrast, who carries all this to a ridiculous extreme.

Historically speaking, the change becomes comprehensible when we consider the fact that, from the times of the Sophists — and perhaps even earlier — there was an ever-widening chasm between the religious beliefs and practices of the masses and of that intellectual elite, which expresses itself in literature <sup>1)</sup>. The penetration of foreign, chiefly Oriental cults in Greece is a symptom of this difference between the masses and the best-educated men, but I doubt if this irruption in itself is responsible for the change of meaning δεισιδαιμονία underwent.

Neither, so it seems to me, is Immisch right in saying that δεισιδαιμονία meant piety, as long as the belief in demons was not confined to the lower classes <sup>2)</sup>. While it is true that the word 'δαιμων', too, underwent a change to the worse in its meaning and that this probably will have influenced the usage of δεισιδαιμονία as well, it can not be truly said that the change of the latter word was caused by that of the former. In fourth-century Greek, in the orators f. i., τὸ δαιμόνιον is quite an ordinary expression for 'the divinity, divine powers' and Immisch is mistaken when he, evidently under the influence of the idea that this word must necessarily mean 'the demoniac powers' asserts that

<sup>1)</sup> Cf. Paul Decharme, *La critique des traditions religieuses chez les Grecs*, passim.

<sup>2)</sup> In his introduction to Theophr. Char. XVI.



it is characteristic for Theophrast that 'der Definition durchaus entsprechend sein δεισιδαίμων nur mit dämonischen Wesen zu thun hat'.

Besides, the fact that Plutarch, who certainly did believe in 'demons', uses the word δεισιδαιμονία in an unfavourable sense, is sufficient proof, that Immisch's explanation of the change of meaning is not the true one.

Not the limitation of the belief in demons to the lower classes caused this change, but the fact that the educated classes were alienated more and more from popular religion, for, as Nilsson has pointed out, δεισιδαιμονία, which he defines as 'diejenige Geistesrichtung .... die überall den Zorn der Götter wegen der Uebertretungen ihrer groszen und kleinen Gebote fürchtete' had its roots in popular conceptions <sup>1)</sup>.

In his very brilliant, but on the whole, I think, unconvincing little book 'la Sibylle', Zielinsky has a chapter entitled 'crainte de dieu, amour de dieu', in which the Greek religion of the classical time is contrasted to that of the Jews. The first is called a religion of love, the second one of fear <sup>2)</sup>. In this connection he comes to speak of the word δεισιδαίμων and says: 'quiconque persistait à craindre ceux qu'il fallait aimer, était traité non de pieux, mais de superstitieux: c'est le sens propre du mot deisidaimôn, "craignant les dieux".' As we have already seen, δεισιδαίμων has many other meanings as well and besides I very much doubt whether many of those, who condemned this 'fear

<sup>1)</sup> Lehrb. d. Religionsgesch. Chantepie de la Saussaye. II p. 375; cf. on the meaning of δεισιδαιμονία II p. 287; nearly the same in his History of Greek religion, p. 84.

<sup>2)</sup> La Sibylle p. 50 sqq.; deisidaimôn p. 53. The same ideas in his book: La religion de la Grèce antique, p. 99, 100.



of the gods', can be said to have loved those divine beings <sup>1)</sup>).

While all this makes the change of meaning intelligible, it is perhaps not superfluous to call attention to the fact that the word δεισιδαιμονία itself made such a change quite easy. 'To fear' may mean 'to revere' as well as 'to be deadly afraid of' and, as we have seen before, δαίμων which meant about the same as θεός to many Greeks, designated e. g. demon, heathen god in the language of the Christian authors. Plutarch attacks the δεισιδαίμονες because they 'fear' i. e. live in terror of the gods, they ought to love and respect; the Fathers attack the pagans who 'fear' i. e. worship the 'demons', in stead of the one and only God. These two examples show that the word δεισιδαιμονία had, etymologically speaking, many possibilities of differentiation in itself.

To the best of my belief δεισιδαιμονία, except in the Christian writers, nowhere means 'fear of demons', this last word taken as a contrast to 'gods'. The δεισιδαιμονία which is attacked and criticized by e. g. Plutarch is not so much a creed as a frame of mind. That is the reason why I venture to differ from Miss Harrison, who opposing it to θεραπεία, regards δεισιδαιμονία as 'fear, not tendance, fear not of gods but of spirit-things, or, to put it abstractly, of the supernatural' <sup>2)</sup>. In Plutarch's case, and that of many others, δεισιδαιμονία is attacked in favour of εὐσεβεία, there is a psychological, not a ritual difference between this 'false' and this 'real' piety. Plutarch, as far as I know, never says: 'abandon your fear of spirit-things and tend the gods' but he does, quite often, exhort his readers and hearers to banish

<sup>1)</sup> I believe Zielinsky's interpretation of the Homeric θεουδής to be wrong too. In this connection I want to point to a scholion which explains this word as θεοδεής, ἢ δεισιδαίμων, while a later commentator has added θεοσεβής. (Schol. Palat. ad ζ 121).

<sup>2)</sup> Prolegomena to the study of Greek religion p. 4-7.



their terror of the gods, who, he is convinced, are friendly and well-meaning, in fact much like the kindly philosopher himself is, only more so.

It is quite probable that especially the δεισιδαίμονες were concerned with ἀποτροπή, as is the fact f. i. with the man Theophrast describes, but that does not justify, to my view at least, Miss Harrison's opinion as to the meaning of δεισιδαιμονία.

III. The Christian writers use δεισιδαιμονία in a quite different sense and designate by it the fear of the pagan gods, or demons as they called them. It is, therefore, not quite exact to say that they mean by it the same as ἀσέβεια or that it is to them synonymous with impiety <sup>1)</sup>.

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<sup>1)</sup> Immisch l. c.: Wie denn überhaupt der δεισιδαίμων im Gegensatz z. B. zum εἶρων ein Begriff ist, der rücksichtlich des sittlichen Werturteils in beständigem Sinken begriffen ist, bis schliesslich das Christentum das Facit zieht: παρὰ μὲν τοῖς Ἑλλήσιν ἐπὶ καλοῦ, παρὰ δὲ ἡμῖν ἐπὶ τῆς ἀσεβείας (Et. M. 263. 13; vgl. Hesych. s. v.).

Sandys l. c.: ultimately δεισιδαιμονία becomes, in Christian times, synonymous with impiety.

The meaning of the word δεισιδαιμονία is moreover discussed by Wytttenbach. Animadversiones II. p. 279 sqq.; von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff. Griech. Lesebuch. I. 2. p. 330 sqq.; Welcker. Griech. Götterlehre II p. 140–143; Leop. Schmidt, Ethik der alten Griechen II p. 64 sqq.; E. Riess. On ancient superstition. Transactions of the Am. Phil. Association 26 (1895) p. 40 sqq. etc. Welcker and Schmidt both translate the word, in its unfavourable sense, as 'Götterangst'; the former regards it as caused by the irruption of exotic religions, while in Schmidt's opinion it is an exaggeration of that attitude of mind which is very scrupulous in the fulfilling of religious duties and afraid of divine wrath in case of any omission. As we have seen both opinions are true to a certain extent. Riess, wrongly as I believe, states that those who especially dealt with δεισιδαιμονία, superstition, during antiquity regarded it as 'fear of demons'. His whole article, however, is full of interesting and exact observations, e. g. where he points out that most Greek writers were enlightened and their opinions in religious matters as little common property as those of Goethe and Kant in the 18th century (p. 43, 44).



SYNOPSIS OF THE CHIEF MEANINGS OF δεισδαιμονεῖν,  
δεισδαιμονία, δεισιδαίμων.

δεισδαιμονεῖν

I — Used in a favourable sense:

1. to fear the gods: δ.δ. δαίμονας ἀλάστορας, Zaleucus apud Stob. (H.) 4. p. 125; to be religious: Heliod. Aeth. 10. 9.
2. to be awe-struck: Athen. 13. 590 E, Cassius Dio epit. 66.
3. to be conscience-smitten: D. S. 27. 4.
4. to regard an event as a divine intervention: D. S. 36. 13.
5. to feel uneasy because of a prediction: D. S. 19. 108. 2.

II — Used in an unfavourable sense:

1. to be full of nervous, superstitious fear: Polystratus p. 9; Polyb. 9. 19. 1; D. S. 15. 53. 4; Diog. L. 2. 91.
2. to be excessively scrupulous: Philo Jud. 1. 655.
3. to fear the 'demons' (pagan gods): Clem. Alex. Protr. 10. 108. 1.

δεισδαιμονία

I — Used in a favourable sense:

1. piety: D. S. 1. 70. 8 εἰς δ.δ. καὶ θεοφιλῆ βίον; Jos. Ant. Iud. 10. 42; Heracl. Incred. 23; Ael. V. H. 5. 17.
2. religious zeal: Jos. de bello Iud. 1. 113; 2. 230.
3. reverence, awe: D. S. 5. 27. 4; 11. 89. 6: ἡ τῶν θεῶν δ.δ.; 36. 13; towards holy animals: 1. 83. 8.
4. fear of the gods because of a bad conscience, conviction that the gods punish sin: D. S. 14. 76. 4; 27. 4.



5. conviction that a certain event is a token of divine help: D. S. 17. 41. 6; 18. 61. 3.
6. holiness of a certain temple or spot: D. S. 5. 63, 3; 11. 89. 6; C. I. G. 2737b 11.
7. religion: Jos. Ant. Iud. 14. 228 etc. Jews liberated from military service δεισιδαιμονίας ἕνεκα; Jos. Ant. Iud. 19. 290; Acts of the Ap. 25. 19.

II — Used in an unfavourable sense:

1. fear (terror) of the divine powers, the gods and demons: Theophr. Char. 16; Stoic. Vet. Frgm. 408, 409; Plut.
2. exaggerated piety, excessive religious zeal: Strabo 7. 3. 3; Plut. Numa 22; Diog. L. 6. 37; Corpus Hermeticum 9 § 9; opposed to real piety, philosophical religion: Philo J. 1. 166; 2. 414; Plut.; Marc. Aur. 6. 30; regarded as a too much, the opposite of a too little (ἀθεότης): Peripatetic philosophers (Stob. W. H. II p. 147, Suidas s.v. δ.δ.); Philo J. 1. 297; 2. 360; Plut. περὶ δεισιδαιμονίας 164 E, 171 E.
3. the regarding of natural phenomena as bad omens: D. S. 15. 54. 1; 32. 12; Plut.
4. religion i. e. belief in a divine providence, in a judgment after death etc.: Pol. 6. 56. 6; D. S. 34/5. 2. 47; Strabo 1. 2. 8; Plut. II 1101 C.
5. taboo: Plut. Aratus 53: ἰσχυρᾶς τῷ νόμῳ δεισιδαιμονίας προσοῦσης; II 238 D.
6. veneration of unworthy objects: Julian the Apostate Epist. 59 (ed. Bidez-C.).
7. observation of the Jewish Law: Jos. Ant. Iud. 12. 259; Origenes I 800 A (Migne); Epist. ad Diognetum 1; 4.
8. Christianity: Jul. Ep. 54: τῇ τῶν Γαλιλαίων δεισιδαιμονίᾳ; 111.
9. paganism: Eusebius. Dem. Ev. 1. 2. 5 τῇ πολυθέῳ δεισιδαιμονίᾳ; 1. 6. 63, etc.; Ecclesiastical writers.
10. sinful human sacrifice: Lyd. de mens. 4. 147.



## δεισιδαίμων

## I — Used in a favourable sense:

1. god-fearing, pious: Xen. Ag. 11. 8; Aristotle Pol. 1315 a 1; Acts of the Ap. 17. 22; Heracl. Quaest. Hom. 1: ὁ δ.δ. βίος; Luc. pro imag. 27; I. G. 14. 1683: εἰς τ' ἀθανάτους δ.δ.; Suidas s. v. δ.δ.: δ.δ. καὶ εὐλαβής.
2. awe-struck: D. S. 1. 62. 4 δ.δ. διάθεις.
3. anxious because of a bad conscience: D. S. 20. 43. 1.

## II — Used in an unfavourable sense:

1. bigot, excessively religious: Theophr. Char. 16; Plut.; M. Aur. 1. 16; Max. Tyr. 20. 6. 7.
2. a person who regards all kinds of things as bad omens: Menander's Δεισιδαίμων; D. S. 13. 12. 6; Plut.; Diog. L. 6. 48; superstitious: Teles p. 39, 41 H; Plut.; Soranus 2. 88: δ.δ. καὶ θεοφόρητος; Luc. Alex. 9; Diog. L. 2. 132.
3. a person who believes the gods are to be feared: Plut.
4. believer in the literal truth of the bible stories: Philo J. 1. 345.
5. pagan: Justin M. Apol. 1. 2; Euseb. V. Const. 3. 48. 2; Eccl. writers.



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<sup>1)</sup> The passage from ps. Aristeas is quoted by Eusebius. Praep. Evang. 8, 19.



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<sup>1)</sup> In a corrupt passage Origenes uses the expression: δεισιδαιμονοῦντες . . . περὶ τὰ ὀνόματα (Comm. Joh. 19. 15. 4).



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<sup>1)</sup> The passage from Antipater's *περὶ γάμου* (Stobaeus H IV 510) I have not used, as the true reading has not yet been ascertained.



## STELLINGEN

### I

Δεισιδαιμονία beteekent oorspronkelijk 'ontzag voor de hogere machten' en is, ook na den tijd van Theophrastus, veel algemeener in deze beteekenis gebruikt dan gewoonlijk wordt aangenomen.

### II

Δεισιδαιμονία wordt door niet-Christelijke schrijvers nimmer gebruikt met de beteekenis 'vrees voor demonen', dit laatste woord genomen als tegenstelling tot goden.

### III

De tegenstelling door Miss Harrison gemaakt tusschen θεραπεία 'service, tendance' en δεισιδαιμονία 'fear, not tendance, fear not of gods but of spirit-things, or, to put it abstractly, of the supernatural' is niet geheel zuiver. (Jane E. Harrison. Prolegomena to the Study of Greek religion. Cambridge 1922, p. 4).

### IV

Δεισιδαιμονία in den ongunstigen zin van het woord, zooals 't b.v. door Theophrastus wordt gebruikt, kan beter worden weergegeven door 'bigotterie', 'kwezelachtigheid' dan door 'bijgeloof'.



## V

De beteekenison ontwikkeling van 't woord δεισιδαιμονία is een afspiegeling van de steeds wijder geworden kloof tusschen de ontwikkelde klassen en de massa.

## VI

Dat de Christelijke schrijvers δεισιδαιμονία gebruikten in den zin van 'heidendom' was mogelijk, doordat zij de realiteit der heidensche goden niet loochenden, doch hen als demonische wezens beschouwden.

## VII

Handelingen 17 vs. 22 en 25 vs. 19 zijn de woorden δεισιδάμων en δεισιδαιμονία niet in afkeurenden zin bedoeld.

## VIII

De opvatting van Walter Otto (Archiv für Religionswiss. XII. 1909, p. 533 sqq.; XIV. 1911, p. 406 sqq.) aangaande de beteekenison ontwikkeling van het woord 'religio' verdient de voorkeur boven die van Kobbert (de verborum 'religio' atque 'religiosus' usu apud Romanos quaestiones selectae. Diss. Koningsbergen. 1910).

## IX

Daar er, godsdienst-historisch gesproken, geen onderscheid is tusschen geloof en bijgeloof is de onderscheiding door Riess (On ancient superstition. Transactions of the Amer. Philol. Ass. XXVI (1895) p. 44) gemaakt tusschen 'echt' en 'onecht' bijgeloof methodisch onhoudbaar.



## X

De opvatting van Zielinsky (La Sibylle. Christianisme nr. 4. Paris 1924, p. 50 sqq. cf. La religion de la Grèce antique Paris 1926, p. 99) dat kenmerkend is voor de zgn. Homerische periode een 'uitgesproken vrees voor de goden' is in strijd met de gegevens van het epos, vindt geen steun in 't gebruik van het woord *θεουδής* en berust ten deele op verwaarloozing van 't feit dat 'vrees' zoowel 'ontzag' als 'angst' kan wezen.

## XI

Het betoog van Brakman, dat de slotverzen van het *Pervigilium Veneris* opgevat moeten worden als een symbolische klacht over den ondergang der oude religie, is niet overtuigend. (*Pervigilium Veneris*. Leiden 1928, p. 18—20).

## XII

De indeeling van 't *Pervigilium Veneris* in vierregelige strophen, door Mackail in zijn uitgave aangenomen, is willekeurig. (*Pervigilium Veneris*. London 1912. Loeb class. library).

## XIII

In vs. 14 van het *Pervigilium Veneris* leze men, met Lipsius en Mackail, *turgentes* in plaats van *surgentes*.

## XIV

In Theophrastus *Charact.* 16 § 10 leze men:

καὶ εἰσελθὼν εἴσω στεφανοῦν τοὺς Ἑρμαφροδίτους(?) <καὶ θύειν>  
ὅλην τὴν ἡμέραν.



## XV

In Plutarchus' *περὶ δεισιδαιμονίας* 166 B: ὅτι τὸν ὕπνον οἱ θεοὶ λήθην κακῶν ἔδοσαν ἡμῖν καὶ ἀνάπαυσιν, τί τοῦτο κολαστήριον σαυτῷ ποιεῖς κτλ. moeten de woorden τὸν ὕπνον gelezen worden na ἀνάπαυσιν.

## XVI

Stobaeus, *Floril.* ed. Wachsmuth-Hense IV p. 510, uit Antipater's *περὶ γάμου* (frgm. 63 Arnim S.V.F):

μηδὲ περὶ θεῶν εὐσεβείας καὶ δόξης καὶ δεισιδαιμονίας ἐμποιεῖν  
leze men: μηδὲ περὶ θεῶν εὐσεβείας καλὰς δόξας κατὰ δεισι-  
δαιμονίαν ἐμποιεῖν.

## XVII

De lezing van Groeneboom (Aeschylus' *Prometheus*. Groningen-den Haag 1928) in Aesch. *Prom.* vs. 792

πόντον περῶς' ἄφλοισβον

is onaannemelijk.

## XVIII

Ten onrechte geeft Mazon in zijn uitgave van Aeschylus' *Prometheus* (Eschyle. Tome I. Paris 1920) de verzen 968 en 969 aan *Prometheus*.















