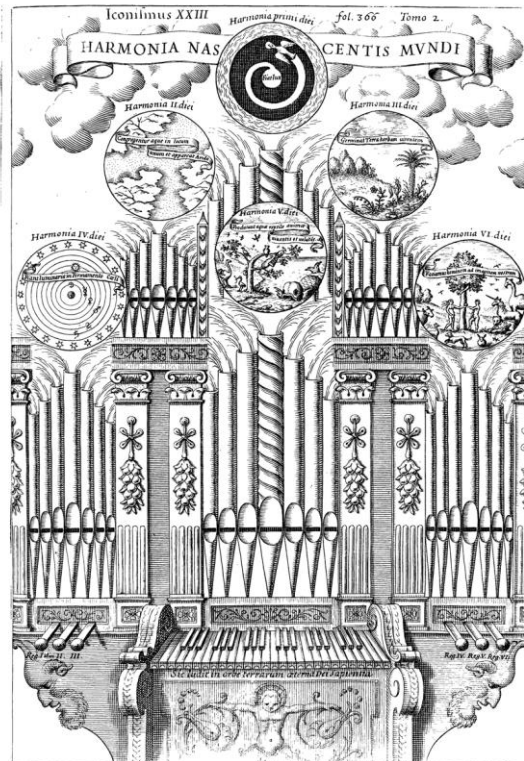


# The Grammar of “Sympathy” in Plutarch: Human Beings in Resonance with the Divine

**Rainer Hirsch-Luipold (Bern)**

Tuesday 2 September, 17:00 in Arts 332 and **online\***



The word “grammar” is frequently used to talk about structural elements in certain discourses: the grammar of love, the grammar of society, the grammar of ornament, and the like. In that sense, this lecture, which is the product of a collaboration of my Bern research team “Resonances,” will discuss the “grammar of sympathy” in Plutarch’s *oeuvre* (including related concepts such as harmony, resonance, and echo as well as the Stoics’ notion of *oikeiōsis*). Just as important, however, are actual grammatical (as well as semantic) aspects in the usage of the word *συμπάθεια* (*συμπαθής*, *συμπαθέω*, etc.), which will provide us insight into Plutarch’s reasoning about the contact between humans and the divine as well as into Plutarch’s discussions with his Stoic counterparts. The imagery of *sympatheia* (within one body, between strings on an instrument, ...) helps Plutarch to illustrate how humans are related to the world (including animals, plants, and fellow human beings) on the one hand, and to the divine or God on the other. Active/passive (grammatically, “voice”) and activity/passivity (the aspect of moving or being moved) will be shown to delineate different philosophical and theological positions.

\*Click [here](#), or email [ursulaw@sun.ac.za](mailto:ursulaw@sun.ac.za) 24 hours in advance of the seminar.

**Department of Ancient Studies / Departement Antieke Studie**

 Private Bag X1, Matieland, 7602, South Africa |  [ldam@sun.ac.za](mailto:ldam@sun.ac.za) |  +27 21 808 3203