

November 2017

Changing Changelessness: On the Genesis and Development of the Doctrine of Divine Immutability in the Ancient and Hellenic Period

Milton Wilcox

University of South Florida, miltonwilcox@mail.usf.edu

Follow this and additional works at: <http://scholarcommons.usf.edu/etd>

 Part of the [Philosophy Commons](#), and the [Religious Thought, Theology and Philosophy of Religion Commons](#)

Scholar Commons Citation

Wilcox, Milton, "Changing Changelessness: On the Genesis and Development of the Doctrine of Divine Immutability in the Ancient and Hellenic Period" (2017). *Graduate Theses and Dissertations*.
<http://scholarcommons.usf.edu/etd/7108>

This Dissertation is brought to you for free and open access by the Graduate School at Scholar Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Graduate Theses and Dissertations by an authorized administrator of Scholar Commons. For more information, please contact scholarcommons@usf.edu.

Changing Changelessness:
On the Genesis and Development of the
Doctrine of Divine Immutability in the Ancient and Hellenic Period

by

Milton Wilcox

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy in Philosophy
with a concentration in Philosophy and Religious Studies
Department of Philosophy
College of Arts and Sciences
University of South Florida

Co-Major Professor: Joanne Waugh, Ph.D.
Co-Major Professor: James Strange, Ph.D.
Roger Ariew, Ph.D.
Michael DeJonge, Ph.D.
Mor Segev, Ph.D.

Date of Approval:
November 8, 2017

Keywords: Ancient, Immutability, Divine, Changeless, History, Theology

Copyright © 2017, Milton Wilcox

DEDICATION

To my mothers, Denise and Debbie, who did not live to see this work completed, you are the source of so much of all that is good in my life.

And to Wynn—because even a blind squirrel finds a nut sometimes.

χάρις ὑμῖν καὶ εἰρήνη ἀπὸ θεοῦ πατρὸς ἡμῶν καὶ κυρίου Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

First and above all others, Kylie must be praised for her elegance, excellence, and ceaseless support of not only me and this process, but also of our children. It has been a long row to hoe, my love, but laboring beside you is all joy—even when I am at my most cranky.

Second, thank you to my children for their precocious joy and inquisitiveness about everything in the world, but also for the hugs, kisses, late nights, early mornings, laughter, and tears that we have shared. Without you, my little ones, my life would be the poorer.

Third, thank you to my fathers, both of whom have inspired me to faithfulness to my projects and the people I share my life with. Your examples have carried me to this point.

Fourth, thank you to my siblings, both of blood and marriage, all of you consistently challenge me to be my best, but particularly to Sarah for your drive for competition.

Fifth, thank you to my friends and colleagues at USF who have offered a friendly and critical ear to my rather arcane field of research. In particular I would like to thank Dan Collette and his family for their steady and deepening friendship over these years (as well as all the shared turkey).

Sixth, thank you to the members of the Bartow Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church. Your support through so many struggles in these years has been a buoy to my family through the celebration of new life and the grief of losing our mothers. I especially thank Rob Patrick for his tireless ministry to my family and our souls and Zach Simmons because sometimes one just needs to play a game.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract	iii
Introduction.....	1
Chapter One: The Transition From Mythological Thinking about Cosmological Deities into Abstract Thinking About Transcendental Deities In the Greek and Hebrew Contexts	5
Transitioning to Transcendental Thinking About the Divine in the Archaic Greek Context	5
Transitioning to Transcendental Thinking About the Divine in the Archaic Hebrew Context.....	13
Chapter Two: The Genesis of the DDI in the Greek Context.....	24
Introduction	24
Xenophanes of Colophon.....	26
Parmenides of Elea	36
Pre-Socratic Divine Motion and Its Origin.....	51
Chapter Three: The Genesis of the DDI in the Ancient Hebrew Context	55
Abraham and the Binding and Sacrifice of Isaac: Absurdity and Covenant Constancy	55
Further Instances of Covenant Constancy in the Face of Absurdity	63
Chapter Four: Influential Texts of Plato and Aristotle	68
Doctrinal Genus and Differentia.....	68
Plato and the DDI.....	71
Aristotle and Divine Changelessness.....	80
Perfectly Active Substance	86
Perfect Human Psychological Activity.....	91
Chapter Five: Cicero, Philo Judaeus, and the New Testament.....	95
Cicero and Middle Platonism.....	95
Philo Judaeus	102
Early Epistles and Immutability.....	114
Chapter Six: Justin Martyr and the DDI in the Context of the 2 nd Century.....	123
Second Century Philosophy and Bibliophilia	123
Justin’s Version of the DDI	130
Divine Perfection and Covenant Constancy as a Means to Articulate the Philosophical Acceptability of the Incarnation and the Godhead	139

Conclusion and Further Work.....	150
References.....	156

ABSTRACT

This project will track and explain the development of the Doctrine of Divine Immutability from early mythological and scriptural source material that seems to indicate that divine entities are changeable into metaphysical systems that demand a perfectly consistent deity. The Doctrine of Divine Immutability is a philosophical and theological postulate that has long been a staple of systematic metaphysics and theology, but its function in robust and fully formed systems is different than its function when it is first generated in Ancient Greece and Judah. Methodologically mostly primary sources are studied and compared with interpretive help from relevant secondary sources. Once the generation and evolution of this doctrine is understood, a more holistic understanding of the relationship between religion and philosophy will be evident. Additionally a more robust understanding of Middle Platonism and 1st and 2nd century Christianity and their relationship to Roman Stoicism will be achieved. Of particular importance to contemporary scholarship this work will allow us to understand the doctrine in its context and will shield us from anachronistic readings of the arguments that are bound to cause fundamental errors in scholarship.

INTRODUCTION

In the course of this study we will be considering the Doctrine of Divine Immutability in its context. The time period under consideration will stretch primarily from the 500's BCE until 200CE. The purpose of this study is to trace the features of the doctrine in question and provide a sort of genealogy that will help explicate the content of the doctrine as well as the work that it does in its context. Each chapter will cover a major section of the development of the doctrine as it grows and changes over the years in different thinker's hands. Accordingly, for the most part the study shall proceed chronologically in two major geographical locations. We will be considering the confluence between the thought of Post-Exilic Judaism and Post-Dark-Ages Greece.

The first chapter will outline the state of the mythic traditions of Homer and the Tanakh out of which our doctrine will grow. It will examine the similarities and differences between these points of departure and attempt to show how two slightly divergent conceptions of the DDI develop. Of particular note will be the nature of the religious and cultural traditions and the way in which they took themselves to carry meaning to the people that live inside these traditions. The Greek context is moving from a robustly polytheistic and decentralized religio-mythical tradition that allows for a great deal of variation between city-states. The Jewish context is different. Rather than having a contiguous and pluralistic culture as regards its deities, it is not dealing so much with an internal series of critiques, but rather the trauma of the diaspora and the loss of the central cultic artifacts that were central to the Temple worship of the pre-exilic period.

Accordingly, these different contexts mean that the questions that are raised as concern the Divine are different, and will have slightly divergent answers.

The second chapter will focus explicitly on the development in the Greek of those philosophical and religious antecedents that will later figure in more robust and systematic articulations of the DDI. Xenophanes of Colophon and Parmenides of Elea are the two pre-Socratic thinkers that will be most salient to our discussion. While there are a great number of other poets that we could consider, I wish to focus on seminal thinkers from whom we have sufficient extant fragments from which to build an account of their thought. While Pythagoras and the Milesians would be fascinating to study, there simply is not enough data to form a cohesive understanding of how they would have articulated the DDI. The fragments of Xenophanes have been the subject of much debate regarding early “Greek Monotheism,” though reports of his systematic theology, and supposed monotheism, are overblown. Special attention will be paid to Parmenides’ fragments, particularly his third fragment as an interpretive tool that will help the modern reader understand how ancient convictions about the link between epistemology and ontology function. The reason for the significance of this fragment will become plain over the course of the argument, but essentially it is the epistemic mechanism which allows for mortal and profane minds to understand the truths of divine existence and generate the DDI.

The third chapter will cover the Exilic and Post-Exilic transition out of pure cultic Temple Hebraic religion to what might be called Proto-Synagogue Judaism. Special attention will be paid to the traditions internal textual resources in the Torah so that the Jewish articulation of the DDI is not confused or conflated with the developments that are occurring at Greece in the same century. Much of the argument will turn on a particularly detailed analysis of how the story

of Abraham and the sacrifice of Isaac will provide the epistemic hook upon which the DDI can hang.

The fourth chapter will cover the seminal texts in Plato and Aristotle. This study is not an attempt to perfectly and most accurately understand exactly what Plato and Aristotle believed about the DDI, but rather to show those texts which most fully contain the resources upon which other thinkers will build in order to advance a more systematic DDI. Because the project is concerned with the development of the idea over time, I will of course, try to articulate how these passages might be read in their context (both temporally and canonically), but these readings are by no means exclusive. They will, however, identify the systematic language upon which the next few centuries of debate and development depend.

The fifth chapter will focus on the first century BCE and the first century CE. The three focus individuals in this chapter will be Marcus Tullius Cicero, Philo Judaeus (also known as Philo of Alexandria), and the Apostle Paul (Saul of Tarsus). For the most part Cicero's *De Natura Deorum* will be in focus, Philo's "Allegorical Interpretation of Genesis" and "On the Unchangeableness of God" will be of peculiar significance, and the Pauline Epistles and the Epistle to the Hebrews will be the focus of the Christian primary source material. Through all of these sections special attention must be paid to the influence of Middle Platonism on the general philosophical landscape in the Roman Empire.

The sixth chapter will focus entirely on St. Justin Martyr as a second century CE Middle Platonist and as a Christian Apologist. While there are some salient passages from the Apologies, most of the chapter will attend to the Dialogue with Trypho the Jew. This chapter will show a Hellenic Christian synthesis of the two forms of the DDI (both of which have grown closer and closer over the centuries and the Hellenization of the Jewish culture—as evidenced by Philo's

work). After the argument and explanation has been accomplished, a more complete understanding and articulation of the nature of the DDI in the ancient world will have been articulated, and further uses for this work will be suggested in a brief conclusion.

**CHAPTER ONE:
THE TRANSITION FROM
MYTHOLOGICAL THINKING ABOUT COSMOLOGICAL DEITIES
INTO ABSTRACT THINKING ABOUT TRANSCENDENTAL DEITIES
IN THE GREEK AND HEBREW CONTEXTS**

Transitioning to Transcendental Thinking About the Divine in the Archaic Greek Context

The transition from the Homeric period of Greece to the Archaic period occurred in what some scholars of religion, following Karl Jaspers, have called the Axial Age.¹ In this time period a great many ideas about divine entities, religiosity, and philosophy were first generated and critiqued. It is in this transitional period that Greek Philosophy is born, and many transcendentalist critiques of the traditional polytheistic religion of the Greek-speaking peoples arise. While it is fascinating that this Axial Age transition appears to occur in roughly the same centuries worldwide (c. 800 BCE-200 BCE) the doctrines and ideas of this period are by no means identical from culture to culture.² Of particular interest to this study is that the Doctrine of Divine Immutability³ is sometimes dated to this period—in particular it seems as though DDI is a basically Hellenic idea. In the archaic period critiques of traditional Bronze and Iron Age deities began to emerge, and it appears as though the DDI is first found in these critiques. Bronze and Iron Age deities are often either theriomorphic or thoroughly anthropomorphic, are most

¹ Karl Jaspers. *The Origin and Goal of History*. Translated by Michael Bullock. London: Yale University Press, 1953. p.1.

² That is to say, the rise of Daoism and Confucianism and the subsequent *Ru Mo* debates in ancient China had remarkably little to do with Greek thought about the Divine. Harappan religiosity and the spread of missionary Buddhism may have had more influence on Hebrew, Hellenic, and Roman religiosity, but such claims deserve their own study, a work I leave to others.

³ DDI hereafter.

often understood and communicated about in familial terms, and serve as a point of contact between human order and cosmic order. In the Axial Age it is precisely the issue of anthropomorphism that many religious and philosophical thinkers begin to challenge. It is this anthropomorphic understanding of deity that is being directly addressed by the Pre-Socratics in Greece and the Major Prophets in Palestine. One of the first Greek critics of the traditional conceptions of deity is Xenophanes of Colophon. In order to understand to what Xenophanes—as well as some other Pre-Socratic philosophers—was committed, some examination of their cultural context and background is in order. Accordingly we shall first consider the intellectual background of the Homeric period and then the pre-Socratic thinkers Xenophanes and Parmenides. This consideration will aid us in understanding the rise of abstract, or “transcendental,” thinking about the divine, and accordingly the rise of the idea of divine changelessness.

As with most archaic cultures, the intellectual life of Homeric culture was not divided from the religious practice of the day. Accordingly, any idea of what is “true” of the divine, cosmic, and human realities will likewise look different from later ideas concerning truth. “Truth” in the Homeric period looked rather different from a Hellenic idea of truth, or even a basic correspondence theory. The arbitration of what was true involved the speech of powerful individuals who occupied the social roles of poets, seers, and kings as Detienne and Havelock have both argued. Concerning the topic of the truth of things, Detienne claims, “in archaic Greece, three figures—the diviner, the bard, and the king of justice—share the privilege of dispensing truth purely by virtue of their characteristic qualities.”⁴ In the time of Homer, these three types of person had special authority to declare truth, and were considered the Experts

⁴ Marcel Detienne. "The Masters of Truth in Archaic Greece." Translated by Janet Lloyd. New York: Urzone, Inc., 1996.16. Note: I will refer to these offices as “seer, poet, and king” respectively.

whom others could trust to impart knowledge. Both the poet and the seer had a direct religious connection to what Detienne calls “the Beyond,”⁵ but what we may correctly call the divine (after all, the claim that everything was full of the gods was not instantly dismissed). Poets and seers were supposedly able to disclose the past, present, and future by looking into the invisible world that other people could not see, or by contact with the Muses:

And they once taught Hesiod the art of singing verse,
While he pastured his lambs on holy Helikon’s slopes.
And this was the very first thing they told me,
The Olympian Muses, daughters of Zeus Aegisholder:
“Hillbillies and bellies, poor excuses for shepherds:
We know how to tell many believable lies,
But also, when we want to, how to speak the plain truth.”
So spoke the daughters of great Zeus, mincing their words.
And they gave me a staff, a branch of good sappy laurel,
Plucking it off, spectacular. And they breathed into me
A voice divine, so I might celebrate past and future.⁶

The roles of the poet and the seer were not identical, however. The seer’s occupation often seems more “religious” to us because their business was divining the will of the gods for a new ritual or cultic action (examples include slaughtering a goat and looking at the entrails, or casting sheep knuckle-bones or teeth to discern whether the gods would favor them in war or not). Such ritualistic activities seem more religious in nature simply because of their ritualized embodiment. We should note, however, that not all divination occurred in secret, and it often

⁵ Detienne, 16.

⁶ “Theogony.” In *Hesiod: Works & Days; Theogony*, 61-62. Translated by Stanley Lombardo. Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, Inc., 1993. 22-34. [_](#)

αἶ νό ποθ’ Ἡσίοδον καλὴν ἐδίδαξαν ἀοιδὴν, ἄρνας ποιμαίνονθ’ Ἑλικῶνος ὑπο ζαθέοιο. τόνδε δέ με πρότιστα θεαὶ πρὸς μῦθον ἔειπον, Μοῦσαι Ὀλυμπιάδες, κοῦραι Διὸς αἰγιόχοιο· “ποιμένες ἄγραυλοι, κάκ’ ἐλέγχεα, γαστέρες οἶον, ἴδμεν ψεύδεα πολλὰ λέγειν ἐτύμοισιν ὁμοῖα, ἴδμεν δ’ εὖτ’ ἐθέλωμεν ἀληθέα γηρύσασθαι.” ὡς ἔφασαν κοῦραι μεγάλου Διὸς ἀρτιέπειαι, καὶ μοι σκηπτρον ἔδον δάφνης ἐριθηλέος ὄζον δρέψασαι, θηητόν· ἐνέπνευσαν δέ μοι αὐδὴν θέσπιν, ἵνα κλείοιμι τὰ τ’ ἐσόμενα πρό τ’ ἐόντα, καὶ μ’ ἐκέλονθ’ ὑμνεῖν μακάρων γένος αἰὲν ἐόντων, σφᾶς δ’ αὐτὰς πρῶτόν τε καὶ ὕστατον αἰὲν ἀείδειν. M.L. West, *Hesiod. Theogony*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1966: 111-149.

involved the participation of observers who occupied other social roles.⁷ The seer's role also seems to have had a more mystical (perhaps even magical) bent than the other two roles. Oracles who lived in caves, who flew into trances in order that they might speak their prophecies, were still part of Ancient Greek society, but they were sometimes removed from it by physical separation. As often as not, oracles of this sort waited for others to seek them out wherever they happened to live. Indeed a number of the oracles we have record of seem to be tied to one place, e.g. the oracle of Delphi or Ammon Zeus. The role of the seer is, in some ways, closer to the role of a shaman than it is to anything like a priest.⁸ While by an art or a gift a seer might transport information between the divine and human realms, the gift is often not under the seer's direct control.

The poet's role, in contrast, was broader. His place was among the people. He traveled about declaring the great tales of men and gods, stories of gods, heroes, battles, victories, and defeats. It seems that rather than prophesy in the strong sense, he taught those who listened to him how to live well and honor the gods. The poet provided examples of great men and women one ought to live up to. Such examples were not just casually bandied about, but powerfully spoken into reality through robust description and passionate song. Homer, of course, gave wonderful examples of such powerful and captivating speech:

Next upon Thestor, son of Enops, he rushed. Crouching he sat in his polished car, for his wits were distraught with terror, and the reins had slipped from his hands, but Patroclus drew nigh to him, and smote him upon the right jaw with his spear, and drove it through his teeth; and he laid hold of the spear and dragged him over the chariot-rim, as when a man sitting upon a jutting rock draggeth to land a sacred fish from out the sea, with line and

⁷ Cornford's *From Religion to Philosophy* is an instructive, though somewhat dated, read on this subject, as is Burkert's *The Orientalizing Revolution*.

⁸ By shaman and priest I here intend to reference a difference in form more than in function, though function is also somewhat distinct. The primary distinction that I wish to point out is the level of institutional organization between a ritual specialist in a decentralized space without a rigid set of cultic traditions within peculiar spatial-cultural loci, and a ritual specialist within such loci. Primarily, then, what I am pointing to is the distinction between rural and urban activities and to their relative economic and political organization of the ritual space and the persons who partake in the rituals.

gleaming hook of bronze; even so on the bright spear dragged he him agape from out the car, and cast him down upon his face; and life left him as he fell. Then as Erylaus rushed upon him, he smote him full upon the head with a stone, and his head was wholly cloven asunder within the heavy helmet; and he fell headlong upon the earth, and death, that slayeth the spirit, was shed about him.⁹

Here Homer gave an exultation of the glory and horror of warfare in splendid detail. The poet is not content to simply tell us that Patroclus killed *n* number of men that day. He tells us the name of a particular man, how he killed him, the motivations behind it, and the skill with which Patroclus wields his spear. He spares no gruesome detail of the kill because sharing such details with the listener serves to draw the listener into the tale, but it also serves to tell a warrior what a good kill is like. This small section of Homer's epic serves to show how the poem as a whole may drive one on to greatness in warfare. These are not the words of a foretelling seer, but the words of one who showed the way to greatness through vivid examples. Homer's words are the words of a teacher or a sage—he casts light upon the path one should follow in order to live a good life.

Poets also declaimed the stories of the gods and the origin of all things. They were the people who told the history of their city, the history of the world, and the history of their gods. They provided the meta-narrative of their culture, and gave their listeners a place within the cosmos. Hesiod's *Theogony* is certainly not the only theogonic work, but like all the others it gives a meta-narrative structure to the history of the universe. Theogonic myths suffuse Bronze and Iron Age cultures, and many of them share the fascinating feature of accounting for the

⁹ Homer. *The Iliad with an English Translation* by A.T. Murray, Ph.D. in two volumes. Cambridge, MA., Harvard University Press; London, William Heinemann, Ltd. 1924.. XVI, 401-414.

ὁ δ' ἔγχεϊ νόξε παραστάς γναθμὸν δεξιτερόν, διὰ δ' αὐτοῦ πείρεν ὀδόντων, ἔλκε δὲ δουρὸς ἐλὼν ὑπὲρ ἄντυγος, ὡς ὅτε τις φῶς πέτρι ἔπι προβλήτι καθημένος ἱερὸν ἰχθὺν ἐκ πόντοιο θύραζε λίνῳ καὶ ἥνοπι χαλκῷ· ὡς ἔλκ' ἐκ δίφρου κεκηνότα δουρὶ φαεινῷ, κὰδ δ' ἄρ' ἐπὶ στόμ' ἔωσε· πεσόντα δέ μιν λίπε θυμός, αὐτὰρ ἔπειτ' Ἐρύλαον ἐπεσσύμενον βάλε πέτρῳ μέσσην κάκ κεφαλὴν· ἦ δ' ἄνδιχα πᾶσα κεάσθη ἐν κόρυθι βριαρῆ· ὁ δ' ἄρα πρηνὴς ἐπὶ γαίῃ κάππεσεν, ἀμφὶ δέ μιν θάνατος χύτο θυμοραϊστής. T.W. Allen, *Homeri Ilias*, vols. 2-3, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1931: 2:1-356; 3:1-370.

genesis of their deities by recourse to human reproductive practice, and legitimizing current social order by recourse to familial structures accepted and practiced by the cultures that housed the myth. The *Enuma Elish* is perhaps the most prevalent and re-used theogonic work in this vein, in that it appears throughout Bronze Age Mesopotamian culture and all the cultures derived from it.

The king had a slightly different role to play. His words brought about truth when he cast judgment over his subjects. The simplest way to understand the king as the master of truth is to grasp that the king's word was law. The king was not accorded the power of a god, in that he could, of course, be gainsaid. It does mean, however, that the king spoke justice into existence when he passed judgment on a legal matter. Before his pronouncement of judgment, justice simply did not exist in the particular case. This ability of the king is analogous to Zeus' nodding his head in judgment. Until Zeus nods, what is permissible is up for grabs. Once Zeus has decided and nodded, however, the case is closed. So it is with the king and his judgments.

These three authorities share what Detienne calls "magicoreligious speech." This type of speech actually brings truth into being by its utterance. In some sense this magicoreligious speech is word magic. The seer or poet vaticinates, and in so doing brings into being a new course of events. Such prophecy was thought to be real and efficacious in much the same way that the king's pronouncement of judgment is. By speaking into the world a human with the power to do so is able to make truth where none existed before. Such power is, perhaps, like unto divine power itself in that it makes something real in a way that goes beyond the typical profane existence of every day experience.¹⁰

¹⁰ Detienne gives an in depth analysis of the Greek understanding of truth as Alethea which is not central to my topic here, but is a very worthwhile read. In addition a great deal may be gleaned from Yoffee, N. 2005. *Myths of the Archaic State. Evolution of the Earliest Cities, States, and Civilizations*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

These traditional offices do not exist in a vacuum, however. Detienne outlines how a more profane language, i.e. the dialectic use of prose, replaced this magicoreligious speech. His analysis is that the warrior class of archaic Greece instituted a convention for distributing the spoils of war and eventually the prizes for athletic competitions. The basic structure of this convention was that all the warriors (or judges of the athletic event) who were important enough to count for something (which is to say the aristocrats) would gather together and either sit or stand in a circle. The spoils or prizes would be placed in the center of the circle of warriors, and then they would take turns (according to their worth in battle) selecting for themselves some of the spoils of war or the prizes that they had earned the right to own. This convention was also how the warrior class prepared their strategy for combat, planned out their movements, and handled any problems that they needed to solve as a group. The warriors would form a circle and then the different parties of appropriate rank would discuss items on which the group needed to decide. When a man came to the middle of the circle he picked up a scepter and made his case, and then yielded the center so that another could speak. In this way the warriors were seen as equals—at least in their ability to address one another publicly.

This format of going to the middle of the group to address the group may also be seen as the birthplace of proto-democratic ideas. Each person who gains access to the circle is (as far as the convention is concerned) an equal member of the circle with an equal right to have his say. This equality of speech is not found in the magicoreligious speech of the seer, the poet, or the king of justice. There is no analog for this dialectic prose in the three traditional “masters of truth.” The warriors, however, do decide among themselves what they will hold true. They decide through debate and persuasion how they should act, who gets what share of the booty, etc.

Most particularly salient is his analysis of the decentralized nature of legitimizing power across various coequal institutions in archaic cities.

In a way, however, the magic of a speech is not entirely lost. If a warrior fails to speak persuasively, his speech falls on deaf ears. While at first this convention only includes the noblemen, it will eventually come to encompass all the soldiers who prove worthy through bravery in battle to participate in the circle. This convention is eventually expanded to the assembly in the city, giving rise to an even more widespread dialectic—and eventually even the Sophist tradition of victory by persuasion.

Detienne contends that once the citizenry at large engage in this sort of dialectic, the traditional social roles are deeply challenged. While the seers (the oracle at Delphi for instance) maintain much of their traditional authority, the poet and the king of justice can be replaced with a more public, less autocratic means of arriving at truth. The assembly can decide what is just in their midst; they no longer need the king of justice to speak judgments into existence because they can do so themselves. Likewise the philosopher arises to challenge the poet for supremacy in the public arena of truth. Where the poet claimed direct inspiration from the gods, the philosopher gains his knowledge through public dialectic and learning. Detienne sees this shift as the “secularization” of speech in ancient Greece, and he seeks to show how it changed the Greek understanding of truth forever. It is certainly the fact that when a king or a poet is no longer the avatar of divine communication, that the settling of matters of justice and cultural norms changes from a sacred thing into a profane thing. The practice of the older sacred power of speech by the common people means either that the sacred is passing out of existence or else that the sacred is not seen as so distantly removed from the profane. If Detienne is correct, then this secularization process is gradual, as is shown by the persistence of traditional Greek religion and the interest of Archaic and Classical thinkers in metaphysics and theological concerns. If, however, this new use of speech is not a “secularization” but rather a closer tie between sacred and profane space,

time, and speech—leading to more diverse participation in sacred matters—then religion is not passing away, simply changing form. What is most important to understand is that there is a possibility in each of these traditional roles of “masters of truth” to speak the truth into existence—and that each of these roles may be either directly challenged or annexed by new social entities or practices. The transition from Homeric period into sixth and fifth century Greece has set a stage in which magicoreligious speech is powerful, but also more and more widely available to Greek citizens—especially in Athens.

Transitioning to Transcendental Thinking About the Divine in the Archaic Hebrew Context

As Loew suggests,¹¹ the Hebrew context for religious speculation and development was quite distinct, perhaps without parallel in world history. Where most archaic cultures used mythical thinking based in anthropomorphic imagery, the Hebrews were more interested in building a Sacred History. Mythical thinking most often begins with a theogony of some sort. Gods and goddesses come from Chaos, or oppose Chaos in some way so that a primordial family is instituted. The First Mother either mates with another primordial deity or she spontaneously gives birth to a deity who then becomes her consort. Typically the divine couple then gives birth to a host of other mythical entities and the story of myth plays out in familial-tribal imagery until the whole host of divinities is complete. Such myths are not merely theogonic, however, but also cosmogonic. The explanations provided by religious μῦθος serves a cosmological type of thinking. There is little in the way of pure abstraction in such myths. These stories serve to bind the human reality to all of reality in a contiguous, mirrored whole. All things are explainable by the diurnal and annual motion of the seasons and stars. Myths serve to explain the world as it is,

¹¹ Cornelius Loew. *Myth, Sacred History, and Philosophy; The Pre-Christian Religious Heritage of the West*. New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc., 1967.

and the place of humans in that world. The paradigm of this sort of cosmogonic-theogonic myth is, of course, the *Enuma Elish*, but we cannot spare time here to examine that work in great detail.¹² What is important is that the explanation given in Egyptian, Akkadian, Syrian, Assyrian, Babylonian, Canaanite, Mycenaean, Minoan, and Homeric-Hesiodic cultures all functioned in rather the same fashion.¹³ The Hebrew legend was quite distinct in tone and in cast of characters. In particular YHWH has no origin story and no familial relationships. His person is removed from the usual cultural analogs between cosmic order and human order. In fact it is His covenant with the Hebrews that establishes human order in the world in the same way that He established the cosmic order in the creation account in Genesis.

According to their own religious tradition the Hebrews struggled greatly with understanding the cultural unity of the tribes of Israel. A great part of the Tanakh is spent outlining the difficulties that the Hebrew people had with their lack of singular loyalty to YHWH. The sacred history of the Hebrews shows their wavering loyalty to YHWH. The call of YHWH on them is a call to exclusivity in worship: “I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the land of slavery. You shall have no other gods before me.”¹⁴ This first and central commandment is perhaps the most distinctive instruction given to the Hebrew people. While it is possible to read this commandment as a commitment to monotheism the historical situation, and the accounts of the Hebrews could also indicate an exclusivist henotheism. The call to a group of tribes to come together in the worship of one (and only one) deity is starkly different than the contemporary religio-cultural realities in the rest of the Fertile

¹² The antiquity of the *Enuma Elish* is beyond doubt, but that is not to say that all other cosmogonic-theogonic myths are beholden to it. The myth of Pursha and other Harappan myths need not be indebted to one core myth. I merely bring up the *Enuma Elish* because it is most easily seen to influence both Greek and Hebrew culture.

¹³ To be sure, each of these cultures developed its own twists and unique uses of cosmological mythology (Egypt in particular is quite different in some important ways), but on the whole the anthropomorphic familial-tribal imagery pervades.

¹⁴ Exodus 20:2 & 3. ESV

Crescent, as well as in Egypt and South-Eastern Europe. The typical model for religious and mythical explanations of the world was not to claim one particular deity who excluded the worship of others, but rather that each deity had his or her own domain, character, and rank among the pantheon of divinities. A sort of pluralism was the default attitude among Archaic cultures in which any and all deities existed, and even strove among one another. While some cultures might look on the gods of another culture as silly or backwards (as was the attitude of certain Romans toward the theriomorphic deities of Egypt),¹⁵ the disapprobation of peculiar gods did not amount to a denial of their existence. Such is the case with the Hebrew people.

The claim that YHWH is the only god of the Hebrew people is, as I indicated, remarkably exclusivist, but it ought not be interpreted as a denial of the existence of the gods of Egypt or Canaan. The exclusivist character of YHWH is such that the most formative event in Hebrew history, the Exodus, actually plays out as war waged between YHWH and the divinities of the Egyptian empire. Thus, reading Exodus 20:3 as though it denied the existence of deities other than YHWH would be extremely odd—seeing as YHWH is declaring his victory over just such deities. What sets YHWH apart from these divinities is His lack of relationship with said deities (usually war between the gods occurs between family members, only crossing cultural boundaries when different cultures war with one another) and his jealousy for his people. While many deities are depicted as desiring particular rites and honors from their worshipers, and even as fighting against one another, a call to exclusivity is odd in and of itself. A city might be the province of a particular god or goddess (Athens, for instance, is the domain of Athena), but in no way are Asclepius, Zeus, Eros, Hera, the Muses, or Apollo denigrated in Athens—these gods are simply not the city’s matron. Cult activity involving these other deities was not only sanctioned in Athens, but expected. Pluralism runs even more deeply in most archaic cultures than mere

¹⁵ Cicero evinces this attitude in his recording of Cotta’s speech in *De Natura Deorum* book I, § 28-29.

acceptance of polytheistic cult practice: often pluralism extended to identification of different parochial deities as the same entity. This practice happens on a local level when Poseidon is considered the god of the sea by coastal cities, but god of earthquakes by land-locked cities. It happens, however, even on a more global scale. Helios and Re may well be considered the same entity known by different names when people from Greece and Egypt engage one another peacefully. One of the more famous examples of this sort of pluralistic syncretism is recalled by Plato when he mentions Ammon Zeus as an oracle in North Africa. The identification of two greatly powerful deities with one another shows the willingness to syncretize as a means of communication not only between the gods and humans, but also as a means of communication across cultural and linguistic borders. Exported and imported deities are common enough among ancient cultures that we often speak of Zeus and Jupiter interchangeably—this tendency is perhaps most noticeable in today’s popular culture where we simply speak of Hercules being the son of Zeus, rather than properly disambiguating the relationship between Zeus and Heracles from that of Jupiter and Hercules. YHWH, however, has no such familial relationships. He does not appear as a deity tied to particular temporal or special confines. YHWH meets the tribal Israelites at a particular mountain, but He does not stay there. He has no clear analogue in most mythical systems. He comes from no-one-knows-where and calls people out of typical mythical situations into a new situation outside of the norm. He takes them to a place (Canaan) that He is not geographically associated with and “gives” it to them in the form of infiltration and conquest.

YHWH breaks all the typical usual conventions of mythical near-eastern deities, to the point that one of His demands is that he not be represented via images or icons. While there is cultic iconography in archaic Hebrew worship, it is an iconography of situation, not an iconography of person. The icons that are used in Hebrew cult activity are the Tabernacle and its

artifacts. These artifacts serve to invoke the presence of God in the midst of the culture without confining God to a particular location or a particular item. The closest that the Hebrew cult came to an icon of their deity was the Ark of the Covenant—itsself a container of items of sacred historical significance. On top of the Ark was the Mercy Seat between two worked Cherubim, but the seat itself was notoriously empty according to their own tradition. Seasonal festivals occurred, but there was not the same sort of cosmological identification of YHWH with any part of the seasonal order, or with any of the items or processes usually associated with a deity. YHWH may steer the seasons, and hold the store of snow and frost, but he is not the storm god any more than he is the mountain god or the river god or the vegetation god.

This call to exclusivity is not immediately respected by the Hebrew people. Much of the Tanakh is spent recording how often Israel “whored after other gods.” The picture laid out in the Tanakh is one of a people called to exclusively worship one deity, YHWH, but a people unwilling to do that very thing.¹⁶ Their sacred history demands many things from them, but the most central tenet is one that they entirely fail to follow. “Hear O Israel the Lord your God, the Lord is one.” “You shall worship the Lord your God, and him only shall you serve.” “You shall have no other gods before me.” All the other deities that a culture would either absorb or syncretize were strictly forbidden according to the Hebrew tradition. Any dilution of YHWH’s singular and peculiar significance resulted in the rise of charismatic persons who called Israel back to exclusive, “pure” worship. Along with the call to exclusivity in worship the Hebrews were called to a cultural exclusivity. Much of the Levitical tradition exists to mark them as different from “the nations.” As a people began as tribal nomads who never attain imperial status on the scale of their surrounding neighbors, and in fact spend much of their history as a vassal

¹⁶ It should be noted here that the distinction between henotheism and monotheism can be read as a largely problematic distinction when applied to Bronze and Iron Age religions. I shall return to this topic briefly in chapter 2.

state to various other empires, their religio-cultural identity is constantly threatened with dissolution or absorption. As a result they had particular standards of grooming, they could not round the corners of their beard,¹⁷ have tattoos or ritual scars (excepting the singular importance of male circumcision),¹⁸ or wear clothes made of mixed fibers.¹⁹ Like many other religions the Hebrews had extensive dietary laws in order to maintain ritual purity, and specific rituals by which one would become ritually clean had such purity been lost. These types of commandments serve to mark Hebrews as distinct from the cultures in Canaan, but they also serve a historical purpose later in Jewish history during the exile.

As indicated above, Greek πολεῖς were not the only part of the world experiencing Axial Age upset of their Bronze and Iron Age values. Any unity between the tribes of Israel found in the Davidic dynasty was incredibly short-lived, and famously did not outlast his son, Solomon. David's military success allowed for Solomon's rule to oversee the construction of the Temple (constructed by architects loaned to him by Hiram of Tyre, not solely by Hebrew architects²⁰), as well as other expeditions after wealth and military power. Famously Solomon even succeeded in bringing back gold from Ophir—a feat of sailing never repeated in Israel's recorded history, though Jehoshaphat is said to have attempted to repeat the expedition.²¹ It is into this period of disunity between the Northern and Southern Kingdoms that the prophetic tradition of Israel finds itself infused with new vigor. While the office of prophet was as old as Hebrew Sacred history, it is in the divided kingdoms, the period after the diaspora of the Northern Kingdom, and the exile

¹⁷ Leviticus 19:27. ESV

¹⁸ Leviticus 19:28. ESV

¹⁹ Deuteronomy 22:11. ESV

²⁰ 1 Kings 5 is an account of the outsourcing of the timber and labor for the temple, chapter 7 is an account of the similar outsourcing for Solomon's palace, and the temple furnishings. Parallel passages can be found in 2 Chronicles 2 & 4.

²¹ Though, again it was Hiram of Tyre who supplied the ships and navigators for this venture, rather than being Solomon's home grown project. See 1 Kings 9:26-28 and 2 Chronicles 8:17-18 for the account of Hiram's and Solomon's endeavor, and compare it with 1 Kings 22:47-49 for Jehoshaphat's failure.

of the Southern Kingdom that the prophetic tradition gains a centrality nearer to what it had in the pre-kingdom period of the Judges. It is precisely this period in which we begin to see the most transcendental reflection occur in the Tanakh, and because of this tendency in these prophets we often think of Isaiah and Jerimiah as thoroughly Axial Age figures.

The Hebrew prophets occupy a rough, but distinct, analogy to the Greek “masters of truth.” Prophets are the revealers of divine truths, but they are singular rather than tripartite. Where in Israel a king might issue edicts and take political action, real justice was to act in accordance with those truths that the prophet(s) had revealed. The king (as a king) had no say in magicoreligious speech, but was as subject to it as were all other Hebrews. While a king might fulfill the role of prophet as well,²² such a role was usually temporary. The role of seer and poet seem to be combined into one person in the Hebrew context. Moses is perhaps the best example, in that he was the recipient of God’s message through direct contact with divine reality, but was also ruler and judge over the whole people. The message and power given to Moses toppled foreign political and divine powers, and was the standard by which every political leader of the Hebrews was to act.²³ The prophet was not given individual power to speak truth in the way that Hesiod claims for himself, or to divine future events through proper ritual practice²⁴ or innate gift, but is given a particular message at a particular time from the deity. Crucially, this message (and any miraculous power that comes with it) is not presented as belonging to the prophet, but

²² A particularly interesting case of this overlap is found in 1 Samuel 10:9-13 and 19:18-24 for multiple cases of Saul prophesying, and as the origin of the saying “Is Saul also among the prophets?”

²³ It is not my intention to debate the historicity and accuracy of the biblical texts in this dissertation. Whether Moses existed or not, and whether the text of the Torah perfectly corresponds to historical events matters little in understanding how these texts function to show background theory that drives the religiosity of the people who interacted with their subject matter during and after the diaspora. In just the same way that it matters little whether or not that Homer actually wrote down his poems, or that the Muses visited Hesiod, or that the character of Achilles actually performed all the actions sung of him, or that the siege of Troy proceeded in exactly the way portrayed in the Iliad, all of these texts reveal important cultural ideals and the social place in which they were practiced.

²⁴ The exact role of the Urim and the Thummim in divination practices is unclear, and is worthy of its own study, so I will not shortchange it here. Even when it is used it does not seem to be a way of communicating complex answers and truths, but about directing bivalent courses of action, i.e. it seems to be a tool of affirmation or denial.

always rests with the deity. While there may be some crossover between the role of priest and prophet (especially considering the Ephod of the High Priest, and his potential use of the Urim and the Thummim), and the role of prophet and political ruler (as in the case of Moses, the judges, and when Saul was counted among the prophets), it is the prophetic office, not the political office, that qualifies one to be the mouthpiece through which divine truth is spoken.

The relegation of the role of the king to a secondary position may be most clearly seen in the ordination of the role of the king in Deuteronomy 17:18-20:

And when he sits on the throne of his kingdom, he shall write for himself in a book a copy of this law, approved by the Levitical Priests. And it shall be with him, and he shall read it all the days of his life, that he may learn to fear the LORD his God by keeping all the words of this law and these statues, and in doing them, that his heart may not be lifted up above his brothers, and that he may not turn aside from the commandment, either to the right hand or to the left, so that he may continue long in his kingdom, he and his children, in Israel.²⁵

This passage comes after the Levitical priests are given authority to settle civil matters, and the injunctions against certain social practices by the kings (should kings be appointed in Israel). The concept then is that the judgments of kings were to be subject to the message delivered by the prophets—even in legal matters. Magicoreligious speech was housed in the role of prophet, and the king's only ability to vaticinate was when he stepped out of the role as king and into the role of prophet. This power relationship, of course, assisted in the reconstruction of the post-exilic power relationships when proper kingship and those appointed to priestly office were not as obvious as they once would have been. In addition this understanding that the words of the prophets came directly from the mouth of God allowed for the construction of a civilization based around the records of the history of the people, rather than requiring the people to reinvent or redefine their identity as a people because of renewed geographical circumstances. The requirement that the king both write and read from this same textual history clearly demarcates

²⁵ ESV.

the language of power and legitimation as being accessible only through the ordained religious form of communication: given by the prophets, legitimized by the priests, enforced by the king. The standards of right action in the Judaic context were set down as direct revelation from God to His people, and those directives could continue to function outside the geographic location of Palestine, or indeed, even without a current prophet or a current king as long as the record and the priestly function could be fulfilled in some way.

As in Greece, the Hebrew people in Palestine also underwent a radical adjustment of their cultural cohesion and religious praxis. Whatever may be true of the Sauline, Davidic, and Solomonic kingdoms, the dissolution of the Hebrew state into smaller kingdoms and the defeat and diaspora of the Hebraic peoples by the Babylonian and Assyrian empires radically changes the face of Hebrew religious thought and practice. The diaspora of the kingdom of Judah and the destruction of the temple complex in Jerusalem is particularly important. The older ritualistic system of worship of their deity was utterly denied to those Hebrew people who had been removed from Palestine. Without the sacred space in which to perform the rituals and without the ability to control their agendas such that their sacred times could coincide with the proper sacred places, the practice of Hebrew religiosity was denied to some generations of Hebrew people. In order to adjust for this lack of traditional context that allowed cultural-religious practice to obtain in the lives of the dispersed peoples, they adjusted their practices to become less dependent on a physical contextualization and more dependent on abstract thought about the nature of their religiosity. This shift in attention from prescribed rituals to abstract teaching is aided by the exposure to the diverse religious traditions practiced in the Babylonian, Median, and Persian Empires. Accordingly the Exile into Babylon and Persia is when we begin to observe the rise of “Synagogue Judaism,” which was a method of preserving their cultural and religious realities in

a distant and syncretistic environment. While the interaction of Hebrew peoples and practicing Zoroastrians is of particular interest to many historians of religion, is not our main concern here. It is sufficient to note that the diaspora and exile began a change in the Hebrew religion that allowed for much more decentralized and abstract thinking about their cultural and doxastic praxis.²⁶

While it may be argued that the transition between the old kingdoms and the restored Jews marks, in itself, a very different religion, I take it that the practitioners of the religion and the re-constructors of the Palestinian worship center believed themselves to be following particular mandates given through the ancient prophets. The historical oddity of the persistence of a Hebraic-Judaic cultural and religious existence that was compelling enough to resist the erosion of dispersal and return to a more traditional context while at the same time adapting into something more complex than common geographical cult-practice is remarkable. The Jewish people made a transition to a transcendental religiosity that preserved their unique cultural and religious identity in the face of an uprooting that was intended to assimilate the diverse peoples of different cultural backgrounds into one larger community that bolstered the might of the Babylonian, and later Persian Empires.

It is, perhaps, the difference in context that is most remarkable between the Jewish and Greek development of transcendental thought about religious and political matters. The Greek context is one of a continued growth in and consolidation of power tied to particular locations, the *poleis*, which allowed for enough leisure that certain persons were able to contemplate more abstract matters. Herodotus is able to travel to far-away places and inquire into their differences because the wealth of his city and his family is able to finance such wanderings. The prosperity

²⁶ It is not my intention to provide a disambiguation or explication of the history between Hebrew Religion, Zoroastrianism, and Judaism. I leave that project either for other historians, or for other works.

of Athens was, no doubt, a contributor to the training of Socrates and Plato. But they are the result of a long term cultural trajectory of civil, economic, military, and cultural growth in Greece that allowed for *poleis* to re-establish (in some small way) the sophistication of the Mycenaean and Minoan civilizations that they recalled in their Homeric μῦθος. The expansion of Greek *poleis* is most striking in the confrontation between these advancing city-states and the Persian Empire. Where the Jews were subjugated and then released by Xerxes in his own time, the Greeks violently wrested control and power away from the great Persian Machine—most notably and obviously at Marathon. In both cases (Greek and Jewish) the exposure to a larger cultural context, as well as advances in trade (Palestine has always been a very fertile land—indeed a review of Byzantine trade reveals just how profitable this small stretch of land could be), were invaluable in transforming the sophistication of abstract thinking in both cultures. Where one culture syncretized their religious and cultural views through colonization and expansion, the other attempted to hold onto something unique about itself despite its subjugation and repeated inability to meaningfully defend itself from invaders.

CHAPTER TWO

The Genesis of the DDI in the Greek Context.

Introduction

While it may be true that the Milesians considered the topic of the gods, especially considering Thales' supposed statement that "everything is full of the gods," there is not enough left of the Milesians' work to be able to offer meaningful analysis on their idea of the divine as changeless or mutable. The issue is even more obscured because of Aristotle's well known tendency to create straw men of his interlocutors' arguments in order to advance his own position. In this study we shall confine ourselves to thinkers for whom we have extant fragments dealing with the immutability of the divine. In the archaic period of Greece we see a great variety of religious institutions that often overlap in some details. Two great resources for understanding this period and its thinkers are Berkert and Cornford. Of particular interest is Cornford's analysis of μοῖρα as central to the thinking of both religious specialists and the early Greek philosophers. I will specifically engage Cornford's understanding of μοῖρα and its role in understanding the concept of immutability in the gods and the ἀρχή. Though I do not wish to belabor our discussion here with a full analysis of Cornford's monograph, I do believe that an analysis of his understanding of μοῖρα will be required to do the topic of immutability due diligence.

Cornford suggests that both archaic Greek religion and ancient philosophy are based upon the concept of μοῖρα or "fate." Cornford's central claim in this regard is that in Greece we must

understand the genesis of all abstract ideas regarding φύσις is found in the practice of sympathetic magic. He contends:

These doctrines of Thales, which are almost all that survives to us of his opinions about the general nature of the world, contain three conceptions which are the principal subject of the following pages: the "*nature*" of things--*physis*, *rerum natura* (declared by Thales to be water); 'God' or 'Spirit'; and 'Soul.' Here at once, in the very first utterance of philosophy, we encounter conceptions which have a long history as religious representations, before philosophy begins. Unless we have some grasp of that history we are not likely to understand the speculation, which however scientific its spirit may be, constantly operates with these religious ideas and is to a large extent confined in its movement within the limits already traced by them.²⁷

That the history of Greek thinking was filled with religiosity is beyond doubt, and that the intellectual soil from which philosophy grew was saturated with μῦθος can hardly be questioned. What is somewhat dubious is the claim that religious thinking evolved directly from totemic systems of sympathetic magic. While such evolutions are possible, the evidence for them is circumstantial at best. In particular, such accounts have a polemical and teleological bent: specifically they posit systems wherein primitive savages evolve more fully into rational persons who (of course) look more and more like we "Scientifically-Minded-Western-Europeans."²⁸ The particulars of how such an evolution would come about are possible to outline, but much in them depends on particular analysis of individuals, and such analyses are often theory-laden—either for or against such evolution. I shall not try to address whether this account is ultimately sustainable or not—but I will address Cornford's idea that μοῖρα is based upon an idea of immutable standards. The most insightful idea that Cornford draws out in his argument is the spatial nature of μοῖρα in its earliest articulation.

²⁷ Francis Cornford, *From Religion to Philosophy: A Study in the Origins of Western Speculation*. New York: Lognmans, Green and Co. 1912. 4-5.

²⁸ This reading is a rather egregious instance of a sort of Hegelian teleology of history that sees our current meta-narrative as the inevitable result of the sweep of all cosmic and intellectual evolution.

Xenophanes of Colophon

One of the earliest Greek thinkers for whom we have extant fragments that show the transition out of traditional mythic thinking is Xenophanes of Colophon. Of particular interest to this discussion are his advancements of the concept of divinity. Xenophanes was happy to tear down the anthropomorphic conception of the gods, but he was not willing that the divine should be dishonored because of his teachings, nor that men should abandon the notion of the divine altogether. We would do well to remember that Xenophanes' interests in politics, philosophy, and science were not separate from his inquiry into god's nature, though they may have been distinct. The god that Xenophanes proposed has a number of fascinating attributes. Fragment 23 purports that "One god is greatest among gods and men, not at all like mortals in body or in thought."²⁹ This statement has been used to claim that Xenophanes was a monotheist, but this claim cannot be easily sustained in the face of the obvious problem that more than one god is posited by the fragment. One might claim henotheism, but that would be an anachronistic formulation that does not take the cultural context of ancient Greek religious practice into account. For instance, in fragment one Xenophanes admonishes his listeners to honor the gods. Any claim that he would both admit the existence of the other gods and encourage others to honor them, but not honor them himself, would be very odd indeed. A claim of henotheism is also very difficult to make stick, because the difference between monotheism and henotheism in the ancient world (or in the practice of modern religiosity for that matter) is frustratingly difficult to discern. The oddity of assigning henotheism to Xenophanes only increases when one recalls that the worship of specific gods in the Greek pantheon was determined by the patron god of the city in which one lived. Any person was free to worship what gods they desired, as long as they

²⁹ Xenophanes. *Xenophanes of Colophon: Fragments A Text and Translation With a Commentary*. Translated by J.H. Leshner. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992: 30-31.B23. Εἷς θεός ἐν τε θεοῖσι καὶ ἀνθρώποισι μέγιστος, οὐτι δέμας θνητοῖσιν ὁμοῖος οὐτὲ νόημα.

made the proper sacrifices and paid proper homage to the city's patron (or matron as the case might be) deity.

Xenophanes is not content with the traditional mythical understanding of the Greek deities that was taught to his generation. He seeks to understand the nature of the divine on its own terms, while not depending on a Hesiodic possession by the muses to guide his inquiry. As a poet, Xenophanes occupied a traditional role in Greek society—that of one of the masters of truth. The extant fragments show that he takes himself and his poetry, his teaching, very seriously. From fragment 2 we see that he considers his teachings about politics more worthy than the games dedicated to the gods. His method of enquiring into reality and working to advance his society through access to truths not understood by the *οἱ πόλῳι* looks very similar to Hesiod's claim about his teaching—but it lacks the appeal to external divine authority. Where Hesiod is a vessel to transmit someone else's speech, Xenophanes is the origin of his poem. Accordingly the teaching that Xenophanes gives about the nature of the divine does not depend upon the traditional Greek theogonic myths. In point of fact it functions as a direct critique of their rationality and coherence. His attempt to explore the nature of divine existence therefore takes the tone of a critique of traditional understandings of the gods as anthropomorphic beings. He does not provide an utterly apophatic theological critique, however, but engages in both apophasis and cataphasis in an attempt to express those things he thinks would be true of the divine.

It is vital to remember at this juncture that for the ancient Greeks there was not a hard division between church and state. The state was very invested in the religion of its people, and the people were very invested in the religion of the state. They believed that the gods actually intervened in their cities directly, and if the city displeased the god or goddess that guarded the

city there would be dire consequences for the citizenry. Piety was not just a private matter in ancient Greece: it was a serious and very public business (as can be seen in the trial and death of Socrates). One's piety and one's political views had a fully reciprocal influence upon each other in a sort of socio-religious feedback loop. Xenophanes' understanding of divine reality could, therefore, be quite destructive to established social orders. While fragments 1 and 2 definitely show us that Xenophanes did not think much of established social orders, he nonetheless was dependent on said orders, and he knew it well.

What was Xenophanes up to in his analysis of divine reality? One attempt to understand Xenophanes theological passages takes him to have taken the ἀρχή³⁰ proposed by the Milesians and applied it to divinity. Jaeger claims that Xenophanes took Anaximandrian concepts and placed god roughly where the boundless belongs.³¹ Hack is so convinced of this relationship between the ἀρχή and the divine that he claims:

Xenophanes has taken the supreme god further along the same path which had led to the Air of Anaximenes and to the One Fire of Pythagoras; the One God of Xenophanes has reached the point where substance disappears, and it stands revealed as pure causality and pure unity, unhampered by even the subtlest of physical attributes, except that it "coheres" with all that it causes.³²

The claim that substance disappears is hyperbolic, as it is not clear exactly what concept of substance was held by the Milesians or by Xenophanes. As we have only fragments of his thought remaining it is hard to ascertain whether Xenophanes has a concept of substance *qua* substance, much less to claim that such a concept could disappear. Indeed in order to understand the concept of substance *qua* substance one would need to do a genealogy of ὑπόστασις rather

³⁰ Primary Substance, the One out of which the Many were made.

³¹ Werner Jaeger. *The Theology of the Early Greek Philosophers*. Eugene, Ore.: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2003. 49.

³² Roy K. Hack. *God in Greek Philosophy*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969. 61.

than of immutability, or even to look more properly at φύσις and the ἀρχή. Cornford's etymological work on φύσις is particularly useful in this regard:

It is at once apparent that we have no satisfactory rendering for *physis*. 'Primary substance' is charged with Aristotelian and scholastic associations; 'matter' suggests something contrasted with mind or life, whereas the primary meaning of *physis* is 'growth,' and its first associations are of life and motion, not of stillness and death. The mere use of this term already implies the famous doctrine which has earned for the Milesian school the designation of 'Hylozoist'--the doctrine that 'the All is alive.' The universe 'has soul in it,' in the same sense (whatever that may be) that there is a 'soul' in the animal body. We must not forget that the meaning of *physis*, at this stage, is nearer to 'life' than to 'matter'; it is quite as much 'moving' as 'material'—self-moving, because alive.³³

A thoroughgoing analysis of these terms cannot be our main concern here, but we at least know that one of the oldest meanings of ὑπόστασις was the sediment that settles at the bottom of a liquid—either the smooth and undifferentiated grey mud at the bottom of a river-bed, or even of sediment in the urine³⁴—and the oldest meaning of φύσις is demonstrably distinct from the notion of substance *qua* substance. In later thinkers, the difference between ὑπόστασις and substance is still important. The distinction between the meanings of these terms is of great significance to the development of philosophical Christian thought to this day. In particular the division between the Orthodox churches and the Western churches rests, in part, on the ambiguity of the proper use and meaning of ὑπόστασις and how it is properly applied to God. Simple etymology also shows that identifying ὑπόστασις and substance as identical concepts at this point in history is pure anachronism. Xenophanes simply could not have been conversant with the Latin thinkers from whom we receive definitions and doctrines concerning *substantia*. Nevertheless, it is clear that Xenophanes does care a great deal for understanding the sensible world in physical terms. Indeed Xenophanes takes great care (and great boldness) to claim that

³³ Cornford, 7

³⁴ Hippocrates, *Aphorismi* 4.69

<http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus:abo:tlg,0627,012:4:69&lang=original>

Iris is merely a cloud.³⁵ His other fragments dealing with ordinary sensible reality are more than sufficient to show that he was interested in physical questions, much like the Milesians.

Suggestions about the nature of the ἀρχή are attempts to understand the causal relationships between natural objects. They are attempts to understand mutations in the observable world according to a set of simple principles. The Milesians wish to understand and explain the world around them. Their concerns are far more directly about grasping what makes a thing or entity that particular thing or entity, or what makes one thing different from another. The motion of the stars and seasons, the borders between sea and shore—these things seem to occupy the concern of the Milesians. A distinction between the subjects of physics and metaphysics is hard to sustain at this point in the history of philosophy.

The question of the ἀρχή is not so much about substance *qua* substance, but about understanding the relationships between all that exists. Indeed it seems likely that the question of the ἀρχή evolves into Plato's question of the one and the many. The difficulty with collapsing these questions together, however, is that neither Plato nor Xenophanes require that the ontology of the many derive from the ontology of the one (or the Greatest God). As I will discuss later in this work, Plotinus' doctrine of emanation clearly works to show a derivation of ontology, but Plato is less clear when considering the forms and ontological relationships. Xenophanes seems to be denying the possibility that such an ontological derivation could obtain. By restricting his considerations in the passages about the divine Xenophanes is engaging in philosophical-theological concerns.³⁶ Again, Cornford expresses a particular idea regarding traditional Greek "theology." He claims that,

³⁵ *Xenophanes*, B32.

³⁶ At this point in Greek intellectual history, so called philosophical and theological concerns were not distinct or exclusive.

If we are to dwell on the freedom of Greek thought from dogmatic prejudice, we cannot be too grateful for the absence of this particular belief in a divine creator. No hypothesis is more facile and supine; nothing is so likely to stupefy and lull to slumber that wonder which is the parent of philosophy, than an explanation which will account with equal readiness for every feature of the world, whether good or bad, ascribing what is good to the transparent benevolence, and what is bad to the inscrutable wisdom, of omnipotence.³⁷

This claim is not without its problems,³⁸ but it does identify one central fact about the Greek idea of the gods: their gods were based in myth, not in sacred history. There is no “Creator” deity wholly responsible for the existence of the world. The created order functions in the same way that a dynastic family does. On the mythical account of the gods, we see immortals who are driven by particular needs—namely the needs to procreate, and the fear of the end of their reign. Xenophanes shares this background, and does not conceive of his non-anthropomorphic deity as a “Creator,” and in fact, we see nothing in what remains of his account concerning cosmogenesis whatsoever.

This background of concepts concerning divinity and the nature of the cosmos leaves a particular question to those thinkers who consider the problem. The Greek thinkers, in particular, are concerned with cosmology in the sense that they are concerned with the study of φύσις. The study of cosmology has many distinct subfields, but the two most applicable in terms of the interaction of the cosmos with the divine are the questions of cosmogony and cosmography. While the theogonic myths of Hesiodic lineage certainly show that questions of cosmogony were not alien to the ancient Greeks, it is not Theogony nor cosmogony which occupies the Milesians, nor Aristotle. While Plato may have engaged in some amount of cosmogonic speculation in the

³⁷ Cornford, 20.

³⁸ The idea that belief in a divine creator “is so likely to stupefy and lull to slumber that wonder which is the parent of philosophy” is simple prejudice. A great number of philosophers in the ancient and medieval periods certainly held such an idea, and it did not reduce their clarity of thought, nor corrupt their wonder. Even in the contemporary world, we see this principle still functions. Certainly Plantinga is a theist, and is also a great logician. Much like claims involving scientific research, philosophy and science can function equally well in theistic and non-theistic circumstances. The fact of the matter is that both philosophy and science are underdetermined as to what sort of intellectual soil they may grow out of, and a simple statement like the one made here by Cornford does not reflect reality. For more work on this topic see the work of Pierre Duhem.

Timaeus, he does not attempt to give a particular order to the development and work of the Demiurge—we must wait for Plotinus for a fully-fledged “Platonic” cosmogony. Since the Greek context is one in which the question of cosmogony is not of primary importance, we may legitimately consider cosmography to be of more significance to the contemplation of the presocratics—and perhaps to Ancient Greek thinkers in general. Cornford shows how this cosmographic bent can be seen even in how the concept of μοῖρα was spatial and legal, rather than genetic or causal, in its original use:

Moirai simply means ‘part,’ ‘allotted portion’; from that primary meaning it is agreed that the meaning ‘destiny’ is derived. Poseidon’s protestation [15th Iliad 1.189] shows how it is that the Gods, as well as men, have *moirai*. Each God has his own allotted portion or province—a certain department of nature or field of activity. This may also be regarded as his *status* (τιμή); it gives him a determined position in a social system. Sometimes it is called his ‘privilege’ (γέρας). Within his own domain his supremacy is not to be challenged; but he must not transgress its frontiers, and he will feel resentment (*nemesis*) at any encroachment by another. [. . .] The original conception of *Moirai* thus turns out to be spatial rather than temporal. We are to think of a system of provinces, coexisting side by side, with clearly marked boundaries.³⁹

The spatial organization of μοῖρα leads into the cosmology of thinkers like Anaximander, but it further influences ideas concerning deity in later thinkers. Of particular importance in this regard is the primacy that Greeks place on Geometry as a sign of great intelligence and wisdom. The understanding of geometrical principles and applications, indeed, is the source of the admiration the Greeks had for the Egyptians, as well as the myth that Thales learned the art from them. The limits and descriptions of the triangle were sacred to the Pythagoreans, and it makes sense that this spatial aspect of μοῖρα would hold such power and fascination for later thinkers, and even manifests itself in the Timaeus as Platonic Solids. When we understand the spatial nature of the provinces of the Olympian triumvirate, it becomes easier to understand the level of concern that Xenophanes and Parmenides place on the geometric descriptions of the sort of deity they each

³⁹ Cornford, 16-17.

consider to be more real than the traditional anthropomorphic deities, and indeed why that deity would be like a well-rounded sphere.

Whether or not Xenophanes intended to apply the category of ἀρχή to god or not, it is certainly true that he pushed the concept of deity far beyond what was represented in the anthropomorphic gods of Olympus. He wishes to preserve the dignity of both profane existence and divine existence, and not make one directly derivative of the other, while still allowing for some kind of causal relationship to obtain—at least for the divine reality to cause changes in profane reality. The god that Xenophanes proposes is the greatest of all beings, and cannot to be compared to mortals in body or in thought—a claim both troubling and fascinating. Taken in its strongest light, this claim seems to indicate that there is no body to this god at all, as any body at all could be compared to the body of a mortal in that both bodies are in fact bodies, and the same standard holds true of thoughts. If we take the description as positing a complete equivocation between the two types of beings, then it seems that Xenophanes must have been doing one of two highly unlikely things. The first is that he is committing himself to the existence of a non-material entity. This commitment is problematic because there is no evidence known to me that the Greeks had the concept of a non-material substance at this point in Greek history. In fact at this point in Greek thought it is hard to make a distinction between physics and metaphysics at all, so the question of substance, much less the idea of multiple sorts of substance, is not historically applicable. Lacking a Cartesian substance dualism, it is therefore very difficult to suppose that such an equivocation can make sense. The other possibility is that he was committed to the non-existence of the god he proposed, which is absurd. At this point in intellectual history there would be no reason for Xenophanes to be a reductive atheist. The rejection of peculiar or parochial local deities was possible, but a thorough discounting of divine reality is highly

unlikely. Even Epicurus would not entirely discount divinities, merely their significance to mortals. Because of this difficulty, it seems likely that what Xenophanes was trying to show was the mistake of speaking of the god's attributes in univocal manner with the way that we speak of humans. Another way that "body" could be translated is "shape." The concept of shape seems far more likely to capture Xenophanes' meaning. Consider a being that is not at all like us in shape: we can think of many such beings, oceanic invertebrates (octopods, cuttlefish, jellyfish, etc.), plants, and insects spring readily to mind as examples of entities with which we do not share a common shape. It is easy to suppose something so different in body is also different in mind, thus fulfilling the second attribute that Xenophanes posits. The better way of understanding his point is that the one god is sufficiently different from human beings that it would be a grave mistake to assign it any anthropomorphic characteristics. Xenophanes does not seem to think that the one god is unknowable, however, though it must be able to be spoken of via some form of analogical language.

Fragment 24 proposes ". . . Whole he sees, whole he thinks, whole he hears," though it could also be translated ". . . he sees all over, he thinks all over, he hears all over,"⁴⁰ which captures more of the ambiguity present in the Greek. The ambiguity in this fragment may mean that this god is omniscient—in that senses all things, or it may mean that this god has a qualitative set of experiences unlike to our own, as the whole of it thinks, sees, and hears without distinction between the senses and the thoughts. Then fragment 25 states ". . . but completely without toil he shakes all things by the thought of his mind."⁴¹ Fragment 25 is an attempt to show how the divine is able to cause changes in the profane world without recourse to standard means of causation. The function of causation without the standard means available to standard

⁴⁰ *Xenophanes*, 30-31. οὐλος ὄρα, οὐλος δὲ νοεῖ, οὐλος δὲ τ' ἀκούει.

⁴¹ *Xenophanes*, 32-33. ἀλλ' ἀπάνευθε πόνοιο νόου φρενὶ πάντα κραδαίνει.

bodies is another dividing line between mortals and the immortal. Both of these attributes are complimented by fragment 26, “. . . Always he abides in the same place, not moving at all, nor is it seemly for him to travel to different places at different times.”⁴² In what is perhaps the most interesting part of Xenophanes speculation concerning divine reality, we are given to understand that causing changes in the world causes no changes in the divine itself. Xenophanes god could not be god if it was capable of motion—of change.

This claim, however, ought not to be taken to mean that the divine is utterly static. The claim about the lack of change in the divine is indeed ontological, but Xenophanes gives a reason for its lack of motion. Consider that it abides in the same place, not moving at all because it is not seemly, or fit, for it to move about. The lack of change in the divine has more to do with its dignity and status than it does with a desire for lack of motion or for divine simplicity. Xenophanes finds the anthropomorphic Olympian deities wanting because they require objects or persons outside themselves. For Xenophanes, for god to be god it must be utterly self-sufficient. If the one god could have needs outside of itself, it would be was obligated toward the object of its need or desire. I shall have more to say on this point in a discussion of Greek psychology of motivation in the following chapters. This level of detail in Xenophanes thought shows great originality in his philosophical considerations of theology. There is one rather striking question that Xenophanes does not engage in the extant fragments; we have no record of his understanding of place. Aristotle’s treatment of place is fascinating and may give us insight into his concept of the Unmoved Mover, but we have no such information concerning Xenophanes’ concepts. This lack of information makes his one god even harder to understand, especially given the spatial background of the Olympian triumvirate.

⁴² *Xenophanes*, 32-33. αἰεὶ δ’ ἐν ταῦτῳ μίμνει κινούμενος οὐδέν, οὐδὲ μετέρχεσθαι μιν ἐπιπρέπει ἄλλοτε ἄλλη.

If, as I have claimed, Xenophanes is not asking about or motivated by the question of the ἀρχή in his analysis of the divine, but is seeking the fundamental cause of motion in profane reality, or the fundamental principle, perhaps we can understand the relationship at which Hack is pushing. The question of substance did not disappear in Xenophanes; it simply was not a question in the first place. At this point, what God or anything else is made of was not an important question. What counted as divine and what counted as profane mattered a great deal, however. For Xenophanes a god had to be complete and utterly without needs. Only perfect and total self-sufficiency could allow a being to be truly divine. The one principle that approaches what Hack suggests is that in Xenophanes we begin to see a division between divine and profane reality. While it may be the case that for Xenophanes that everything is full of the gods, not all items in nature are thereby rendered as particular, powerful deities. These items are not possessed of their own god, but rather they can be shaken by the one god, greatest among gods and men. Xenophanes seeks an understanding of the divine that is more expansive and transcendental than the folk religion of his day. In the end, we should see Xenophanes pushing not for divine stasis, but pushing very hard for something more akin to divine aseity.

Parmenides of Elea

The second Pre-Socratic thinker for whom we have extant fragments concerning the nature of the divine is Parmenides of Elea.⁴³ Parmenides is most widely known not for his own writings, but rather for his student Zeno's defense of his doctrine that multiplicity (and thus change) were absurd. There is, however, much more to Parmenides than a simple denial of the many and change. Parmenides, much like Xenophanes, wrote poems as a way to reflect upon

⁴³ Heraclitus of Ephesus may have had quite a bit to say about the nature of the divine in his discussion about λόγος, but that topic deserves its own lengthy treatment, and would not meaningfully add to our understanding of the nature of divine immutability at this juncture.

abstract ideas. Compared to Xenophanes he seems to have had more interest in what we in the 21st century might call “religious experience.” He certainly places great emphasis on his talk with the goddess and his nearly shamanistic visit beyond the doors of Night and Day. While Parmenides’ poem addresses multiple philosophical concerns, among them the nature of existence *qua* existence, epistemology, negative predication, and the nature of change, it also points to the power of the human intellect, and the union of mind and world. For Parmenides there is no subject – object divide from which to exercise intense skeptical doubt. This implicit trust in the continuity between knower and known allows him to posit robustly cataphatic ideas about the nature of the divine than we have in Xenophanes’s extant fragments. I will maintain that reason and reality are one and the same for Parmenides, and so his ability to think like the divine, and understand the divine, is central to his commitments regarding the what-is.

As we have already seen from our consideration of Greek thought to this point, we cannot be sure of a separation between divine and profane realms, much less a difference between physics and metaphysics. Parmenides and the peoples of the Axial Age lived in a world enchanted by nymphs and gods, where the mountains breathe and the ocean is a cranky old man—and one might meet any of them while walking between towns. The reality of wandering or parochial deities was a part of the reason for the practice of *ξενία*, a practice that the goddess he meets in the proem takes pains to extend to him. Unlike the situation we see in Isaiah, or the account of the Israelites at Sinai, neither Homer, Hesiod, nor Parmenides fears dissolution through coming into the presence of a deity. As far as they understand, the divine is all around them. Many Greeks feared that a particular deity would harm, curse, or kill them if they displeased the deity, but the idea that the gods were exalted and unavailable was not a part of the cultural reality. The earth in which they plant their crops may be known as a patch of dirt, or it

may be γαῖα herself, and this dual identity is not seen as problematic. In the same fashion there is no worry about one's capability to seek out and uncover nature, even though nature hides itself.⁴⁴ There are surely some bits of gold that no human could dig to, if we may borrow Heraclitus's analogy,⁴⁵ but it is not because they are unable to dig, but because a human is a fragile, mortal, ephemeral, partial entity who will not live long enough to complete the search. In other words, it is not that there is some great ontological or epistemological divide between knower and known—it is simply that some things are too far away, or too well hidden, or too heavy to lift for a mortal to grasp alone because of the brevity of human lifespans.

The key to understanding Parmenides' claims about the nature of What-is comes from the principle found in fragment 3, “. . . τὸ γὰρ αὐτὸ νοεῖν ἔστιν τε καὶ εἶναι.”⁴⁶ which Gallop renders as “. . . because the same thing is there for thinking and for being.”⁴⁷ While the interpretation of this passage is difficult, I maintain that this fragment expresses Parmenides' commitment to the inseparability of epistemology and ontology. Gallop notes that there are divergent ways in which we may understand how Parmenides uses “is” in this sentence. As he states “The ‘veridical,’ ‘copulative,’ and ‘combined’ interpretation of ‘is’” are all possible ways of reading Parmenides, as is the “existential.”⁴⁸ There has been no little debate about which meaning of “is” Parmenides intends in his poem. While I concede that it is possible that Parmenides could intend that only one of these uses is “correct,” I believe that looking for the “one” meaning intended (or most appropriate) to Parmenides is a mistake based upon reductive thinking.

⁴⁴ Heraclitus. *Heraclitus: Fragments A Text and Translation*. Translated by T.M. Robinson. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1987. F.123.

⁴⁵ *Heraclitus*, F.22.

⁴⁶ Parmenides. *Parmenides of Elea: Fragments A Text and Translation*. Translated by David Gallop. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1984: 56-57.

⁴⁷ Gallop. 57. This translation is good, but the language seems to resist full understanding. There are many possible translations. I will attempt to elucidate what I believe Parmenides to be pointing at through an examination of how this idea is used throughout other extant fragments.

⁴⁸ Gallop, 30.

This non-reductive use of terms makes more sense of Parmenides claims, but also seats him more firmly in his time period when compared to the polysemic use of terms in both Xenophanes and Heraclitus of Ephesus. Parmenides lived in a time when it was not necessary that a word would have only one meaning, in the same way that a particular object in the world could *be* more than one thing all at once. Famously, it is not until Aristotle that the sentence becomes the basic unit of meaning. Part of the difficulty with understanding the Pre-Socratics, as is particularly acknowledged in Heraclitus, was that they did not share this basic assumption regarding language. Ambiguity and polysemy in terms could be both appropriate and expected. While Parmenides is not making the kind of wordplay that Heraclitus is so fond of,⁴⁹ I believe that he makes use of polysemy in his use of “is” in these passages. To assume that he would use a particular word in a highly technical sense assumes that Parmenides would think in a literary fashion rather than a verbal fashion. When we refer to the “writing” of Parmenides’ poem, we really ought to think more of an intentional and embodied composition—as a song. Parmenides uses the word “is” in just such a polysemic and verbal fashion. He is using the existential ‘is,’ the veridical ‘is,’ and the copulative ‘is’ simultaneously. The polysemic use leads to a holistic understanding of the “What –is” as not reducible to a technical term, or a particular explanatory factor in an argument. The “What-is” encompasses these meanings, and would be indescribable if Parmenides actually used the word in a reductive, or restricted sense. He is thus uniting all of these senses in a single use, and if we are to understand his thinking, we must hold them all equally and without tension. This robust polysemy has both epistemological and ontological bite, and serves to unite the realm of thought and being in one simple phrase. I shall refer to this principle of the unity of thought and being found in fragment three as “the F3P” hereafter.

⁴⁹ A perfect example of this use of polysemy and the strangeness of homophones can be found in F.48 “τῷ οὖν τόξῳ ὄνομα βίος, ἔργον δὲ θάνατος.” “The bow’s *name* [then?] is ‘life’ (bios), but <its> *job* is death!” Robinson, 34-35.

In order to show that his commitment to the F3P is not isolated I shall reproduce other lines in which Parmenides uses and expands upon this central principle. The expansion of the F3P is found in 2.1-8, 6.1, and 8.34-41. The lines in question are as follows:

Come, I shall tell you, and do you listen and convey the story,
What routes of inquiry alone there are for thinking:
one—that [it] is, and that [it] cannot not be,
Is the path of Persuasion (for it attends upon truth);
The other—that [it] is not, and that [it] needs must not be,
that I point out to you to be a path wholly unlearnable,
For you could not know what-is-not (for that is not feasible),
Nor could you point it out.⁵⁰

It must be that what is there for speaking and thinking of is; for [it] is there to be,⁵¹

The same thing is for thinking and [is] that there is thought;
For not without what-is, on which [it] depends, having been declared,
Will you find thinking; for nothing else <either> is or will be
Besides what-is, since it was just this that Fate did shackle
To be whole and changeless; wherefore it has been named all things
That mortals have established, trusting them to be true,
To come-to-be and to perish, to be and not to be,
And to shift place and to exchange bright colour.⁵²

These fragments are found in the fragments we dub *The Way of Truth*, and I believe that they are sufficient to show the tight bond between epistemology and ontology in Parmenides' thought.

Despite this bond, I do not mean that Parmenides is a naïve realist. Parmenides and his contemporaries were aware that their senses could be fooled. Homer's poems were evidence enough of that phenomenon.⁵³ Indeed if humans were never fooled, then Parmenides' poem would be at once redundant and insane. In addition to the mythical histories, both Xenophanes

⁵⁰ *Parmenides*, 2.1-8. εἰ δ' ἄγ' ἐγὼν ἐρέω, κόμισσαι δὲ σὺ μῦθον ἀκούσας, αἴπερ ὁδοὶ μούναι διζήσιός εἰσι νοῆσαι· ἢ μὲν ὅπως ἔστιν τε καὶ ὡς οὐκ ἔστι μὴ εἶναι, Πειθοῦς ἔστι κέλευθος (ἀληθείη γὰρ ὀπηδεῖ), ἢ δ' ὡς οὐκ ἔστιν τε καὶ ὡς χρεῶν ἔστι μὴ εἶναι, τὴν δὴ τοι φράζω παναπευθεῖα ἔμμεν ἀταρπὸν· οὔτε γὰρ ἂν γνοίης τὸ γε μὴ ἔδον (οὐ γὰρ ἀνυστόν) οὔτε φράσαις. Gallop, 54-55.

⁵¹ *Parmenides*, 6.1. χρῆ τὸ λέγειν τε νοεῖν τ' ἐδὸν ἔμμεναι· ἔστι γὰρ εἶναι, Gallop, 60-61.

⁵² *Parmenides*, 8.34-41 ταυτὸν δ' ἔστι νοεῖν τε καὶ οὔνεκεν ἔστι νόημα· οὐ γὰρ ἄνευ τοῦ ἐόντος, ἐν ᾧ πεφατισμένον ἔστιν, εὐρήσεις τὸ νοεῖν· οὐδὲν γὰρ <ἢ> ἔστιν ἢ ἔσται ἄλλο πάρεξ τοῦ ἐόντος, ἐπεὶ τὸ γε Μοῖρ' ἐπέδησεν οὐλον ἀκίνητόν τ' ἔμμεναι· τῶι πάντ' ὄνομασται, ὅσσα βροτοὶ κατέθεντο πεποιθότες εἶναι ἀληθῆ, γίγνεσθαί τε καὶ ὄλλυσθαι, εἶναι τε καὶ οὐχί, καὶ τόπον ἀλλάσσειν διὰ τε χροῖα φανὸν ἀμείβειν. Gallop, 70-71.

⁵³ Is it Odysseus or the beggar that we see, and how can we be sure?

and Heraclitus pointed out the importance of perspective and the difference between opinion and knowledge.⁵⁴ This awareness of human fallibility did not, in the presocratics at least, result in despair towards the possibility of knowledge that one sees in skeptics (be they classical or post-modern). On the contrary, though many people are deceived by appearances,⁵⁵ the individual person is capable of coming to knowledge if they search hard for the truth. For example while he managed to fool the suitors, Odysseus is still given away by an old scar when one looks closely enough. Heraclitus is capable of investigating himself⁵⁶ and coming to understand that “Soul possesses a λόγος (measure, proportion) which increases itself.”⁵⁷ Even thinkers who were deeply convinced of the foolishness of their contemporaries, as Heraclitus surely was, allowed that mortals were capable of discovering truth if they strove after it.⁵⁸

The difference between the Pre-Socratic philosophers and those who adhere entirely to Homeric or Hesiodic μῦθος is that the Pre-Socratics are trying to understand a fundamental principle behind the existence they are a part of without reference to *anthropomorphism*. Where pure mythical thinking gives particular human (or quasi-human) identities to individual entities and objects in the world that offers a personality and intention that matches some part of anthropocentric concept that is meaningful to the cultural and intellectual background of the assigner, a non-anthropomorphic understanding of those same items seeks to understand them on their own terms. Parmenides method of understanding the world is not to attempt to give anthropomorphic identities to parts of the world, but to attempt to see the human as a contiguous

⁵⁴ See Xenophanes F.19, F.20, F.21, F.35, F.38, and F. 39. See Heraclitus F.1, F.2, F.4, F.5, F.8, F.13b, F.15, F.21, F.23, F.26, F.28a, F.37, F.46, F.48, F.58, F.60, F.61, F.78, F.82, F.83, F.97, F.102, F.111, F.113, F.116, and F.123

⁵⁵ As are most mortal opinions—see “*The Way of Seeming*” Section of Parmenides’ poem.

⁵⁶ Heraclitus, *Heraclitus: Fragments*. trans. T M. Robinson. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991. F.101.

⁵⁷ *Heraclitus*, F.115. ψυχῆς ἐστὶ λόγος ἐαυτὸν αὐξῶν. Robinson, 66.

⁵⁸ See Heraclitus F.1, F.5, F.29, F.40, F.56, F.57, F.81a, F.87, F.104, F.108, F.121, F.125a, and F.129

part of a greater whole. That whole encapsulates human experience in addition to all other kinds of existence—because existence is common to all:

Welcome; for it is no ill fortune that sent you forth to travel
This route (for it lies far indeed from the beaten track of men),
But right and justice. And it is right that you should learn all things,
Both the steadfast heart of persuasive truth,
And the beliefs of mortals, in which there is no true trust.
But nevertheless you shall learn these things as well, how the things which seem
Had to have genuine existence, permeating all things completely.⁵⁹

Thus the human experience is not the basis for understanding; rather the fact of contiguous existence with the whole forms the basis for all human perspectival experience, and thus the basis of Parmenides' claims. Humans exist, thought exists, objects exist, reason exists, the cosmos exists, and so there is always common ground on which to stand when considering anything. In addition, because existence is common to all, there must always be some amount of shared experience predicated upon the most basic fact: existence. For Parmenides then, there can be no perspective that exists that is impossible to contemplate—or more simply one can always walk in another's shoes, even if one could never fill those shoes. This method of thinking preserves the lack of a subject-object gap while still allowing for more abstract critical thinking than pure mythical thinking provides. It also delineates a boundary—perhaps even a μοῖρα—over which certain things may not even be thought, thus raising the thorn of negative predication which so rankles him.

To further show Parmenides' commitment to this epistemological-ontological unity we must recognize that Parmenides is not like Homer who pleads for the goddess herself to sing, or

⁵⁹ *Parmenides*, 1.26-32. χαῖρ', ἐπεὶ οὐτι σε μοῖρα κακὴ προὔπεμπε νέεσθαι τήνδ' ὁδόν (ἧ γὰρ ἀπ' ἀνθρώπων ἐκτὸς πάτου ἐστίν), ἀλλὰ θέμις τε δίκη τε. χρεὼ δέ σε πάντα πυθέσθαι ἡμὲν Ἀληθείης εὐκυκλέος ἀτρεμῆς ἧτορ ἠδὲ βροτῶν δόξας, ταῖς οὐκ ἐνὶ πίστις ἀληθείης. ἀλλ' ἔμπης καὶ ταῦτα μαθήσεται, ὡς τὰ δοκοῦντα χρῆν δοκίμως εἶναι διὰ παντὸς πάντα περῶντα. Gallop 52-53. This text is quite difficult, particularly lines 31 and 32. I do not mean to make light of the difficulty in translating them, but I think that Gallop provides a good preliminary analysis of how this line fits into the overall poem on pp 21-23 of his translation. What Gallop does not address in his account, however, is why he translates μοῖρα as “fortune” rather than “fate” or “doom” in line 26.

like Hesiod who invokes the muses to sing through him—Parmenides is the student of the goddess. She speaks *to* him, not *through* him when she calls out “Come, I shall tell you, and do you listen and convey the story,”⁶⁰ This is a subtle but astoundingly important shift in how learning from the gods is understood. Parmenides is no mere vessel, but is a mortal who can hold his own in conversation with divine persons and divine truths. Parmenides’ mental faculties are sufficient to engage with and understand divine truths and his body is able to endure their presence. It is true that Parmenides claims that mortals require instruction regarding divine truths in order to understand them, but once exposed to these truths he is able to ponder their depths through use of his own faculties. Once he has heard her speech and learned her lessons, he is then able to go out and spread the message. In addition human nature was not necessarily closed in many ancient cultures. Euhemerism and apotheosis were serious possibilities in the ancient world (at least for some subset of human beings), and there were myths about humans becoming immortal through action of the gods. Well known examples from Greek culture are Pythagoras and Empedocles.⁶¹ It is sloth, recalcitrance, and vice that stand in the path to knowledge for Parmenides and his contemporaries, not epistemological and ontological restrictions.

To explicate the way this divine to human continuum functioned in Ancient Greece I shall compare two interpretations of Plato’s allegory of the cave as a sort of case study.⁶² The first

⁶⁰ *Parmenides*, 2.1. εἰ δ’ ἄγ’ ἐγὼν ἐρέω, κόμισαι δὲ σὺ μῦθον ἀκούσας Gallop, 54-55.

⁶¹ Usually this happened to a hero of some sort. Heracles is a decent example, though he was a son of Zeus he became something more than mortal in some legends. Egyptian pharos also had this sort of distinction, as did Imhotep. In the Akkadian and Babylonian Empires the king would recapitulate the actions of Enlil or Marduk in annual festivals that were meant to renew the earth, and so they too took on a divine dimension.

⁶² While I maintain that reading Parmenides as though he was in conversation with Plato is a mistake, I believe we may legitimately read Plato as influenced by Parmenides (and Zeno)—indeed the very existence of Plato’s *Parmenides* seems to indicate both a familiarity with Parmenides’ work, and a desire to address the old sage’s ideas. The method of the final sections of the *Parmenides* shows that Plato is working with something like the F3P, as well. From *Parmenides* 137.c to the end of the dialogue the character of Parmenides works out the nature of the One and the Many through investigation of the thought process available to himself and the young Aristotle. The rationalistic investigation of the nature of the One and the Many proceeds along grounds quite similar to the actual Parmenides’ methodology—seeing thought and reality linked in such a way that a contradiction in thought is a problem for the reality it is supposed to describe. For my purposes it does not matter whether the arguments in this

interpretation is that the prisoners in the cave may be chained there by their natural abilities, unable to come to real knowledge of how things are because of their mortal, derivative, partial, limited nature. In this interpretation it would take an act of a god to take them beyond their limits and usher them into the light of true knowledge via some sort of transformation of the person or divine intervention. Even then the now freed prisoners could only bear such knowledge by being sustained by divine power. This understanding of the allegory of the cave is analogous to a Kantian gulf between the phenomenal and the noumenal. Even if one somehow made the prisoner aware of her lack (i.e. her inability to reach the noumenal through conventional means), there is nothing he or she could do to overcome the lack and know the noumenal. While a god might implant a “noumenal truth” into the minds of a mortal, that truth would not be knowledge in the same way “phenomenal knowledge” is knowledge. One would be hard pressed to justify that noumenal truth, or to use it in a process of reasoning concerning phenomenal matters. In this system humans are utterly helpless in the face of their own finite nature, never able to grow past a certain point. Under this interpretation we cannot have a contiguous existence between phenomenal realms, merely phenomenal realms that exist in the same unavailable noumenal world. In this interpretation, knowledge of other phenomenal worlds, to say nothing of the divine realms, cannot be truly known. At best they might merely introduced into the world by means of inspiration and μύμησις of divine inspiration. Reason then, is not common to all parts of existence, and the gap between knower and known is so vast that Phyrro himself was hardly skeptic enough. As we have seen, this interpretation is clearly not Parmenidean, but is rather the way in which a post-Kantian thinker would address the allegory.

section of Plato’s dialogue are sound or not, what matters is that there is implicit in them a principle like Parmenides’ F3P.

The second interpretation depends on a specific understanding of ancient Greek psychology, and Plato's view of poetry. I shall elaborate further when we come to Plato, but the ownership of one's own words was deeply important in Greek psychology. Reading and writing were thought to be activities for slaves and women while speeches were "real men's work." In the *Theatetus* we see this principle in action when a slave is called in to read the account of the conversation between Socrates and Theatetus. The use of scribes in ancient Greece is well known—an author would not take the time to learn to write when they could simply dictate to a professional writer. Likewise a man would not want to read another person's words (for instance a playwright would not read another's words—that was what actors were for) because that would mean that someone else's ψυχή was in control of their body—essentially it would mean that someone else was using their voice in the way the Muses used Hesiod, the goddess used Homer, or Apollo used the Oracle at Delphi.⁶³ While these offices might have been traditionally honored in the Greek *poleis* they were also tied to the use of magico-religious speech of which Dettienne writes. While it may be appropriate for such inspiration or communion to occur with a poet, a seer, or a king, such a possession was certainly not desired by those who wished to make no claim to such an office. In particular as more authority was vested outside of the βασιλῆες and democratic ideals flourished among the nobility and the citizenry in general, desire for such power to overthrow the individual's voice fell further out of favor. If power and authority in the πόλις is vested in oneself, why would one wish to become a passive vessel? As Havelock points out much of Plato's work—particularly in *The Republic*—deals with critiquing μίμησις, and the allegory of the cave is no different. When read as a part of his critique of the effect of μίμησις on the soul, the allegory has a vastly different meaning than the first interpretation.

⁶³ Such a use of one's body made the used person the passive person—and if we know anything from Aristotle it is that activity is better than passivity.

Under this second reading of the allegory, the prisoners are held captive not by their native abilities, but because they have never received any real education.⁶⁴ The process of setting them free does not seek to push them past the limits of their finite nature or to provide them some new “ascended human” status, but to free them from the spell of the poets that keeps them in darkness. Once they have been freed they are capable of exercising their intellects aright, and will naturally come to full knowledge as long as they are not led astray by some vice. The problem that the dwellers in the cave have in this second interpretation is not that their constitution lacks something, but that they are not free. Like a slave they are bound to serve the will of another—only able to see those things which others show them.⁶⁵ They are chained with heavy chains in a mimetic feedback loop and no one has yet come to free them from the spell under which they suffer. This second interpretation is far closer to Parmenides’ perspective, honors the F3P and avoids anachronism.

Parmenides tells his listener the same story as this second reading of the cave with his proem and poem. Mortals are wrong about the way of truth and the way of seeming for many reasons, but the biggest reason is that they have not properly learned, or that they are not properly observant. They are content to stick with the way of seeming, and do not exercise their natural rational capacities in such a way that they can meditate on the way of truth. As stated above, when Parmenides meets the goddess he learns from her but he does not request that she speak through him. To be sure she gives him a commission, and she restrains him from the way of seeming, but she does so because of his reason, not her power or inspiration. Indeed after the proem we see his arguments for the What-is come forth along with a very sudden change in style. The proem reads much as one would expect of a myth, but the poem itself is more like

⁶⁴ In other words the restriction is not essential, but accidental.

⁶⁵ We must remember that though Aristotle suggests that some people may be born into a “slave status” from which they cannot ascend, we see nothing of this doctrine in Plato or Parmenides.

Heraclitus' or Xenophanes' argumentation. Parmenides is able to communicate his knowledge precisely because *it is his*. Rather than a mimetic repetition of the goddess's words, we see him transition from the proem into the body of his work in which he proceeds to reason from principles to a conclusion about the true nature of reality. He is committed to the idea that humans are intimately connected with the intelligible (and intelligent) world around them. The union with the whole is what drives his ability to make such claims even while recognizing the existence of perspectives.

While Parmenides makes a few interesting moves that seem dubious to 21st century readers, his arguments make sense if one understands the tight relationship of epistemology and ontology in his thought. We have already considered the basis for the unity of epistemology and ontology in Parmenides, so now we shall apply his standard to his discussion of the way of truth. Parmenides' claims engage the questions of the nature of What-is, its timelessness, ungenerability, and incorruptibility.

Parmenides sums up the way of truth in fragment 8. This fragment speaks in both cataphatic and apophatic ways about the nature of thought, speech, and what-is.

. . . A single story of route still
is left: that [*it*] *is*: on this [route] there are signs
very numerous: that what-is is ungenerated and imperishable;
whole, single-limbed, steadfast, and complete;
Nor was [it] once, nor will [it] be, since [it] is, now, all together,
One, continuous; for what coming-to-be of it will you seek?
In what way, whence, did [it] grow? Neither from what-is-not shall I allow
You to say or think; for it is not to be said or thought
That [*it*] *is not*. And what need could have impelled it to grow
Later or sooner, if it began from nothing?
Thus [*it*] must either be completely or not at all.
Nor will the strength of trust ever allow anything to come-to-be from what-is
Besides it; therefore neither [its] coming-to-be
nor [its] perishing has Justice allowed, relaxing her shackles,
But she holds [it] fast; the decision about these matters depends on this:
Is [it] or is [it] not? But it has been decided, as is necessary,

To let go the one as unthinkable, unnamable (for it is no true Route), but to allow the other, so that it is, and is true.
For if [it] came-to-be, [it] is not, nor [is it] if at some time [it] is going to be.
Thus, coming-to-be is extinguished and perishing not heard of.⁶⁶

His claims here are both epistemological and ontological. The routes in question concern what it is legitimate to think—what 21st century thinkers might conceive of as justified inferences—but they also concern What-is, and what is speakable. Parmenides seems to have something like the principle of the excluded middle in mind when he raises the horns of this epistemic-ontological dilemma in that he will not allow the real existence of a third path. If there are only two routes that one may use to think, then the options for maneuvering are severely reduced and Parmenides' arguments are powerful. His commitment to the F3P gives him a situation in which any contradiction in language is a contradiction in thought, as he explicitly states in 6.1. Such a contradiction is also a contradiction in ontology, and is therefore rendered self-contradictory. Years later Plato still conceives of thinking as “A talk which the soul has with itself about the objects under its consideration.” a statement that shows us that Plato believed in this self-same rational capacity for thought to touch both itself and the reality of the object considered.⁶⁷ The capacity for speech, thinking, and reality are tightly woven together in the ancient world, and so the story that the goddess gives to Parmenides attains to the same level of reality as the objects it discusses.⁶⁸

⁶⁶ *Parmenides* 8.1-21. . . . μόνος δ' ἔτι μῦθος ὁδοῖο λείπεται ὡς ἔστιν· ταύτη δ' ἐπὶ σήματ' ἔασι πολλὰ μάλ', ὡς ἀγένητον ἔδον καὶ ἀνώλεθρόν ἐστιν, ἐστὶ γὰρ οὐλομελές τε καὶ ἀτρεμές ἢ δ' ἀτέλεστον· οὐδέ ποτ' ἦν οὐδ' ἔσται, ἐπεὶ νῦν ἔστιν ὁμοῦ πᾶν, ἓν, συνεχές· τίνα γὰρ γένναν διζήσεται αὐτοῦ; πῆι πόθεν ἀυξηθέν; οὐδ' ἐκ μὴ ἐόντος ἔασσω φάσθαι σ' οὐδὲ νοεῖν· οὐ γὰρ φατὸν οὐδὲ νοητὸν ἔστιν ὅπως οὐκ ἔστι. τί δ' ἂν μιν καὶ χρέος ὄρσεν ὕστερον ἢ πρόσθεν, τοῦ μηδενὸς ἀρξάμενον, φῦν; οὕτως ἢ πάμπαν πελέναι χρεῶν ἐστιν ἢ οὐχί. οὐδέ ποτ' ἐκ μὴ ἐόντος ἐφήσει πίστιος ἰσχύς γίγνεσθαι τι παρ' αὐτό· τοῦ εἵνεκεν οὔτε γενέσθαι οὔτ' ὄλλυσθαι ἀνήκε Δίκη χαλάσασα πέδησις, ἀλλ' ἔχει· ἢ δὲ κρίσις περὶ τούτων ἐν τῶιδ' ἔστιν· ἔστιν ἢ οὐκ ἔστιν· κέκριται δ' οὖν, ὡς περ ἀνάγκη, τὴν μὲν ἔαν ἀνόητον ἀνόνημον (οὐ γὰρ ἀληθής ἐστιν ὁδός), τὴν δ' ὥστε πέλειν καὶ ἐτήτυμον εἶναι. πῶς δ' ἂν ἔπειτ' ἀπόλοιτο ἐόν; πῶς δ' ἂν κε γένοιτο; εἰ γὰρ ἔγεντ', οὐκ ἔστ(ι), οὐδ' εἰ ποτε μέλλει ἔσεσθαι. τῶς γένεσις μὲν ἀπέσβεσται καὶ ἄπιστος ὄλεθρος. Gallop 64-67.

⁶⁷ Plato, *The Theatetus of Plato*. trans. M J. Levett. Revised by Myles Burnyeat. Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, inc., 1990. 189.e.1-2

⁶⁸ These are no “language games,” but rather the νόος and the λόγος entail and support one another and φύσις.

Parmenides demonstrates his commitment to the F3P again when he bids us “Look upon things which, though far off, are yet firmly present to the mind; | For you shall not cut off what-is from holding fast to what-is, | For it neither disperses itself in every way everywhere in order, | Nor gathers itself together.”⁶⁹ The far off things are present to the mind, which is part of the reality it touches—indeed it is part of What-is in such a way that we could not divide the mind from What-is even if we desired to do so. Thought and reality remain elided. Under these circumstances Parmenides’ claims are indeed a type of argumentation. He gives his audience a poem that drives their thoughts to consider the nature of the reality they are a part of, and can in no way be separate from. The result he comes to is that What-is is immutable—at least as far as generation and perishing are concerned. He has to go farther than the initial principle to attain true immutability, however. After all there are ways to conceive of a cosmos that is ungenerated and imperishable that is still capable of change, as Aristotle clearly does.⁷⁰

Parmenides offers the argument for the changelessness of What-is in 8.22-49,

Nor is [it] divisible, since [it] all alike *is*;
 Nor is [it] somewhat more here, which would keep it from holding together,
 Nor is [it] somewhat less, but [it] is all full of what-is.
 Therefore [it] is all continuous; for what-is is in contact with what-is.
 Moreover, changeless in the limits of great chains
 [It] is un-beginning and unceasing since coming-to-be and perishing
 Have been driven far off, and the true trust has thrust them out.
 Remaining the same and in the same, [it] lies by itself
 And remains thus firmly in place; for strong Necessity
 Holds [it] fast in the chains of a limit, which fences it about.
 Wherefore it is not right for what-is to be incomplete;
 For [it] is not lacking; but if [it] were, [it] would lack everything.
 The same thing is for thinking and [is] that there is thought;
 For not without what-is, on which [it] depends, having been declared,
 Will you find thinking’ for nothing else <either> is or will be
 Besides what-is, since it was just this that Fate did shackle
 To be whole and changeless; wherefore it has been named all things

⁶⁹ Gallop, 57. *Parmenides* 4.1-4. “λεῦσσε δ’ ὁμως ἀπεόντα νόω παρεόντα βεβαίως· οὐ γὰρ ἀποτμήξει τὸ ἐὸν τοῦ ἐόντος ἔχεσθαι οὔτε σκιδνάμενον πάντῃ πάντως κατὰ κόσμον οὔτε συνιστάμενον.”

⁷⁰ See *Physics* VIII and *Metaphysics Lambda*.

That mortals have established, trusting them to be true,
 To come-to-be and to perish, to be and not to be,
 And to shift place and to exchange bright colour.
 Since, then, there is a furthest limit, [it] is completed,
 From every direction like the bulk of a well-rounded sphere,
 Everywhere from the centre equally matched; for [it] must not be any larger
 Or any smaller here or there;
 For neither is there what-is-not, which could stop it from reaching
 [Its] like; nor is there a way in which what-is could be
 More here and less there, since [it] all inviolably *is*;
 For equal to itself from every direction, [it] lies uniformly within limits.⁷¹

Here Parmenides gives us a series of arguments about the kinds of change that What-is can undergo. From the concept of being ungenerable and imperishable he expands to the idea of changelessness in general. The attribution of chains that limit its change is difficult—he might mean that it is capable of movement within certain limits or descriptions, or he might mean that the chains of fate and necessity keep it from any motion at all. In the end he comes down to absolute changelessness. The most powerful move he makes towards immutability comes from 8.40-41 in which he claims that coming-to-be and perishing are equitable to shifting place and changing color. If changes such as shifting place and the exchange of visual qualities are a type of generation or destruction (or perhaps *require* a type of generation or destruction) it follows

⁷¹ *Parmenides*, 8.22-49. οὐδὲ διαιρετόν ἐστιν, ἐπεὶ πᾶν ἐστιν ὁμοῖον· οὐδέ τι τῆι μᾶλλον, τό κεν εἴργοι μιν συνέχεσθαι, οὐδέ τι χειρότερον, πᾶν δ' ἔμπλεόν ἐστιν ἐόντος. τῶι ζυνεχῆς πᾶν ἐστιν· ἐὼν γὰρ ἐόντι πελάζει. αὐτὰρ ἀκίνητον μεγάλων ἐν πείρασι δεσμῶν ἔστιν ἀναρχον ἄπαυστον, ἐπεὶ γένεσις καὶ ὄλεθρος τῆλε μάλ' ἐπλάχθησαν, ἀπῶσε δὲ πίστις ἀληθείας. ταῦτόν τ' ἐν ταῦτῳ τε μένον καθ' ἑαυτό τε κεῖται χούτως ἔμπεδον αὐθι μένει· κρατερὴ γὰρ Ἀνάγκη πείρατος ἐν δεσμοῖσιν ἔχει, τό μιν ἀμφὶς ἐέργει, οὐνεκεν οὐκ ἀτελεύτητον τὸ ἐὼν θέμις εἶναι· ἔστι γὰρ οὐκ ἐπιδευές· ἐὼν δ' ἂν παντὸς ἐδεῖτο. ταῦτόν δ' ἐστὶ νοεῖν τε καὶ οὐνεκεν ἔστι νόημα. οὐ γὰρ ἄνευ τοῦ ἐόντος, ἐν ᾧ πεφατισμένον ἐστιν, εὐρήσεις τὸ νοεῖν· οὐδὲν γὰρ <ἦ> ἔστιν ἢ ἔσται ἄλλο πάρεξ τοῦ ἐόντος, ἐπεὶ τό γε Μοῖρ' ἐπέδησεν οὐλον ἀκίνητόν τ' ἔμεναι· τῶι πάντ' ὀνομασται, ὅσσα βροτοὶ κατέθεντο πεποιθότες εἶναι ἀληθῆ, γίγνεσθαι τε καὶ ὄλλυσθαι, εἶναί τε καὶ οὐχί, καὶ τόπον ἀλλάσσειν διὰ τε χρόα φανὸν ἀμείβειν. αὐτὰρ ἐπεὶ πείρας πύματον, τετελεσμένον ἐστὶ, πάντοθεν εὐκύκλου σφαίρης ἐναλίγκιον ὄγκωι, μεσσοθέν ἰσοπαλές πάντη· τὸ γὰρ οὔτε τι μεῖζον οὔτε τι βαιότερον πελέναι χρεόν ἐστὶ τῆι ἢ τῆι. οὔτε γὰρ οὐκ ἐὼν ἔστι, τό κεν παῦοι μιν ἰκνεῖσθαι εἰς ὁμόν, οὔτ' ἐὼν ἔστιν ὅπως εἶη κεν ἐόντος τῆι μᾶλλον τῆι δ' ἦσσαν, ἐπεὶ πᾶν ἐστιν ἄσυλον· οἷ γὰρ πάντοθεν ἴσον, ὁμῶς ἐν πείρασι κύρει. Gallop, 69-73.

that any sort of change would cause What-is to not be as What-is must be.⁷² I believe that it is a tremendous mark of how deeply he, and his near contemporaries, held to the F3P that his terrible logic (and the immutability it led to) was seen as a truly difficult problem, despite the evidence of change in their everyday experience.⁷³

Pre-Socratic Divine Motion and Its Origin

Once the basic commitment to the unity of thought and What-is is understood, Parmenides' lines of poetry can be seen as arguments for immutability, but why would either he or Xenophanes be so concerned with changelessness in the divine or the "What-is," when sense data clearly reveals that the cosmos (or at least the items in it) do in fact change? I suggest that this concern was present in both Xenophanes and Parmenides because they believed that alteration in place or quality is seen as a motion of some sort, and motions require that the item or entity in question lack something into which they could change. Privation is the source of motion or alteration in the mind of Xenophanes and Parmenides, and both of these thinkers are not willing to allow for any privations in the divine. Xenophanes shows this conviction when he claims that the divine cannot be anthropomorphic:

Homer and Hesiod have attributed to the gods
all sorts of things which are matters of reproach and censure among men:
theft, adultery, and mutual deceit.⁷⁴

. . . as they sang of numerous illicit divine deeds:

⁷² While it may be that Parmenides' notions in these lines also depend on a concept of What-is as simple, and indeed his arguments against its divisibility do tend strongly in the direction of a doctrine of simplicity, I am not sure how one would support the idea of simplicity of the world. If the way of seeming is not a path one can walk, but that all that is cannot be cut off from What-is, and what-is-not cannot even be thought, then whence the path of seeming and all our perceptions of change? Would not the illusion be one with What-is? I am not convinced that Parmenides had answers to these sorts of questions—but I am also not convinced that he would consider them to be real problems, because of the weight of his conviction about the union of epistemology and ontology.

⁷³ Zeno's paradoxes remain with us even ~25 centuries later.

⁷⁴ *Xenophanes*: Fragment 11. πάντα θεοῖσ' ἀνέθηκαν Ὀμηρὸς θ' Ἡσιόδός τε, ὅσσα παρ' ἀνθρώποισιν ὀνειδέα καὶ ψόγος ἐστίν, κλέπτειν μοιχεύειν τε καὶ ἀλλήλους ἀπατεύειν. Leshner, 22-23.

theft, adultery, and mutual deceit.⁷⁵

But mortals suppose that gods are born,
wear their own clothes and have a voice and body.⁷⁶

As well as when he speaks about the motionlessness of the divine in Fragment 26, but perhaps most interestingly the disjunction between the changelessness between the greatest god and his physics:

. . . for all things are from the earth and to the earth all things come in the end.⁷⁷

All things which come into being and grow are earth and water.⁷⁸

The sea is the source of water and of wind,
for without the great sea there would be no wind
nor streams of rivers nor rainwater from on high;
but the great sea is the begetter of clouds, winds,
and rivers.⁷⁹

For we all come into being from earth and water.⁸⁰

From the juxtaposition of these fragments we can see that Xenophanes clearly thinks of the divine as necessarily distinct from the profane in at least one way—their capacity for and means of alteration. The greatest god cannot come into or pass out of existence, nor can it move because of any lack within itself. Xenophanes' standard is the same as the one revealed in Parmenides' fragments 2 and 8. The constancy of existence and the lack of any generation or corruption is necessary for the divine to be truly divine. There is no capacity for lack in the greatest god, or in the “What-is.” The reality of this item is ensured by strong necessity because of the union

⁷⁵ Xenophanes, Fragment 12. ὡς πλεῖστ' ἐφθέγγαντο θεῶν ἀθεμίστια ἔργα, κλέπτειν μοιχεύειν τε καὶ ἀλλήλους ἀπατεύειν. Leshner, 22-23.

⁷⁶ Xenophanes, Fragment 14. ἀλλ' οἱ βροτοὶ δοκεῖουσι γεννᾶσθαι θεοῦς, τὴν σφετέρην ἐσθῆτα <τ'> ἔχειν φωνὴν τε δέμας τε. Leshner, 24-25.

⁷⁷ Xenophanes, Fragment 27. ἐκ γαίης γὰρ πάντα καὶ εἰς γῆν πάντα τελευτᾷ. Leshner, 32-33

⁷⁸ Xenophanes, Fragment 29 γῆ καὶ ὕδωρ πάντ' ἐσθ' ὅσα γίνονται ἢ δὲ φύονται. Leshner, 34-35.

⁷⁹ Xenophanes, Fragment 30. πηγὴ δ' ἐστὶ θάλασσαν ὕδατος, πηγὴ δ' ἀνέμοιο· οὔτε γὰρ ἐν νέφεσιν γίνονται κε ἰς ἀνέμοιο ἐκπνεῖοντες ἔσωθεν ἄνευ πόντου μέγαλοιο οὔτε ῥοαὶ ποταμῶν οὔτ' αἰθέρος ὄμβριον ὕδωρ, ἀλλὰ μέγας πόντος γενέτωρ νεφῶν ἀνέμων τε καὶ ποταμῶν. Leshner, 34-35.

⁸⁰ Xenophanes, Fragment 33. πάντες γὰρ γαίης τε καὶ ὕδατος ἐκγενόμεσθα. Leshner, 36-37.

between thought and reality inherent in the F3P. Where a 21st-century thinker might be hard pressed to take the F3P seriously (in the same way that Final Causation is not seen as real causation), this principle is at the core of Pre-Socratic contemplation. The concept that thought and reality are elided is explicitly stated, even if not explicitly argued for. It is this principle that allows Parmenides to draw the conclusions he does concerning the nature of What-is and Xenophanes concerning the greatest god.

The fact is that these thinkers are concerned that any privation in divine existence makes the divine not truly divine. Any entity or object that is not entirely self-sufficient is dependent on those things that it lacks in order to maintain its existence. Humans require earth, water, air, and fire in order to subsist. We require drink, grain, and flesh (be it of fruit, fowl, fish, or beast) to flourish. All things are compelled to move toward that which they lack—and are therefore in some way controlled by their privations. If an entity or object that had no privations were to exist, such an entity would be greatest among gods and men. It would be a being that was invincible and altogether unmasterable. The dignity and power of such an entity would be capable of self-existence, and capable of making all things to quake and shake by the power of his thought, while exerting no toil. All actions would be categorically different from those items that exist in the profane world. Such a being would not require a body or mind like ours in shape or thought. It would not be more here or less there, but would be whole, complete, perfect, One. Like the simplest three dimensional shape—the sphere—a shape with only One edge, so would such a Being-Be-One. This sort of Existence does not require utter stasis, however. It merely requires that the One be only self-motivated. All the quaking that It causes affects It not, because It cannot be affected. Its divine actions may affect other things and bring about effects, but never its actions nor the effects of its actions serve to change the One—for any change would make it

no longer One. These thinkers have taken the first, tiniest step into what we would think of as metaphysics—only they do not think in terms of physics and metaphysics. These ideas have immediate and radical ontological importance. Anthropomorphic gods are revealed as petty lords of small fiefs. True divinity is beyond any such limits, and is therefore unlike mortals in shape and thought—like a well-rounded sphere; perfect, whole, complete, pure, *One*.

CHAPTER THREE

THE GENESIS OF THE DDI IN THE ANCIENT HEBREW CONTEXT

As was discussed in the introduction, the ancient Hebrew context was distinct from the situation of its geopolitical neighbors. In this chapter I wish to discuss not the geopolitical situation, parts of the Tanakh that I think offer the Hebrew tradition its own type of push towards divine changelessness. This consideration will center on the birth and binding of Isaac as a paradigm for a specific kind of DDI, and then show how other sections of the Tanakh expand on and reinforce this conception of the Divine. Both of these texts have great theological import for the understanding of the nature and character of YHWH. Understanding the push towards a changeless YHWH happens in these passages because of a contemplation on YHWH's interaction with mortals, and the covenant(s) that YHWH makes with them. I shall begin with an analysis of the story of God's promises and covenant to Abraham and the subsequent demand for the sacrifice of Isaac.

Abraham and the Binding and Sacrifice of Isaac: Absurdity and Covenant Constancy

A consideration of the binding of Isaac that does not take the entire context of Abraham's life previous to that demand is doomed to mischaracterize the nature of the tale. This particular story has often been the subject of debate over the moral character of God. Many thinkers have attempted to offer a theodicy for how God could ask for such an apparently immoral sacrifice. It is not my intention in this dissertation to engage with questions of theodicy or morality directly,

though perhaps some of my claims will be useful in articulating one or both of those ideas. My focus is rather to deal with how a divine entity could be seen to be changeless in the face of apparently contradictory situations. Accordingly, in this consideration of the binding of Isaac I shall consider how a reader of this passage could see YHWH as a changeless being.

The story of Abram's exodus out of Ur of the Chaldeans is, in some ways, the story of the genesis of the Hebrew people. It is through Abraham that the Hebrew people identify themselves as a unit, despite their tribal differences. The call of Abram is, at first, a call without context. A voice comes to him and instructs him to leave his society behind and go to a land that would be shown to him at some later time. There is at this point in the tale, no established relationship between YHWH and Abram, merely a call and a response. Abram leaves his lands, his family, his native gods, and takes an amount of wealth from a prosperous land and sets out for destinations unknown based upon the promises of an unknown deity. The first promises that Abram receives are,

Get out of your country,
From your family
And from your father's house,
To a land that I will show you.
I will make you a great nation;
I will bless you
And make your name great;
And you shall be a blessing.
I will bless those who bless you,
And I will curse him who curses you;
And in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.⁸¹

and "To your descendants I will give this land. [Canaan]"⁸² These promises form the foundation of the relationship between God and Abram. After his trek to Egypt, return to Canaan, and separation from Lot, God again gives Abram a promise,

⁸¹ Gen. 12:1b-3. ESV

⁸² Gen. 12:7. ESV

Lift your eyes now and look from the place where you are—northward, southward, eastward, and westward; for all the land which you see I give to you and your descendants forever. And I will make your descendants as the dust of the earth; so that if a man could number the dust of the earth, then your descendants could also be numbered. Arise, walk in the land through its length and its width for I give it to you.⁸³

The gift of land is of particular importance in understanding the type and power of deity with which Abram is interacting. There is a claim to power and ownership concerning a land to which said deity seems to be alien. The importance of the commitments of this deity ought not to be missed: This deity commits to give a. Land on which to raise herds and crops, and b. human progeny of vast numbers. The promises are not complete, however. God again comes to Abram and converses with him in a vision, and a further expansion and detail is given to the call and promise of God,

“Fear not, Abram, I am your shield; your reward shall be very great.” But Abram said, “O Lord GOD, what will you give me, for I continue childless, and the heir of my house is Eliezer of Damascus?” And Abram said, “Behold, you have given me no offspring, and a member of my household will be my heir.” And behold, the word of the LORD came to him: “This man shall not be your heir; your very own son shall be your heir.” And he brought him outside and said, “Look toward heaven, and number the stars, if you are able to number them.” Then he said to him, “So shall your offspring be.” And he believed the LORD, and he counted it to him as righteousness.

And he said to him, “I am the LORD who brought you out from Ur of the Chaldeans to give you this land to possess.” But he said, “O Lord GOD, how am I to know that I shall possess it?” He said to him, “Bring me a heifer three years old, a female goat three years old, a ram three years old, a turtledove, and a young pigeon.” And he brought him all these, cut them in half, and laid each half over against the other. But he did not cut the birds in half. And when birds of prey came down on the carcasses, Abram drove them away.

As the sun was going down, a deep sleep fell on Abram. And behold, dreadful and great darkness fell upon him. Then the LORD said to Abram, “Know for certain that your offspring will be sojourners in a land that is not theirs and will be servants there, and they will be afflicted for four hundred years. But I will bring judgment on the nation that they serve, and afterward they shall come out with great possessions. As for you, you shall go to your fathers in peace; you shall be buried in a good old age. And they shall come back here in the fourth generation, for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet complete.”

When the sun had gone down and it was dark, behold, a smoking fire pot and a flaming torch passed between these pieces. On that day the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying, “To your offspring I give this land, from the river of Egypt to the great river, the

⁸³ Gen. 13:14-17. ESV

river Euphrates, the land of the Kenites, the Kenizzites, the Kadmonites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Rephaim, the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Girgashites and the Jebusites.”⁸⁴

In this passage God gives a very peculiar set of promises. First, God answers a complaint from Abram that the promise goes as yet unfulfilled. Abram has no children of his own, and his house will pass to a slave born within his house. God’s response is to directly say that Eliezer of Damascus will not be the heir, but rather a son of Abram’s own body. After this promise, God reaffirms that the descendants of Abram will be of an indeterminately large number—or that they would at least be beyond Abram’s capacity to count. Thus God reaffirms the second promise (that God would make Abram a great nation). Then the first promise is also revisited, and the land is once again promised to Abram, and again Abram questions God’s promise. At this point a rather remarkable thing occurs. God’s response is to cut a formal covenant with Abram. Animals are ritually sacrificed and laid apart over against one another so that a bloody pathway is formed. Once the sun goes down a theophany of God passes between the pieces and so formalizes the peculiar relationship between God and Abram (and therefore Abram’s descendants) in which God reaffirms both promises at once. The offspring will receive the land. Fascinatingly only the theophany passes through the pieces, meaning that the punishments for any failure of this covenant will fall on God, and not on Abram or Abram’s descendants.

Immediately⁸⁵ following this incident the scripture turns to an attempt of Abram and Sarai to make good on the covenant by means of Sarai’s slave girl Hagar. Hagar indeed becomes pregnant and gives birth to Ishmael when Abram was eighty-six. Thirteen years later God appears again to Abram, reaffirms the covenant, this time complete with a renaming of Abram to Abraham and an insistence that all male human members of the covenant be circumcised in the

⁸⁴ Genesis 15:1-21, ESV

⁸⁵ While the change in subject is immediate in the text, the text also informs us that an undetermined amount of time has passed, as this next tale takes place after Abram has been in the land for 10 years.

flesh of their foreskins at eight days old. God then renames Sarai to Sarah, and specifically promises that “I will bless her, and moreover, I will give you a son by her. I will bless her and she shall become nations; kings of peoples shall come from her.”⁸⁶ Abram does not believe that Sarah and he will be able to conceive, and so requests that Ishmael would be the son of promise—a request that God denies. God then specifically states “No, but Sarah your wife shall bear you a son, and you shall call his name Isaac. I will establish my covenant with him as an everlasting covenant for his offspring after him. [. . .] but I will establish my covenant with Isaac, whom Sarah shall bear to you at this time next year.”⁸⁷ Abraham obeys and circumcises the males of his household. In chapter 18 there is the story of the theophany with two angels who eat with Abraham at his tent, and the rebuke of Sarah for laughing at the promise of God. In Chapter 21 the promised Isaac is born, the tension with Hagar and Ishmael rises, and God reaffirms that it is “through Isaac shall your offspring be named.”⁸⁸

To recount, Abraham received a call and promise from God at 75 years of age. A few years later God reaffirms the promise by making a formal covenant with Abraham—God specifically promises that a child of Abraham’s own body will be the child of promise. When Abraham is c.85 years old he and Sarah try to get an heir by Hagar. Thirteen years later Isaac is promised, and is born a year after that. Thus, from the first call of Abraham until the birth of the child 25 years have passed, the child has been promised at least six times, twice by name. After a quarter of his life waiting on one promise to be fulfilled, we then see that Isaac is weaned, and sometime after that (when Isaac is fully able to form cogent sentences) but before his marriage (sometime after his 37th birthday) is when the story of the binding of Isaac occurs. We may safely assume that there have been between 30 to 40 years of consistent promise have occurred

⁸⁶ Genesis 17:16, ESV

⁸⁷ Genesis 17:19, 21. ESV

⁸⁸ Genesis 21:12b. ESV

concerning the promised child, and six to eleven years of knowing that Isaac is specifically the child of promise. Once this context has been accounted for and understood we finally reach a position where the content of this particular tale may be evaluated for what it is; a part of the story of the God's covenant with Abraham.

After this extended period of waiting on a peculiar promise based on one child God makes a seemingly irrational and absurd demand of Abraham: "Take your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I shall tell you."⁸⁹ While this passage is the center of many different debates, I wish to emphasize is the apparent ability of this deity to undergo radical change—seemingly at a whim. By simple argumentation we seem to reach the conclusion that the God of Abraham is mutable.

1. If the deity is immutable, then the deity cannot alter its purposes.
2. The deity does alter its purposes.
3. Therefore the deity is mutable.

Simple *Modus Tollens* seems to give us all the information we require in order to understand the fickle nature of God in this passage. Let us examine how this argument applies to the God of Abraham.

First we must consider that there have been the two covenants cut with Abraham. The first was cut into the flesh of the sacrificial animals—through which God alone passed as a theophany. The second was cut into the flesh of the foreskin of Abraham and all the males of his household—including Isaac when the boy was 8 days old. As far as Abraham was concerned he had kept the covenant of circumcision. He had gone where God told him to go, and he had served God faithfully for his part. Abraham had fulfilled his end of the covenant responsibility

⁸⁹ Genesis 22:2, ESV

and God had delivered the child of promise. Isaac, however, was still young and unmarried. Because Isaac lacked children God's promise to Abraham and to Sarah was not yet fulfilled. There was no great nation of descendants from Abraham's body. It is into this situation that the call to sacrifice Isaac is made. What God has asked Abraham to do is kill Isaac—thereby making it impossible for God to bring about the promise He had covenanted with Abraham. Here we add layers to our analysis of the nature of Abraham's God:

1. A perfect deity cannot act on false pretenses.
2. An omnibenevolent deity cannot make false promises.
3. An omnipotent deity cannot fail to bring about its purposes.
4. An immutable deity cannot alter its purposes.
5. Abraham's God reneges on at least one of his purposes.
6. Therefore, Abraham's God is either not perfect, not good, not omnipotent, or is mutable.

In order to understand the stakes at this juncture we might modify any or all of these premises to be more subtle, but the two easiest and most direct ways to deal with the problem at hand is to address 5, and to modify it to 5_A "Abraham's God *seems* to renege on at least one of his purposes." We shall now analyze the story and show how the use of 5_A will not only salvage, but indeed will establish, a Hebrew version of the DDI.

From Abraham's perspective, God has demanded that the child of promise—the only child through whom God could fulfill his promises—and now that child is to be killed before the promise can be fulfilled. If Isaac dies childless then God's promise is broken. There are a few options to what has gone awry here. First, God has acted in such a way as to deceive Abraham, violating 1 and 2, showing that this God is not worthy of worship for his character. Second, God

has been found unable to bring about his purposes for Isaac based on some constraint that he cannot overcome, meaning that God fails to 3 because God is unable to bring about this one promise and is not worthy of the lifelong devotion that Abraham has lived out. Indeed if God cannot establish the line of Abraham's descendants through Isaac, then the whole covenant relationship is void. The central fact about this story is not the actions of God, nor the actions of Abraham, but rather the standards of the covenant relationship between these two persons. Because the covenant between YHWH and Abraham is modeled on the suzerain-vassal form of covenant, we have occasion here to ask what sort of test is occurring.

While this story has often been read as a test of Abraham's faith in a deity that demands difficult, perhaps even immoral things, I contend that we ought also to read this passage as a test of YHWH. Read in this fashion the tale will establish not Abraham's faithfulness, but rather YHWH's faithfulness to the covenant. YHWH made Abraham promises that could only be fulfilled through Isaac because the promises depended on Isaac's existence. When God calls for Isaac's death then, Abraham is offered the chance to test YHWH in a way that other humans in the Tanakh may never test YHWH.⁹⁰ When Isaac is bound and Abraham commits to killing him, we see the ultimate failure of YHWH's promise in the making. If Isaac dies without children, then YHWH is bound by the covenant with Abraham to die and suffer disintegration in the same way that the heifer, the goat, the ram, and the two birds that sealed the covenant in blood had died and been torn apart. In short, this sacrifice is the test of YHWH's faithfulness to the covenant despite seemingly absurd circumstances. This formula of YHWH's faithfulness to the covenant with Abraham and his children is the foundation of the Hebrew idea of the DDI. Rather than being a critique of anthropomorphism, or intended to justify a claim regarding divine motivation, the claim made in this passage is that YHWH is immutable in behaving in a manner

⁹⁰ Deuteronomy 6:16

consistent with his covenant. Indeed we may term this sort of immutability “Covenant Constancy.”

Further Instances of Covenant Constancy in the Face of Absurdity

Covenant Constancy is not isolated to the binding of Isaac, however, but is a major feature of the Tanakh. Time and again the story of YHWH’s relationship with the children of Israel is about a seeming failure of the covenant, or a failure to fulfill a promise, or perhaps most prevalently how a seemingly absurd circumstance that *seems* to show that the covenant has failed is in fact a way in which YHWH is carrying out the covenant in unexpected ways. In many ways the binding of Isaac is the prototype of all these other stories, and each of them is confirmed in the same manner. There is always a seeming failure or tension to a breaking point before YHWH steps in and makes good on the covenant. Isaac has two sons, and again the covenant is confirmed to the younger son. When Jacob seems to have been driven out of the land of promise by Esau, the conflict is resolved by means of a change of heart in the violent older brother. When the sons of Jacob seem to have doomed themselves through the abuse of Joseph, YHWH makes a way for the children of Israel to survive the famine without abuse. When their descendants suffer abuse at the hands of a new king in Egypt, YHWH reveals himself to Moses and calls them out of the house of slavery by means of plagues and miracles. YHWH renews and strengthens covenant in the wilderness of Sinai, and when the children of Israel reject the tenants of the covenant he makes with them, rather than destroying them and starting anew, he keeps covenant by weeding out the faithless generation. After they enter the Canaan and Joshua dies, YHWH sends Judges to call his people to repentance for violation of the commandments regarding the worship of other deities, and subsequently to free them from oppression by

conquering powers. After the period of the Judges we see that through the period of the kings the same ideas are present in the text. Saul's election and subsequent fall gives rise to David's reign and the new covenant that promise that one of David's progeny will rule his kingdom eternally,

Now, therefore, thus you [the prophet Nathan] shall say to my servant David, 'Thus says the LORD of hosts, I took you from the pasture, from following the sheep, that you should be prince over my people Israel. And I have been with you wherever you went and have cut off all your enemies from before you. And I will make for you a great name, like the name of the great ones of the earth. And I will appoint a place for my people Israel and will plant them, so that they may dwell in their own place and be disturbed no more. And violent men shall afflict them no more, as formerly, from the time that I appointed the judges over my people Israel. And I will give you rest from all your enemies. Moreover the LORD declares to you that the LORD will make you a house. When your days are fulfilled and you lie down with your fathers, I will raise up your offspring after you, who shall come from your body, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build a house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. I will be to him a father, and he shall be to me a son. When he commits iniquity I will discipline him with the rod of men, with the stripes of the sons of men, but my steadfast love will not depart from him, as I took it from Saul, whom I put away from before you. And your house and your kingdom shall be made sure forever before me. Your throne shall be established forever.'⁹¹

This promise, combined with the promise made to Abraham that his offspring would possess the land of Canaan eternally⁹² leads to the paradigmatic absurd situation: the Exile and Diaspora.

Both of these promises seem to show the greatest failure of the promises of YHWH, and they are the core commitments outside of the very existence of the Israelite people. This apparent failure of YHWH to deliver on these two prominent promises is an exact parallel to the story of the binding of Isaac. The failure of the kingdom and the failure of the possession of the land would show that YHWH was unable or unwilling to keep the commitments of the covenant.

To be sure some amount of leeway can be granted because of the penalties and curses that came with the Deuteronomic renewal of the covenant. While the curses are most exactly contained in chapter 28, the curse that is most significant to this study is contained in chapter 4,

⁹¹ 2 Samuel 7:8-16 ESV

⁹² Genesis 17:8 ESV

When you father children and children's children, and have grown old in the land, if you act corruptly by making a carved image in the form of anything, and by doing what is evil in the sight of the LORD your God, so as to provoke him to anger, I call heaven and earth to witness against you today, that you will soon utterly perish from the land that you are going over the Jordan to possess. You will not live long in it, but will be utterly destroyed. And the LORD will scatter you among the peoples, and you will be left few in number among the nations where the LORD will drive you. And there you will serve gods of wood and stone, the work of human hands, that neither see, nor hear, nor eat, nor smell. But from there you will seek the LORD your God and you will find him if you search after him with all your heart and with all your soul. When you are in tribulation, and all these things come upon you in the latter days, you will return to the LORD your God and obey his voice. For the LORD your God is a merciful God. He will not leave you or destroy you or forget the covenant with your fathers that he swore to them.⁹³

This curse describes the situation that the Israelites go on to suffer in the exile of the Northern and Southern kingdoms. The loss of the ownership of the land and the fact that the Davidic line lost control of the kingdoms would appear to show the failure of the promises, and thus either the lack of power or the rather severe mutability of YHWH as regards his covenant commitments. Part of the account that must be considered, however, are these very curses. From the perspective of the people the promises may have failed, but part of the point of the Tanakh is that YHWH does not—in fact cannot—fail to keep covenant with his people.

While covenant constancy despite appearances is present at the outset in the test of YHWH's faithfulness in the binding of Isaac, we see a reaffirmation of this principle for people who feel the seeming lack of faithfulness in YHWH's conversation with Elijah,

And behold, the word of the LORD came to [Elijah], and he said to him, "What are you doing here, Elijah?" He said, "I have been very jealous for the LORD, the God of hosts. For the people of Israel have forsaken your covenant, thrown down your altars, and killed your prophets with the sword, and I, even I only, am left, and they seek my life to take it away." And he said, "Go out and stand on the mount before the LORD." And behold, the LORD passed by, and a great strong wind tore the mountains and broke in pieces the rocks before the LORD, but the LORD was not in the wind. And after the wind an earthquake, but the LORD was not in the earthquake. And after the earthquake a fire, but the LORD was not in the fire. And after the fire the sound of a low whisper. And when Elijah heard it, he wrapped his face in his cloak and went out and stood at the entrance of the cave. And behold, there came a voice to him and said, "What are you doing here Elijah?" He said, "I have been very

⁹³ Deuteronomy 4:25-31

jealous for the LORD, the God of hosts, for the people of Israel have forsaken your covenant, thrown down your altars, and killed your prophets with the sword, and I, even I only, am left, and they seek my life to take it away.” And the LORD said to him, “Go, return on your way to the wilderness of Damascus. And when you arrive, you shall anoint Hazael to be king over Syria. And Jehu the son of Nimshi you shall anoint to be king over Israel, and Elisha the son of Shaphat of Abel-meholah you shall anoint to be the prophet in your place. And the one who escapes from the sword of Hazael shall Jehu put to death, and the one who escapes from the sword of Jehu shall Elisha put to death. Yet I will leave seven thousand in Israel, all the knees that have not bowed to Baal, and every mouth that has not kissed him.⁹⁴

This passage shows that the difficulty in perceiving the covenant constancy of YHWH can be as difficult as perceiving YHWH himself. Elijah shows how in the midst of a terribly depressing situation, when the covenant people seem to have abandoned not only YHWH, but Elijah as well, it seems that YHWH has been unable to maintain the relationship that he had committed himself to with the Abrahamic covenant. YHWH’s response is perhaps as counter-intuitive as it could be. He reveals his power over the created order, and finally reaches out to Elijah in an intimate moment of prophetic revelation—a revelation that things will get even worse! Elijah is to go and anoint the enemy of Israel to be king in Syria, and to anoint a new king of Israel, and then to anoint a new prophet—indicating that either Elijah will die or that his prophetic office will be removed from him and given to another. Then these anointed ones will commit a great slaughter in the land. This word is harsher than the idea that Elijah alone would die. In the midst of all this depressing news, however, YHWH offers an insight to Elijah as to the true nature of the situation. Despite all the appearances and all of Elijah’s despair a perfect remnant will be preserved—seven thousand persons who remain uncorrupted. The preservation of the remnant of YHWH’s people is consistent with the promise given in Deuteronomy, and shows how YHWH does in fact maintain covenant constancy despite appearances. It is this conception of YHWH as

⁹⁴ 1 Kings 19:9-18, ESV

constant that aids the displaced persons from Judah in developing an account of their religion that survives the lack of native and cultic context during the Exile.

The difference between the way YHWH *seems* to be is powerfully distinguished from the way YHWH *is in fact*—a distinction that is both subtle and powerfully reinforced by the prohibition from making icons or depictions of YHWH. Thus we can see that the cult items and practice both reinforce this awareness of the fundamental distinction between how a situation seems and how YHWH is in fact, is central to understanding both the theological facts of YHWH's existence, but also what may be known of him. The contrast becomes clear when we consider what Hebrew scripture makes so very clear through two different prophets; Moses and Balaam, "Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one."⁹⁵ and "God is not a man, that he should lie, or a son of man, that he should change his mind. Has he said, and will he not do it? Or has he spoken, and will not fulfill it?"⁹⁶ By these means we are able to support that 5_A as a means to maintain divine status uncorrupted by inconsistency or failure. Thus, in the same way that the presocratics were attempting to describe One Deity that could not be affected, distracted, or gainsaid, we see a God that cannot be overcome by human actions or cosmic circumstances. Here again, we see an argument for a DDI that emphasizes self-motivation, power to shape all things, invincibility, and aseity rather than stasis.

⁹⁵ Deuteronomy 6:4. This passage goes on to instruct the Israelites to maintain their faithfulness because of God's faithfulness.

⁹⁶ Numbers 23:19

CHAPTER FOUR

INFLUENTIAL TEXTS OF PLATO AND ARISTOTLE

The importance and influence of Plato and Aristotle on philosophical theology cannot be overstated, and because of this fact there has been much ink spilled over how to best interpret the writings of these singularly significant thinkers. Interpreting these two philosophers is notoriously difficult, and much of the study done on them attempts to understand and articulate exactly what each of them believed and what they did not believe. While an accurate philosophical understanding of the doctrines of Plato and Aristotle is, of course, a worthy and important goal it is not the aim of this work. The contributions of any given historical figure to a field of study need not hang on what the person actually believes, but rather by studying the impact of those beliefs on their devotees. Accordingly we shall consider the various passages of these seminal philosophers that help to shape the conversation over the next four centuries. Needless to say, any discussion of these philosophers must involve some manner of interpretation on my part. However, the emphasis here is on ways Middle Platonists may have used these passages in advancing their own ideas.

Doctrinal Genus and Differentia

While the logical worth of any given argument may be evaluated apart from the context in which that argument is made, understanding the preconditions, assumptions, and purpose behind any piece of argumentation requires an examination of that context. When we consider

Plato and Aristotle, then we must consider them as being in conversation with those who influence them. We have already considered the work of some of the seminal Pre-Socratic philosophers in chapter two, and while that consideration is not exhaustive, it is illustrative of the concerns to which Plato and Aristotle are reacting. With the conversation set between the religious and cultural practices of the fourth century combined with the critical work of the early philosophers, we gain a metric to understand which passages, and accordingly which “doctrines” should be considered relevant to the progressing conversation about the nature of the Divine. Some of these passages are far less obvious to the 21st century thinker simply because we are more removed from the context of the original conversation.

Much of Plato’s work was designed to show the importance of philosophical education as compared to the mimetic recitation of the Homeric and Hesiodic literature as the primary means of transmitting culturally significant information. While this polemic against Homer and Hesiod is hardly unique to Plato, the success of his particular polemic is singular. While Aristotle’s work is aimed at a different agenda, he is no less polemic in his analysis of the history of philosophy. Both Plato and Aristotle are working at carving out a space for philosophical contemplation of the peculiar subjects that interest them at any given time or in any given work. These polemicized types of contemplation did not abandon holistic thinking, however, and allowed for the application of Socrates’s definitional queries to be preserved in Plato’s writings.⁹⁷ Any topic is open for thought or discussion, and these thinkers turn their attention to these subjects with gusto. The use of *genus* and *differentia* as a means to accurately define terms and subjects gives rise to a sort of taxonomic means of explaining the cosmos gives us a basic framework in which to evaluate the ideas contained in the passages we will consider.

⁹⁷ I am not attempting to claim access to the historical Socrates here, but merely express the concern with accurate definitions of terms that amount to knowledge claims.

Both Plato and Aristotle make use of this technique as a way to philosophically engage the topics they encounter. It is not the only tool in their arsenal,⁹⁸ but it is a particularly powerful one, and in many ways the use of *genus* and *differentia* mirrors the by-now infamous problem of negative predication in Parmenides as well as anticipating the difficulties between apophatic and cataphatic thought in metaphysics which becomes so significant and entrenched in the Medieval period. This explanatory method appears in Greece's Axial Age, and is used to critique the traditional cosmological and anthropomorphic folk religions of the day, and while it has already been used for over a century to attack such these ideas, myths, dogmas, and cultic practices, Plato in particular turns this method on a new target: μίμησις.⁹⁹ If we take this methodological procedure seriously it gives us a means to evaluate the various passages which will be useful in our consideration of the DDI, both in these thinkers, and in the Hellenic period thinkers who follow them.

In particular we should be aware that the use of *genus* and *differentia* are of particular significance to the study of the Divine, and particularly of Divine Nature. While a claim of methodological monism or dualism with regards to ὑπόστασις would, for reasons already established in the previous analysis of Xenophanes, be overblown, we can see in Plato and Aristotle a use of this explanatory method that cuts across subject matter. Plato has Socrates use this method with virtually every subject with which he engages and for every term for which he seeks a definition. Aristotle, likewise, uses this method in categorical & taxonomic investigation of reality in general. When turned to studying φύσις we see the same methods applied, but an oddity appears when one begins to consider the nature of the Divine. First Philosophy itself

⁹⁸ In particular Plato seems to be captivated by the abstract truths of Geometry and our ability to know them in a non-contextual way.

⁹⁹ For an excellent articulation of Plato's motivations and use of method see Havelock's seminal work, *Preface to Plato*.

seems to push against the limits of continuity of explanation for Plato and Aristotle in the same way that it did for Xenophanes and Parmenides. When one begins to consider the nature of the Divine, and particularly of Divine action and motivation, the usual store of categories seems to fall short. Thus, while the study of φύσις and First Philosophy are not separable, they do become rather distinct. Especially in Aristotle we see a push to maintaining unification of explanation, but explanations of the transcendent Unmoved Mover cannot be wholly univocal with how we speak of things in the sublunary physics. This distinction of explanatory factors can help explain the nature of the DDI in Plato and Aristotle, as well as the work it does.

Plato and the DDI

Before considering Plato's texts, the interpretive standpoint from which this argument proceeds must be acknowledged. These passages should be considered in at least two ways before any claims to a "Platonic Doctrine" is made, and quite apart from conducting an analysis of the pure logical structure of the argument. First we must consider it in its place in intellectual history, and then we must consider it in its literary context in the flow of the document. Once these standards are met, we will be in a more established place to understand what Plato may or may not be claiming the passages we will consider.

The place of definition and *genus* and *differentia* has already been broached, but it is worth rehashing here. Plato's concern with definitions makes a few assumptions. Perhaps the most significant is that he maintains a fundamental trust that the human mind is capable of Knowing both Reality and Truth. In many ways, despite his profound challenge of the wisdom and knowledge of the day, despite many of the dialogues ending in ἀπορία, despite the Academy eventually promoting skepticism, Plato maintains hope that Philosophy can deliver powerful answers to the questions we ask. Unlike Pyrrho, there is content towards which Plato is driving

his students. While that content may not be made explicit in writing—and may even be ineffable—the focus and force of Plato’s program yields a very specific sort of fruit in the lives of his disciples. The very fact of the extent of his written works indicates that there is intent to preserve the method of seeking that content.¹⁰⁰ There is continuity between Plato’s estimation of human epistemic potential and Parmenides’s F3P. This argument sees Plato as involved in conversation with various themes and philosophical discussions that were already existent in the pre-Socratics. While Plato’s thought should not be conflated with theirs, the continuities that do exist should not be ignored. Plato is likely closer to their way of thinking than he is to Augustine, much less Descartes. Accordingly, we should read Plato as a philosopher of his time, and attempt to understand his writings as having philosophical force that is first and foremost addressing the students to whom he first bequeathed these dialogues.

The most explicit passage used to understand Plato’s version of the DDI comes from Republic II, from 380d-383c.¹⁰¹ While this passage is an easy one to cite in order to claim that Plato argues for a sort of transcendental stasis of the divine that allows no changes whatsoever, such an interpretation is not necessitated from the text. In addition, as we have already seen in our consideration of Xenophanes, Divine actions may not be tied to Divine mutation. For its part, this passage makes a few rather bold claims, but to exactly what do those claims amount?

¹⁰⁰ A comparison between Plato and other Axial Age figures is revealing when considering textuality and the significance of writing in cultures where such activities are costly and time consuming. The work necessary to preserve documentation on scrolls renders unnecessary or unimportant writing a foolhardy thing to do. Socrates, Buddha, and Mahavira wrote nothing, their students and disciples compiled sayings and composed stories about them—Jesus of Nazareth is a similar figure. Their means of communicating the content of their message was oral. Figures like Confucius, Laozi (if there was one such person), Homer (again, if there was just one such person), Hesiod, the composers of Isaiah and Jerimiah, the composers of the Upanishads and the Mahabharata, all intentionally worked on the writings themselves as a way to preserve the content. Plato is rather soundly in the second camp of Axial thinkers.

¹⁰¹ This passage is quite lengthy, and I will not reproduce it in its entirety here for two reasons. First it would make this section bloated, and second I am not going to attempt to show the “correct doctrine” that Plato holds here, merely argue that this passage is not immune from interpretive variation, and is only one of a number of passages that are significant to the debate over the DDI for the next few centuries.

Excerpted from the text the argument appears to argue for the most strident kind of immutability imaginable. The argument is fairly simple, and proceeds from the idea of divine perfections.

1. Whatever is in good condition, whether by nature or craft or both is least likely to be changed by anything else.
2. A god and what belongs to him are in every way in the “most-good” condition.
3. Therefore, a god and what belongs to him is perfectly unlikely to be changed by anything else.¹⁰²

So far, so good. This line of thinking is in line with what we have seen before. Here we have a non-anthropomorphic conception of Divine constancy based in Divine invincibility. We easily see a continuity between this argument and the argument of Xenophanes. Plato is not finished with the argument, however. The dialogue between Socrates and Adeimantus continues with a discussion of questions about divine motivation,

- S. Then does he change or alter himself?
A. Clearly he does, if indeed he is altered at all.
S. Would he change himself into something better and more beautiful than himself or something worse and uglier?
A. It would have to be into something worse, if he’s changed at all, for surely we won’t say that a god is deficient in either beauty or virtue.
S. Absolutely right. And do you think, Adeimantus, that anyone, whether god or human would deliberately make himself worse in any way?
A. No, that’s impossible.
S. It is impossible, then, for gods to want to alter themselves? Since they are the most beautiful and best possible, since it seems that each always and unconditionally retains his own shape.
A. That seems entirely necessary to me.¹⁰³

Thus, in the discussion here a god must not be forced to alter by things or forces outside of itself and no internal motivation could cause a god to change because its perfection would not allow for any better state to be the motivation for any change. There is one final way in which Plato suggest that divine change might occur—that a deity might seem to change for some reason,

¹⁰² Paraphrased from 381b. Plato’s concluding line here is “Then a god would be least likely to have many shapes.”

¹⁰³ Plato, *Republic*. Translated by G.M.A. Grube and C.D.C. Reeve. Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, INC., 1992. 381b-381c

without actually undergoing real changes in itself. But this illusion of change would amount to a falsehood, and this kind of falsehood would be particularly egregious. Any such illusion would misrepresent the very essence of Divine perfection. If a god could engage in such deception it would lower the quality of Divine perfection. Therefore a god is immune from all external controlling or even contributing factors, would be unable to alter in ways that would make it worse than its already perfect nature, and could not ever seem to be less than it is. Thus extracted we seem to have outlined an utterly invariant argument for a sort of “simple immutability” in every way possible.

It is, however, worth considering the context in which Plato sets this description of a god’s capacity for change. While *The Republic* is often read as Plato’s dialogue on political theory, the reader is aware that the only reason that the nature of the *καλλίπολις* is so that by analogy the nature of the individual human soul may be investigated. While the insights that Plato offers in this work are certainly valuable when considering political theory, it is necessary to remember that the main focus of this inquiry is how the individual human soul is improved. This particular passage is solidly couched in this allegory, and in particular this argument is part of the articulation of how to properly train the soul to think correctly about deities. Most especially, this section is not intended to be a robust articulation of Platonic Theology, but is rather a critique of what kinds of poets and songs are to be allowed to be part of the education of the youth and the entertainment of the citizen of the *καλλίπολις*. In short, this section is one of the first attacks in *The Republic* on the practice of mimetic recitation of poetry that so clearly corrupts the soul. When read in this context we may legitimately ask whether or not this articulation concerning the nature of Divine is to be taken as a doctrinal standard of Platonic Theology, or whether it is part of the method of attack on *μίμησις*.

In particular we should notice that Plato is very concerned here with the idea of divine entities changing their shape, and he ties this change to the work of a γόης. The comparison to a sorcerer and the work of such cheats and illusion makers is a particular type of polemic that Plato explicitly ties into his critique of the mimetic poet. This particular section is ordered to the end of passing a particular law about what types of stories may be told in the καλλίπολις, and the conclusion is as follows;

Then let no poet tell us about Proteus or Thetis, or say that
The gods, in the likeness of strangers from foreign lands,
Adopt every sort of shape and visit our cities.

Nor must they present Hera, in their tragedies or other poems, as a priestess collecting alms for

The life-giving sons of the Argive river Inachus,
or tell us other stories of that sort. Nor must mothers, believing bad stories about the gods wandering at night in the shapes of strangers from foreign lands, terrify their children with them. Such stories blaspheme the gods and, at the same time, make children more cowardly.¹⁰⁴

While it is true that Plato's Socrates does claim that the gods are not able to undergo changes because of their perfections, that discussion is couched in and ordered toward the criticism of wrongfully educating children and causing them to become vicious adults. Book 2 concludes even more strongly where Socrates concludes with, "Whenever anyone says such things about a god, we'll be angry with him, refuse him a chorus, and not allow his poetry to be used in the education of the young, so that our guardians will be as god-fearing and godlike as humans can be."¹⁰⁵ Plato's emphasis here could not be clearer. While he seems to hold some standard of Divine perfection and immutability important, the exact nature of Plato's own theology may be obscured by the fact that this section is couched in allegory. In point of fact, the doctrinal accuracy of these claims is like the Myth of Er in book 10. Just as Plato may or may not believe

¹⁰⁴ Plato, *Republic*, 381d-381e.

¹⁰⁵ Plato, *Republic*, 383b-383c

in a robust metempsychosis whose quality is due to the perfection of a soul in the life last lived, he may or may not believe in this claim about the nature of the Divine.

Whatever the truth of Plato's personal convictions about the DDI, this argument is not necessarily the definitive statement of those beliefs, simply based upon its location in the corpus. Again, it is not the point of this work to declare with certainty what Plato does or does not believe, but to point out that this particular document leaves open a possibility that Divine action is possible, even if a robust version of the DDI is true. In particular, the reader must take careful notice that Plato restricts himself to a discussion of a peculiar kind of change in *Republic 2*—change in shape or change in appearance. Plato does not concern himself here with changes of extrinsic qualities (such as the ability to become related to new things or states of affairs), changes of location (either spatial or temporal), nor does he mention the ability of gods to affect changes in the world of φύσις. The exact nature of the DDI here articulated is underdetermined both by the language in the argument as well as by its place in the overall dialogue. The importance of the passage is unquestionable, but the exact nature of Plato's version of the DDI argued for here is quite open for further debate.

The debate over what Plato really believes about the nature of the divine is given even sharper teeth when we consider the goal towards which he aims this kind of description of the gods. Plato explicitly tells his students that the reason that they tell only a very particular type of story in the education of the children of the καλλίπολις is “so that our guardians will be as god-fearing and godlike as human beings can be.”¹⁰⁶ The rest of the *Republic* also stresses the importance of having a perfected and virtuous soul, and Plato never fully abandons this goal. Plato may even see the human soul not only as capable of Knowledge of Reality and Truth, but as capable of a kind of Divine Perfection. He is certainly optimistic about the ability of the

¹⁰⁶ Plato. *Republic*, 383c

Athenians to attain Philosophy as a good for the soul that can reach a level of perfection that Socrates drove them towards with his teaching and questioning. Indeed, Plato seems to have something of a nascent doctrine of human beings as capable of a kind of apotheosis that is achieved by the proper practice of Philosophy. Nowhere is this more evident than the way that Plato narrates the death of Socrates. This idea of the divinity of the soul of the philosopher is not unique to that passage, however. We also find this idea of the perfecting power of Philosophy in the dramatic setting of the *Theatetus*, wherein Theatetus (already like Socrates in shape) becomes like him also in soul because of his Philosophical education. This motion towards divinity is similar to the kind of God argued for in *Republic 2*, in that their character becomes immune to adversity, but still able to change those around them through questioning and Philosophic consideration of Reality and Truth.

In addition to these passages about character that reforms others, we also see that Plato engages with the topic of theology in the *Timaeus*. Once again the dramatic setting of this dialogue should not be missed. It is set the very day after the discussions of in *The Republic*, and its continuity with that discussion features prominently at the opening of the dialogue. This juxtaposition is even more important when we consider that much of Timaeus's articulation of the existence of the world consists of a mythic telling of the cosmogonic history of the cosmos and the gods and living things that people the cosmos. Like previous thinkers, Plato here articulates a rather robust continuity between the study of φύσις and theology. In particular, Timeaus references the ideas of previous thinkers quite thoroughly in his articulation of the philosophical cosmogony.

The theogonic myth that Timaeus gives starts with an appeal to the gods, as is proper at the outset of any affair—mirroring the sort of invocation with which both Homer and Hesiod

begin their mimetic epics. After the brief introduction, Timeaus immediately turns to a Parmenidean articulation of existence itself.¹⁰⁷ The nature of existence itself by itself is not much considered at first, but we do get a more complete articulation of what this metaphysical reality is like when the first and signature work of the Demiurge is described. The first thing that he creates is the cosmological animal made after the shape of the best of all things. This description is of a perfectly spherical, and that the sphere itself must be ordered according to the ratio of numerical harmony present in a well-made and fine-tuned lyre. The cosmological animal must have both intellect and soul as well as perfect body, and must be self-contained so as to not have any needs beyond itself. This construction of the cosmic animal that contains all other life and intellect within itself is made after the image of the most pure being, and becomes the source of time once it is completed.¹⁰⁸ This elaborate cosmogony takes the place of the familial generation of anthropomorphic deities in Hesiod's *Theogony*, and makes the nature of the divine a more robustly developed version of the speculation given by Xenophanes and Parmenides. This cosmogonic and theogonic myth gives a sort of structure to divinity that allows for the Divine to act upon the cosmological order, and even to cause other—albeit lesser—divinities to exist in a supra-temporal fashion.

While the exact nature of the divine indicated here in the *Timaeus* is, again, rather opaque because of Plato's caginess in having Timeaus give us this myth that clearly uses the material of the Pythagoreans and other pre-Socratics, not to mention Homer and Hesiod, the core feature that interests us here is that the Divine has causal power while itself being immune from change. The nature of the Divine reality to which the Demiurge looks for inspiration in

¹⁰⁷ *Plato's Timaeus*. Translated by Peter Kalkavage. Newburyport, MA: Focus Publishing / R. Pullins Co., 2001. 27c-28a.

¹⁰⁸ This rather lengthy account stretches from 29e-41d, at which point he turns to the creation of mortal creatures which are made of the same stuff as the cosmic animal and the cosmic soul.

construction of the cosmic animal is perfectly self-sufficient and invincible, and for all the world seems to be beyond any description beyond “is”. However, this “Divine is-ness,” though not described in itself by Timaeus, exerts a fundamental causal power—creative and philosophical imitation. In some way, the work of the Demiurge is nearly mimetic in nature. It perceives the perfection of the Divine, and overcome with inspiration and perhaps even a sort of awe constructs the cosmic animal to be as perfect a model as could be constructed. This model contains all the rationality, soul, and substrata in which such things can inhere. Again, regardless of Plato’s actual intentions in the *Timaeus*, we easily begin to see how this line of thinking becomes important to the overall history of philosophical theology. This use of Divine perfection to be the source of divine action proceeds in at least two ways in the Greek context. One can hardly read the *Timaeus* and not be struck by the similarities between this account of the spherical, self-containing, sempiternal cosmos and the cosmography provided by Aristotle in the *Physics* and *Metaphysics*.¹⁰⁹ The chief difference¹¹⁰ between these accounts is that Plato’s Demiurge constructs the cosmic order, where as in Aristotle no such construction is entertained. The other way that this myth becomes famous is through the interpretations of Plotinus, where the One gains a positive activity. For Plotinus, the story is similar, but the One (or the Divine) necessarily emanates all of formal reality and the Demiurge. This activity is not chosen, but innate and unstoppable, but is nevertheless a form of pure activity in being—where being is a verb rather than a mere noun.

¹⁰⁹ The relationship between the Philosophy of Plato and Aristotle is fraught with much scholarship and tension. It is not my intention here to make a statement about what either philosopher actually believed, and whether or not the agreed or disagreed on the subjects of physics and first philosophy.

¹¹⁰ Again, at least at the superficial level. I am not trying to contend with any possible doctrine of the forms vs. the hylomorphism of Aristotle. Nor am I trying to claim that the fundamental features of the cosmography of the *Timaeus* can be identified with the cosmography in Aristotle’s *Physics*. I am merely pointing out that the macroscopic features of these accounts bear enough similarity to one another that a person in the Hellenic period can see a continuity between them.

Which tradition more accurately describes Plato's own views on the nature of the DDI is not really the most important part of his contribution to the discussion. Rather, what Plato gives us is not a solid doctrine that answers all the questions, but is rather a codification of the conversation up to that point. This codification serves as the point of departure for later thinkers who are interested in both the nature of change and the nature of the Divine. This continuity of conversation serves to codify the logical structure of the argument that has come before in the pre-Socratics. In its context, it also serves to show the continuity of concern. Ancient thinkers are not interested in describing divine action, but rather in showing that there must be a discontinuity between the types of non-divine change that occurs in the sublunary realm and the type of action that occurs in the Divine reality.

Aristotle and Divine Changelessness

While Aristotle is famous for not being particularly concerned with religious matters, he does spend significant energy on First Philosophy. The theological speculation that is part of doing First Philosophy is itself rather robust, what it lacks is a concept of personal religious rites and rituals tied to the speculation—in other words there is in Aristotle no prescribed religious service to the deity. While the Academics and the Stoics may have had a more directly “quasi-religious” overtone to their philosophical discipline, there is very little to suggest that Aristotle and his disciples cared a great deal for personal religiosity beyond its expediency in political matters. The nature of this speculation does have a rather odd religious feature, however. In something like the way that the Divine functions in the *Timaeus*, Aristotle's doctrine of the Divine does make the Divine uniquely active, and that activity is the source of all motion in the cosmos proper. This singular feature, and Aristotle's peculiar way of articulating the nature of

final causation does leave one kind of religious attitude open for expression: pure adoration and rapture in contemplation.

The nature of the unmoved mover and the nature of active νοῦς are both subjects that have been debated for millennia now. For reasons that are rather different than Plato's eagerness about his personal beliefs, there is still very good reason to question what Aristotle's doctrines actually are. There is some question about how exactly the works we have were recorded. There is an amount of variation in quality of the work which has led some thinkers to suppose that there were multiple scribes who recorded Aristotle's words on different subjects. A good example of this kind of variation within a single topic is book 5 of the *Nicomachean Ethics*. While the subject matter concerning Justice is contiguous with the other parts of NE, this particular book seems to be less refined than some of the others. Whether this is because Justice is particularly difficult as a subject, or whether the scribe was less skilled is opaque. In addition to this textual problem, we are also aware that Aristotle did not oversee the way in which his philosophy was compiled and organized.

Once again, the texts in which Aristotle considers the nature of the divine are fairly obvious. Most specifically Aristotle considers the nature of change and the relationship of change to the divine in the *Physics* and the *Metaphysics*—especially in *Physics VII* and *Metaphysics Λ*. The operative point here is that Aristotle makes a distinction between activity and change (or motion). The nature of change or motion is a function of imperfection and deprivation. Activity on the other hand, in its truest sense, is existing in perfect accord with the final cause of the existent in question. The importance of this distinction is what allows for the Unmoved Mover to be both removed from the profane order of things (in the sense that it is not subject to the necessary deprivations of said order) and yet of singular significance to that order.

Of particular significance to our study is Aristotle’s notion of change and motion, and why it does not apply to divine entities, specifically the Unmoved Mover, in particular.

Φύσις, according to Aristotle “has been defined as a ‘principle of motion and change’”.¹¹¹

This idea is key to understanding how we begin to address the nature of the Divine. It is the nature of definitions that they are limits upon a term or topic that removes non-essential or non-attributive attributes to the subject of the definition. We shall see that just as Xenophanes claimed that “One god is greatest among gods and men, not at all like mortals in body or in thought.”¹¹² so too does Aristotle confirm that the Divine must be fundamentally different from the profane order in both shape and soul. Nowhere is this more evident than the difference between moved movers and the unmoved mover. Aristotle describes the nature of motion in the profane order as follows,

Everything that is in motion must be moved by something. For if it has not the source of its motion in itself it is evident that it is moved by something other than itself, for there must be something else that moves it. If on the other hand it has the source of its motion in itself, let AB be taken to represent that which is in motion essentially of itself and not in virtue of the fact that something belonging to it is in motion. Now in the first place assume that AB, because it is in motion as a whole and is not moved by anything external to itself, is therefore moved by itself—this is just as if, supposing that JK is moving KL and is also itself is in motion, we were to deny that JL is moved by anything on the ground that it is not evident which is the part that is moving it and which is the part that is moved. In the second place that which is in motion without being moved by anything does not necessarily cease from its motion because something else is at rest, but a thing must be moved by something if the fact of something else at rest, but a thing must be moved by something if the fact of something else having ceased from its motion causes it to be at rest. Thus, if this is accepted, everything that is in motion must be moved by something.¹¹³

Aristotle’s claim is that all motions are continuous with causal connections. No motion could be *sui generis* but must be connected to prior causes. Specifically he insists that in infinite

¹¹¹ Aristotle. “Physics.” Translated by R. P. Hardie and R. K. Gaye in *The Basic Works of Aristotle*. Edited by Richard McKeon. New York: Random House, Inc., 2001. 200b12

¹¹² *Xenophanes*, B23.

¹¹³ Aristotle, *Physics*, 241b24-242a5

regression of causation is irrational and impossible at 242a16-243a3.¹¹⁴ Having established, at least to his own satisfaction, the impossibility of *sui generis* individual and self-caused motion, Aristotle then considers what kinds of changes can be caused by these profane processes.

That which is the first movement of a thing—in the sense that it supplies not ‘that for the sake of which’ but the source of the motion—is always together with that which is moved by it (by ‘together’ I mean that there is nothing intermediate between them). This is universally true wherever one thing is moved by another. And since there are three kinds of motion, local, qualitative, and quantitative, there must also be three kinds of movement, that which causes locomotion, that which causes alteration, and that which causes increase or decrease.¹¹⁵

Here Aristotle speaks directly of efficient causation and the kinds of changes that efficient causation can accomplish. He also expressly exempts final causation from proximity to the sorts of change or motion that things in the profane order can undergo. This distinction between efficient causation and final causation allows for a mode of influence or causation that works “at a distance” rather than immediately, but we shall return to this point below.

At this point Aristotle explicitly attempts to prove his point about types of motion. He applies the idea of efficient and immediate causation to all classes of things in profane order. Locomotion, alteration, and quantitative change all can happen to both animate and inanimate entities. All of these kinds of motion require a full account of the thing moved and the causal account of its movement, but any such motions also require a kind of privation of something that is a quality of potentiality that allows for the new state of the entity or item in question to undergo such a change or motion. There is a kind of activity, however, that does not undergo these standard motions—namely he identifies that the soul, or at least some parts of the soul, remain unmoved in specific ways. Locomotion, though the primary kind of change and motion,

¹¹⁴ This passage is lengthy, so I will not produce it here. The argument turns on the idea that it would be impossible for an infinite series to explain the origin of motion.

¹¹⁵ Aristotle, *Physics* 243a3-243a9

is not the sort of thing that makes sense to talk of when we consider the nature of the soul.¹¹⁶

Aristotle argues that generation cannot be a kind of alteration, properly speaking, at 246a1-246a9.

Since, therefore, having regard to the figure or shape of a thing we no longer call that which has become of a certain figure by the name of the material that exhibits the figure, whereas having regard to a thing's affections or alterations we still call it by the name of its material, it is evident that becomings of the former kind cannot be alterations.

Moreover it would seem absurd even to speak in *this* way, to speak, that is to say, of a man or house or anything else that has come into existence as having been altered. Though it may be true that every such becoming is necessarily the result of something's being altered, the result, e.g. of the material's being condensed or rarefied or heated or cooled, nevertheless it is not the things that are coming into existence that are altered, and their becoming is not an alteration.¹¹⁷

The idea here seems to be that as long as a thing is not altering in its fundamental nature, but rather is becoming more or less fully itself, there is no alteration of the thing itself as regards its formal nature.

Even if the generation of the soul is not a form of change, it would seem to be able to undergo alteration of states because of its ability to receive sensible forms. However, Aristotle insists that this is not the case. First he insists that actualizations of perfections in and of themselves are cases of alteration;

Again, acquired states, whether of the body or of the soul, are not alterations. For some are excellences and others are defects, and neither excellence nor defect is an alteration: excellence is a perfection (for when anything acquires its proper excellence we call it perfect, since it is then if ever that we have a thing in its natural state: e.g. we have a perfect circle when we have one as good as possible), while defect is a perishing or departure from this condition. So just as when speaking of a house we do not call its arrival at perfection an alteration (for it would be absurd to suppose that the coping or the tiling is an alteration or that in receiving its coping or tiling a house is altered and not perfected), the same also holds good in the case of excellences and defects and of the persons or things that possess or

¹¹⁶ It strikes me that the oddity of a soul suffering locomotion would be analogous to the oddities of Aristotle's understanding of the doctrine of place and motion when considering a ship in a river. Though the container may be in motion, the contents themselves are left unmoved in a certain kind of way, or if the container is stationary, the contents may move internally. A soul could not suffer independent locomotion because it must indwell the body. The soul, then, does not properly undergo locomotion in and of itself, rather the body undergoes locomotion properly speaking. See 212a10-20.

¹¹⁷ Aristotle, *Physics* 246a1-246a9

acquire them: for excellences are perfections of a thing's nature and defects are departures from it: consequentially they are not alterations.¹¹⁸

So a thing need not undergo locomotion, nor alteration to be able to reach a state of internal perfection, and indeed Aristotle puts this even more strongly when he discusses the nature of the intellectual part of the soul.

Again, the states of the intellectual part of the soul are not alterations, nor is there any becoming of them. In the first place it is much more true of the possession of knowledge that it depends upon a particular relation. And further, it is evident that there is no becoming of these states. For that which is potentially possessed of knowledge becomes actually possessed of it not by being set in motion at all itself but by reason of the presence of something else: i.e. It is when it meets with the particular object that it knows in a manner the particular through its knowledge of the universal. (Again, there is no becoming of the actual use and activity of these states, unless it is thought that there is a becoming of vision and touching and that the activity in question is similar to these.) And the original acquisition of knowledge is not a becoming or an alteration: for the terms 'knowing' and 'understanding' imply that the intellect has reached a state of rest and come to a standstill, and there is no becoming that leads to a state of rest, since, as we have said above, no change at all can have a becoming. Moreover, just as to say, when any one has passed from a state of intoxication or sleep or disease to the contrary state, that he has become possessed of knowledge again is incorrect in spite of the fact that he was previously incapable of using his knowledge, so, too, when any one originally acquires the state, it is incorrect to say that he becomes possessed of knowledge: for the possession of understanding and knowledge is produced by the soul's settling down out of the restlessness natural to it. Hence, too, in learning and in forming judgements on matters relating to their sense-perceptions children are inferior to adults owing to the great amount of restlessness in their souls. Nature itself causes the soul to settle down and come to a state of rest for the performance of some of its functions, while for the performance of some of its functions, while for the performance of other things do so: but in either case the result is brought about through the alteration of something in the body, as we see in the case of the use and activity of the intellect arising from a man's becoming sober or being awakened. It is evident, then, from the preceding argument that alteration and being altered occur in sensible things and in the sensitive part of the soul and, except accidentally, in nothing else.¹¹⁹

Clearly we have here an articulation that even the learning of the soul is not an alteration of the soul properly speaking, but is rather an alteration that happens in the body of the individual who now has the "new" knowledge. No case of learning is a change of the nature of the soul, and cannot count as a case of alteration. So Aristotle has dispensed with two of the three primary

¹¹⁸ Aristotle, *Physics* 246a10-246b3

¹¹⁹ Aristotle, *Physics* 247b1-248a9

types of motion as regards the nature of the intellective part of the soul. So the activities of the soul are not a form of motion or change, properly speaking. This idea is fundamental to understanding both the nature and the usefulness of Aristotle's Deity.

After establishing that soul is capable of activity that does not involve any of the kinds of motion, he then gives a lengthy argument for the existence of the sempiternal infinite motion of the heavens—the circular rotation of the spheres. This type of motion must have an ultimate cause, and Aristotle famously identifies this cause at the end of the *Physics*,

The only continuous motion, then, is that which is caused by the unmoved movement: and this motion is continuous because the movement remains always invariable, so that its relation to that which it moves remains also invariable and continuous.

Now that these points are settled, it is clear that the first unmoved movement cannot have any magnitude. For if it has magnitude, this must be either a finite or an infinite magnitude. Now we have already proved in our course on *Physics* that there cannot be an infinite magnitude: and we have now proved that it is impossible for a finite magnitude to have an infinite force, and also that it is impossible for a thing to be moved by a finite magnitude during an infinite time. But the first movement causes a motion that is eternal and does cause it during an infinite time. It is clear, therefore that the first movement is indivisible and is without parts and without magnitude.¹²⁰

At this point Aristotle has established that the Divine must be investigated in a different way from the rest of *Physics*. The study thus far has led him to realize that the Final Cause of all change and motion must have different explanatory factors than the rest of existence. We have here a distinction between the profane and the divine order, but not a separation. The explanation is different, and the study must proceed along different lines, but there are clear lines of continuity between the studies. Accordingly, we shall now turn to *Metaphysics* Λ.

Perfectly Active Substance

Metaphysics is much clearer about the nature of the Divine because it expands upon the ideas generated in the physics. In particular we see that Aristotle takes up the idea of the first

¹²⁰ Aristotle, *Physics*. 267b16-27

cause much more seriously. His claims in Lambda in particular are particularly important for further developments in the DDI.

Aristotle opens the discussion of the exact nature of Divine Substance and the actions proper to it, as well as the implications for those actions on motion at 1071b11. Here he claims the following,

But if there is something which is capable of moving things or acting on them,, but is not actually doing so, there will not necessarily be movement; for that which has a potency need not exercise it. Nothing, then, is gained even if we suppose eternal substances, as the believers in the Forms do, unless there is to be in them some principle which can cause change; nay, even this is not enough, nor is another substance besides the Forms enough; for if it is not to *act*, there will be no movement. Further, even if it acts, this will not be enough, if its essence is potency; for there will not be *eternal* movement, since that which is potentially may possibly not be. There must, then, be such a principle, whose very essence is actuality. Further, then, these substances must be without matter; for they must be eternal, if *anything* is eternal. Therefore they must be actuality.¹²¹

Having explained the necessity of a perfectly active causal substance he uses his explanation to oppose to the Hesiodic account of the world being generated out of chaos and night. He assigns the first heaven an eternal existence and a ceaseless circular motion at 1072a23.

It is then that Aristotle makes a most interesting claim about the nature of the First Cause,

And since that which is moved and moves is intermediate, there is something which moves without being moved, being eternal, substance, and actuality. And the object of desire and object of thought move in this way; they move without being moved. The primary objects of desire and of thought are the same. For the apparent good is the object of appetite, and the real good is the primary object of rational wish. But desire is consequent on opinion rather than opinion on desire; for thinking is the starting-point. And thought is moved by the object of thought, and one of the two columns of opposites is in itself the object of thought; and in this, substance is first, and in substance, that which is simple exists actually.¹²²

Here Aristotle affirms that thought is a fundamental kind of causation. The kind of causation in question is, of course, final causation, which he outlines in the following paragraphs.

¹²¹ Aristotle. "Metaphysics." Translated by W. D. Ross in *The Basic Works of Aristotle*. Edited by Richard McKeon. New York: Random House, Inc., 2001. 1071b11-22

¹²² Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, 1072a 24-28

He is very explicit about the nature of final causation and its relationship to unchangeable entities, and how these factors contribute to the proper understanding of the divine. He also continues his work from the *Physics* in an attempt to show how the existence of motion in the profane realm grounds the reality,

That a final cause may exist among unchangeable entities is shown by the distinction of its meanings. For the final cause is (a) some being for whose good an action is done, and (b) something at which the action aims; and of these the latter exists among unchangeable entities though the former does not. The final cause, then, produces motion as being loved, but all other things move by being moved.

Now if something is moved it is capable of being otherwise than as it is. Therefore if its actuality is the primary form of spatial motion, then in so far as it is subject to change, in *this* respect it is capable of being otherwise—in place, even if not in substance. But since there is something which moves while itself unmoved, existing actually, this can in no way be otherwise than as it is. For motion in space is the first of the kinds of change and motion in a circle is the first kind of spatial motion; and this the first mover *produces*. The first mover, then, exists of necessity; and in so far as it exists by necessity, its mode of being is good, and it is in this sense a first principle. For the necessary has all these senses—that which is necessary perforce because it is contrary to the natural impulse, that without which the good is impossible, and that which cannot be otherwise but can exist only in a single way.¹²³

Having laid the groundwork for the necessity of the existence of the Divine, Aristotle tells explains its fundamental attributes:

On such a principle, then, depend the heavens and the world of nature. And it is a life such as the best which we enjoy, and enjoy for but a short time (for it is ever in this state, which we cannot be), since its actuality is also pleasure. (And for this reason are waking, perception, and thinking most pleasant, and hopes and memories are so on account of these.) And thinking in itself deals with that which is best in itself, and that which is thinking in the fullest sense with that which is best in the fullest sense. And thought things on itself because it shares the nature of the object and the thought; for it becomes an object of thought in coming into contact with and thinking its objects, so that thought and object of thought are the same. For that which is *capable* of receiving the object of thought, i.e. the essence, is thought. But it is *active* when it *possesses* this object. Therefore the possession rather than the receptivity is the divine element which thought seems to contain, and the act of contemplation is what is most pleasant and best. If, then, God is always in that good state which we sometimes are, this compels our wonder' and if in a better this compels it yet more. And God *is* in a better state. And life also belongs to God; for the actuality of thought is life, and God is that actuality; and God's self-dependent actuality is life most good and

¹²³ Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, 1072b1-13

most eternal. We say therefore that God is a living being, eternal, most good, so that life and duration continuous and eternal belong to God; for this *is* God. [. . .]

It is clear then from what has been said that there is a substance which is eternal and unmovable and separate from the sensible things. It has been shown also that this substance cannot have any magnitude, but is without parts and indivisible (for it produces movement throughout infinite time, but nothing finite has infinite power; and while every magnitude is either infinite or finite, it cannot, for the above reason, have finite magnitude, and it cannot have infinite magnitude because there is no infinite magnitude at all). But it also has been shown that it is impassive and unalterable; for all other changes are posterior to change of place.¹²⁴

Herein is Aristotle's explicit version of the DDI, but he does not leave us with this argument alone. While the study of physics leads directly to the necessity of the existence and perfection of the Divine, there is another reason to suppose that the Divine is immutable: the motivation of such a perfect entity. He explains divine motivation from 1074b26-34

Evidently, then, it thinks of that which is most divine and precious, and it does not change; for change would be change for the worse, and this would already be a movement. First, then, if 'thought' is not the act of thinking but a potency, it would be reasonable to suppose that the continuity of its thinking is wearisome to it. Secondly, there would evidently be something else more precious than thought, viz. that which is thought of. For both thinking and the act of thought will belong even to one who thinks of the worst thing in the world, so that if this ought to be avoided (and it ought, for there are even some things which it is better not to see than to see), the act of thinking cannot be the best of things. Therefore it must be of itself that the divine thought thinks (since it is the most excellent of all things), and its thinking is a thinking on thinking.

It is thus that Aristotle articulates the notion of a God that does not, and cannot, change.

However, this perfect substance is not static or inactive—rather it is perfectly identified with its activity—thought thinking itself.

There is, of course, an objection that Aristotle anticipates; that a thought cannot be both an activity and the object of an activity. However, here Aristotle recapitulates an old conceptual friend—the F3P. Like Parmenides before him, he believes that in the case of the Divine that there is one thing that exists for thinking as for being. We see this older principle given new life at 1075a1-11.

¹²⁴ Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, 1072b14-29; 1073a2-12

We answer that in some cases the knowledge is the object. In the productive sciences it is the substance or essence of the object, matter omitted, and in the theoretical sciences the definition or the act of thinking is the object. Since, then, thought and the object of thought are not different in the case of things that have not matter, the divine thought and its object will be the same, i.e. the thinking will be one with the object of its thought.

This idea has a similar implication for the nature of the Divine as well. The Divine's existence and perfection are ensured by necessity, and it is causally insulated from influence by any other existent entity or object, whether abstract or concrete. The Unmoved Mover causes motion by the pure perfection of its own thought; only where Xenophanes gave thought the power to make all things quake and shake Aristotle gives thought the power of rotating the entire universe. Its thoughts are so much more perfect than the thoughts of all others that it is unlike us in νοῦς, but it is also unlike us in shape insofar as it does not have a share in material cause. He claims "that everything which has not matter is indivisible—as human thought, or rather the thought of composite beings, is in a certain period of time (for it does not possess the good at this moment or at that, but its best, being something *different* from it, is attained only in a whole period of time), so throughout eternity is the thought which has itself for its object."¹²⁵ The result here is that we have a more fully developed idea of the nature of Divine motivation and activity, while being more taxonomically correct in our understanding of what makes the Divine different from the profane order. Namely, the *motivation* of Divine action is exactly the same as the *motivation* of the universe—perfect contemplation of perfection. The changelessness of the Divine is not the result of different goals, but results from the fact that the Divine has no privations which could be actualized.

Here, however, we do run into a strange problem. How could humans have access to something so dissimilar to everything that we experience through the senses? The answer is that as far as Aristotle and is concerned, theology is not the study of something "wholly other" or

¹²⁵ Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, 1075a7-11.

“unknowable”. Rather the ability of the philosopher extends into being able to understand the fundamental principles of existence. To explain the epistemic powers of human persons that allow for such knowledge, we shall turn to Nicomachean Ethics and *De Anima* next.

Perfect Human Psychological Activity

In any question about the truth of a matter, and perhaps especially in metaphysical and theological questions, the problem of epistemic access and power must-needs rear its head. Aristotle is not, perhaps, as concerned with radical skepticism as we might be, nevertheless he does address how a human might come to know divine things—he claims that human mind and divine mind connected. This answer further strengthens Aristotle’s ties to something akin to the F3P of Parmenides, as we shall see.

Book 10 of Nicomachean Ethics puzzles a great many readers because much of the text focuses on the ethical virtues rather than the intellectual virtues. In fact, it sometimes seems as though the ethical and intellectual virtues are in competition with one another. Regardless of the cohesion of the text overall, book 10 is instructive for understanding the nature of intellection and the ties of the human mind to the divine mind. There are two passages that are concern the nature of human epistemic access to the nature of the Divine, which also help to reinforce Aristotle’s version of the DDI. Aristotle is rather precise about the epistemic unity of reason at 1177b25-1178a8.

But such a life [a life of constant philosophical contemplation] would be too high for a man; for it is not in so far as he is a man that he will live so, but in so far as something divine is present in him, and by so much as this is superior to our composite nature is its activity superior to that which is the exercise of the other kind of virtue. If reason is divine, then, in comparison with man the life according to it is divine in comparison with human life. But we must not follow those who advise us, being men, to think of human things, and, being mortal, of mortal things, but must, so far as we can, make ourselves immortal, and strain every nerve to live in accordance with the best thing in us; for even if it be small in bulk, much more does it in power and worth surpass everything. This would seem too, to be each man himself, since it is the authoritative and better part of him. It would be strange, then, if

he were to choose not the life of his self but that of something else. And what we said before will apply now; that which is proper to each thing is by nature best and most pleasant for each thing; for man, therefore, the life according to reason is the best and pleasantest, since reason more than anything else *is* man.¹²⁶

This passage simply and directly aligns with Aristotle's conception of thinking being an activity that involves no potentiality or change. Thus, the human capacity for reason and contemplation is perfectly in accordance with the Divine. Human epistemic capacity is thus capable of grasping Divine truths in a Divine way, but lacks the constancy and purity of the Divine. It is the material cause that keeps humans from fully realizing their Divine part, in the same way that the heavens cannot fully realize their own Divine perfection.

The second passage more directly concerns the reason that the Divine is changeless, and is found 1178b7-23,

But that perfect happiness is a contemplative activity will appear from the following consideration as well. We assume the gods to be above all other beings blessed and happy; but what sort of actions must we assign to them? Acts of justice? Will not the gods seem absurd if they make contracts and return deposits, and so on? Acts of a brave man, then confronting dangers and running risks because it is noble to do so? Or liberal acts? To whom will they give? It will be strange if they are really to have money or anything of the kind. And what would their temperate acts be? Is not such praise tasteless, since they have no bad appetites? If we were to run through them all, the circumstances of action would be found trivial and unworthy of the gods. Still every one supposes that they *live* and therefore that they are active; we cannot suppose them to sleep like Endymion. Now if you take away from a living being action, and still more production. What is left but contemplation? Therefore the activity of God, which surpasses all others in blessedness, must be contemplative; and human activities, therefore, that which is most akin to this must be most of the nature of happiness.

Once again we see shades of Xenophanes and Parmenides. The Divine must be both knowable by us through our experiences of reasoning, but must also be immune from profane motivations or affections. These passages serve to augment and unify Aristotle's standard of Divine

¹²⁶ Aristotle. "Nicomachean Ethics." Translated by W. D. Ross in *The Basic Works of Aristotle*. Edited by Richard McKeon. New York: Random House, Inc., 2001.

immutability as being identical with Divine activity and provide the sketch of how a human mind fits into the overall scheme.

The final passages significant for understanding Aristotle's understanding of the DDI and our ability to know it is found in *De Anima* 3.4 and 3.5. At 430a2 Aristotle is explicit once again about an idea that powerfully echoes Parmenides' F3P,

Mind is itself thinkable in exactly in the same way as its objects are. For (a) in the case of objects which involve no matter, what thinks and what is thought are identical; for speculative knowledge and its objects are identical. (Why mind is not always thinking we must consider later.) (b) In the case of those which contain matter each of the objects of thought is only potentially present. It follows that while *they* will not have in mind them (for mind is a potentiality of them only in so far as they are capable of being disengaged from matter) mind may be thinkable.¹²⁷

And finally Aristotle gives the obscure and difficult paragraphs of 3.5 which are as follows;

And in fact mind as we have described it is what is by virtue of becoming all things, while there is another which is what it is by virtue of making all things: This is a sort of positive state like light; for in a sense light makes potential colours into actual colours.

Mind in this sense of it is separable, impassible, unmixed, since it is in its essential nature activity (for always the active is superior to the passive factor, the originating force to the matter which it forms).

Actual knowledge is identical to its object: in the individual, potential knowledge is in time prior to actual knowledge, but in the universe as a whole it is not prior even in time. Mind is not at one time knowing and at another not. When mind is set free from its present conditions it appears as just what it is and nothing more: this alone is immortal and eternal (we do not, however, remember its former activity because, while mind is in this sense impassible, mind as passive is destructible), and without it nothing thinks.

While this passage is famously difficult, it is clear that Aristotle can be read as being committed to the idea of an active Divine mind that cannot be corrupted by potentiality.

This idea of the divine and human mind being distinct but not wholly other weds the concepts of divine invincibility, power, and constancy of Xenophanes with the mental capacities inherent in Parmenides and Heraclitus. These principles create a means by which the Divine is unique, but also imminently knowable. In many ways these passages, taken together serve to

¹²⁷ Aristotle. "De Anima" Translated by J. A. Smith in in *The Basic Works of Aristotle*. Edited by Richard McKeon. New York: Random House, Inc., 2001.

show the paradigm of ancient thinking on this matter. The DDI of the ancient world is not a matter of abstracted logical principles, but of a contiguous rationality that is a part of all reality—be it divine or profane. Ultimately, regardless of the final truth about Aristotle’s personal convictions regarding the divine, these passages in their context give us a picture of how the DDI can function in a pre-modern systematic understanding of the cosmos.

CHAPTER FIVE:

CICERO, PHILO JUDAEUS, AND THE NEW TESTAMENT

The influence of Plato and Aristotle on the Hellenic period cannot be overstated, and many lifetimes' work could be devoted to the study of the various extant figures we have from this time period. I have here selected three thinkers that I believe exemplify the prevailing philosophical-theological concerns of the period from 100BCE to 100CE, and we shall examine what each of these three individuals has to say about the nature of God or the gods as unchanging. Cicero will give us a good touchpoint for how the idea of changelessness has advanced into the popular culture of Latin rhetoricians, as well as its public acceptance in the early days of the Roman Empire. Philo Judaeus will show us how a Jewish thinker will use the resources in his own tradition to insist on God's changelessness (despite apparent biblical passages that indicate otherwise). Paul of Tarsus will show us the emerging synthesis between Hellenic philosophical ideas and apocalyptic Judaism that gives rise to Christianity. Specifically Paul's concern with Christology and the incarnation (both major themes in early Christian writing) will pose drastic challenges to a doctrine of simple divine changelessness. An examination of these three thinkers will hardly provide up with an exhaustive understanding of the nature and use of DDI in this period, but it will enable us to understand where this doctrine is situated at the time, and what work it does in philosophical-religious dialogue.

Cicero and Middle Platonism

We have extant much of Cicero's *De natura deorum* though not all of it. What remains, however, gives us a picture of the common views concerning the nature of the gods in Hellenic Rome. While the discussion that Cicero records comes to no explicit conclusions regarding the nature of the gods, he does provide us a history of ideas regarding the nature of the gods (albeit a polemic one). While it might seem that the content of the positions and criticisms regarding the Epicurean and Stoic ideas about the gods and nature should be the most significant section of this work, there is little new about Cicero's criticisms. Rather, the most telling and compelling facts about *De natura deorum* are small things that are easily overlooked. The first, and perhaps most significant, piece of information that Cicero gives us about this topic is that this study is the purview of natural philosophers rather than some other group of individuals. The second tidbit is that there is still an ongoing tension between the established state religion that worships anthropomorphic gods and a more abstract philosophical consideration of Deity that does not succumb to or depend upon anthropomorphism. The third and final piece of information that Cicero gives us is that there is a close identity between the physical (and because of point 1, theological) doctrines of the Stoic and Peripatetic schools in the minds of most Romans at this time period.

Much ink has been spilled in an attempt to understand what Cicero's personal convictions were concerning the nature of the gods, especially because of closing lines of the monograph: "Here the conversation ended, and we parted, Vellius thinking Cotta's discourse to be the truer, while I felt that that of Balbus approximated more nearly to a semblance of the truth."¹²⁸ While the desire to know Cicero's personal convictions is understandable, it is hardly important in comparison to the information he communicates to us about the state of the question regarding

¹²⁸ Cicero. *On the Nature of the Gods. Academics*. Translated by H. Rackham. Leob Classical Library 268. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1933. III.95g-i

the nature of the gods in his time period. Indeed, it may be foolhardy to even seek for an Academic's "true beliefs" in the first place. The reader should remember that the account that he sends to Brutus is not a public exercise; rather it is a way to open discussion with his peers concerning matters that are of personal interest to him. Cicero's examination of this topic functions as an exploration of the matter at hand so that he and Brutus (and any other peers they wish to bring to the discussion) can have meaningful correspondence about this matter in the future. If we keep these things in mind it becomes easier to understand why the work reads like a cross between an epistle and an encyclopedia article—and one that ends in *aporia* at that.

Any lasting power from Cicero's argumentation in *De natura deorum* comes not from the novelty of the reasoning, but rather from the strength of Cicero's command of rhetorical skill in his native tongue—a skill that makes these arguments available, and indeed enjoyable, to a Latin speaking audience. Any student of archaic and ancient philosophy will find little new in all of this work, but that makes it no less significant for the Roman citizens who read it over the coming centuries. Accurate and erudite communication of these ideas and arguments is of great use to the student of philosophy, especially in the Latin speaking world of the coming centuries. In particular, the rehearsal of these arguments will be of great use to Christian theologians and apologists, as they provide an easy access to what have become very standard arguments against anthropomorphic paganisms. As Maccormack remarks,

What mattered about Cicero was not so much his thinking about law, or—as in the *Tusculan Disputations*—his thinking about pain and death, but the discontinuities and discrepancies in Roman notions of the gods that he had written about in *De natura deorum*. For generations Christian writers, the vantage points there portrayed, that is the philosophical theodicies of two of the interlocutors, the Epicurean Velleius and the Stoic Balbus, as critiqued by the adherent of the Academy and *pontifex* Gaius Cotta, provided arguments both to attack Roman and in general pagan religion, and simultaneously to affirm the truth of Christian monotheism. In the dialogue *Octavius*, the very form of which was inspired by Cicero, Tertullian's near contemporary Minucius Felix thus adapted and incorporated statements by Cicero's Balbus about the order and harmony of the cosmos as proofs of the existence of

god into his defence [sic] of Christianity, while statements by Velleius and Cotta were recycled to demonstrate that the religion of ancient Rome and pagan religion in general were erroneous.¹²⁹

This use of Cicero's monographs shows us that his influence on theological inquiry does not diminish, but is rather disseminated throughout the next centuries, even fueling certain movements in decidedly Christian thinkers. Neither the obviousness of Cicero's influence, nor the strength of the arguments he records need be evaluated here, rather let us turn to the deep significance of the three themes I outlined above.

The first point shows us that in the Hellenic Period, and even the philosophy happening in the transition from the Roman Republic to the Roman Empire, we are still dealing with systems of thought that hold to the continuity of explanations of the cosmos with explanations of the divine. Cicero repeatedly locates the debate on the nature of the gods in the realm of natural philosophy. Velleius introduces Cicero's discussion on the nature of the gods thusly,

I am not going to expound to you doctrines that are mere baseless figments of the imagination, such as the artisan deity and world-builder of Plato's *Timeaeus*, or that old hag of a fortuneteller, the *Pronoia* (which we may render 'Providence') of the Stoics; nor yet a world endowed with a mind and senses of its own, a spherical, rotary god of burning fire; these are the marvels and monstrosities of philosophers who do not reason but dream. [. . .] Can you suppose that a man can have even dipped into natural philosophy if he imagines that anything that has come into being can be eternal? What composite whole is not capable of dissolution? What thing is there that has a beginning that has not an end?¹³⁰

The standard of needing to apply the standards of natural philosophy when examining the nature of the gods is further illustrated by Velleius's recitation of the varying ideas about divine nature from Thales to Chrysippus and declares them all to be "more like the dreams of madmen than the considered opinion of philosophers."¹³¹ This *ad hominem* attack by Velleius is, perhaps, ironic as his school's doctrines and its founder are rather exquisitely abused by Cotta for much of the

¹²⁹ Sabine Maccormack, "Cicero in late antiquity." In *The Cambridge Companion to Cicero*, ed. Catherine Steel, 251-305. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013. 256

¹³⁰ Cicero, I.18c-19a, I.20c-20g.

¹³¹ Cicero, I.42a. p.43

work. Vellius's recitation is followed by a rather simplistic understanding of the gods as sedate, dispassionate, and disinterested entities engaged in no activity whatsoever. Vellius claims that belief in the gods "has not been established by authority, custom or law, but rests on the unanimous and abiding consensus of mankind; their existence is therefore a necessary inference, since we possess an instinctive or rather an innate concept of them; but a belief which all men by nature share must necessarily be true; therefore it must be admitted that the gods exist."¹³²

Vellius's standard for epistemic justification is hardly a convincing argument for the existence of the gods, and his argument for their nature is similarly lackluster. It is safe to assess that Cicero had little interest in, or patience with, Epicurean conceptions of the divine. Cicero's apparent desire to recount the history of Greek ideas about the nature of the gods is far more compelling an exercise than the argumentation of Vellius in this introductory passage.

The history of the subject is engaged in by natural philosophers, and even the Cotta, for all his Academic skepticism, affirms the appropriateness of this approach even as he denies that the Epicurean doctrine is foolishness, "In all this I speak for the time being only as the mouthpiece of our oracles of natural philosophy; whether their utterances are true or false I do not know, but at all events they are more probable than those of your school."¹³³ Cotta's account is critical and apophatic, and as such only shows the problems involved in considering whether the nature of the gods can be grasped according to the programs laid out by previous philosophers (as summarized by Vellius and Balbus). Cicero's own positive assessment of the nature of the gods is, therefore doomed to remain unarticulated—as it should be for one in the Academic tradition. Cicero himself tells us as much in his opening address to Brutus when he says, "Those however, who seek to learn my personal opinions on the various questions show an

¹³² Cicero, I.44b-h

¹³³ Cicero, I.66b-c

unreasonable degree of curiosity. In discussion it is not so much weight of authority as force of argument that should be demanded.”¹³⁴ As a prominent Roman citizen during the first century of the Empire, his public affirmation of devotion to the gods is part of his patriotism. Philosophical inquiry is part of his personal passion. While we may not have a firm answer on Cicero’s personal beliefs regarding the nature of the gods, we may rely on his conviction that enquiry into the nature of the gods is a part of the business of natural philosophers.

The second detail given to us in small asides in the text is that the tension between philosophical accounts of the nature of deity and the popular religion of the day is simply assumed in the characters who we find populating the dialogue. In particular we find that Cotta is a *pontifex*, and despite any skepticism he may have for the business of augury and soothsaying, he is an active and willing participant in the religious order of the day.

The third piece of information is the briefest and easily overlooked, but is of deep significance to understanding how members of the Roman intelligentsia, especially exponents of Middle Platonism, understood the philosophical schools to be related. In the dramatized beginning of the dialogue, before the accounts of the different schools are given, Cicero writes this brief passage recording the conversation with which his companions welcome him into the discussion,

“Well, I too,” I replied, “think I have come at the right moment, as you say. For here are you, three leaders of three schools of philosophy, met in congress. In fact we only want Marcus Piso to have every considerable school represented.”

“Oh,” rejoined Cotta, “if what is said in the book which our master Antiochus lately dedicated to our good Balbus here is true, you have no need to regret the absence of your friend Piso. Antiochus holds the view that the doctrines of the Stoics, though differing in form of expression, agree in substance with those of the Peripatetics. I should like to know your opinion of the book, Balbus.”

“My opinion?” said Balbus, “Why, I am surprised that a man of first-rate intellect like Antiochus should have failed to see what a gulf divides the Stoics, who distinguish expediency and right not in name only but in essential nature, from the Peripatetics, who

¹³⁴ Cicero, I.10a-d

class the right and the expedient together, and only recognize differences of quantity or degree, not of kind, between them. This is not a slight verbal discrepancy, but a fundamental difference of doctrine. However we can discuss this some other time. For the moment we will, if you please, continue the topic which we had begun.”¹³⁵

This brief aside shows us that as far as Cicero and others like him in Middle Platonism are concerned, the Stoics and Peripatetics are understood to be fundamentally similar in doctrine, with only minor disputes over proper technical syntax. It is true that Balbus here objects to this comparison, but notice the substance of his disagreement—Balbus is concerned that his interlocutors not confuse Stoic and Peripatetic *ethics*, he voices no objection as to the similarities of the physical doctrines of these schools. This point may seem minor and accidental, but in a dialogue that takes itself to be concerned with the proper practice of natural philosophy applied as a means to consider the very nature of divinity, we have a statement by Cicero showing that the idea of *pronoia* is perfectly analogous to the Unmoved Mover of the Peripatetics. While this detail might seem insignificant at first glance, we shall be reminded of it when we consider Philo Judaeus’s physical doctrine and how it relates to his understanding of the nature of God as distinct from the fundamental truths of physics in the sub-lunar world.

Altogether Cicero’s examination of the nature of the gods adds nothing new to the pure question of what are the gods like, but it gives us a wonderful window into the state of the debate in Roman society. The articulation of the argumentation is a subject for classicists, and the strength of the argumentation for metaphysicians and theologians to assess, but for the purpose of understanding the state of the DDI, Cicero adds nothing new, other than these small details which will help us to more accurately evaluate the writings of Paul of Tarsus and Philo Judaeus. Accordingly, let us turn to Philo next.

¹³⁵ Cicero, 16.a-17.a

Philo Judaeus

Philo Judaeus is rather atypical of a Jewish thinker of his day, and his methodology of interpretation and training marks something of a bold synthesis that would be only tenuously accepted long after he died. In some ways he prefigures the opinions of the much more widely accepted Moses bin Maimon, but Philo's thought concerning the Torah and philosophy remains fully his own—not least because he lives and works solidly within the Middle-Platonic period, rather than the Post-Plotinian philosophical landscape. Philo's commitment to Judaism and to the Law is deep, but his interpretation of the Torah is particularly unconventional for the first centuries BCE and CE. His method of allegorical interpretation is not unheard of, but is also not popular. This interpretation is not well received by other Jewish scholars, nor by Christians—with the possible exception of Origen.¹³⁶ While some Christians did engage interpretive methods that included allegory Philo's methodology was much more pointedly, and singularly, allegorical. This method of interpreting the Tanakh allegorically allowed for novelties in theological and philosophical understandings of the importance of sections of the Law. This study will focus on sections of Philo's Allegorical Interpretation of Genesis that deal specifically with the idea that God must be unable to change—specifically with regard to intentions, but also in regards to God's uniqueness when considered as part of the study of φύσις.

First, we must again recognize that at this point in philosophical discourse, the study of First Philosophy (Metaphysics) and Physics is still not rigidly distinguished, and so to enquire into God's nature, one is also be engaged in a study of physics. So far, despite Aristotle's distinctions, the two fields remain linked, and the study of one must needs affect the study of the other. Accordingly, Philo's theological enquiries are directed at Genesis—a book that deals with the establishment of all φύσις. While it is tempting for us to provide a marked distinction

¹³⁶ The allegorical method is what is in question here, rather than any particular resulting interpretation.

between theological and physical study, Philo—like others in the pre-medieval periods—has no such qualms. Philo’s doctrine of φύσις will need to be outlined in brief in order for this study to proceed.

Philo’s physical ideas mirror that of Stoic doctrine that is somewhat conflated with a more Peripatetic division of the soul in that he describes living beings under a four-fold physical division. Philo introduces this division in his discussion of the creation of Adam and Eve when he makes the following claims;

Having said this, we must go on to remark that the mind when as yet unclothed and confined by the body (and it is of the mind when not so confined that he is speaking) has many powers. It has the power of holding together, of growing, of conscious life, of thought, and countless other powers, varying both in species and genus. Lifeless things, like stones and blocks of wood, share with all others the power of holding together, of which the bones in us, which are not unlike stones partake. “Growth” extends to plants, and there are parts in us, such as our nails and hair, resembling plants; growth is coherence capable of moving itself. Conscious life is the power to grow, with the additional power of receiving impressions and by being the subject of impulses. This is shared also by creatures without reason. Indeed our mind contains a part that is analogous to the conscious life of a creature without reason. Once more, the power of thinking is peculiar to the mind, and while shared, it may well be, by beings more akin to God, is, so far as mortal beings are concerned, peculiar to man. This power or faculty is twofold. We are rational beings on the one hands as being partakers of mind, and on the other as being capable of discourse. Well, there is also another power or faculty in the soul, closely akin to these, namely that of receiving sense-impressions, and it is of this that the prophet is speaking.¹³⁷

This division mirrors Stoic division of physics, though it also imports some use of Platonic and, more significantly, Peripatetic terminology. Specifically, Philo seems to have a robust idea that there are important divisions between the mind and the body in which it is clothed. This sort of

¹³⁷ Philo. *On the Creation. Allegorical Interpretation of Genesis 2 and 3*. Translated by F. H. Colson, G. H. Whitaker. Loeb Classical Library 226. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1929. 22a-24b.

τούτου προειρημένου κάκεινο λεκτέον, | ὅτι ὁ γυμνὸς καὶ ἀνένδετος σῶματι νοῦς—περὶ γὰρ τοῦ μήπω ἐνδεδεμένου ἐστὶν ὁ λόγος—πολλὰς ἔχει δυνάμεις, ἐκτικὴν φυτικὴν ψυχικὴν διανοητικὴν, ἄλλας μυρίας κατὰ τε εἶδη καὶ γένη ἢ μὲν ἕξις κοινὴ καὶ τῶν ἀψύχων ἐστὶ λίθων καὶ ξύλων, ἧς μετέχει καὶ τὰ ἐν ἡμῖν εἰκότα λίθοις ὅστέα. ἡ δὲ φύσις διατείνει καὶ ἐπὶ τὰ φυτὰ· καὶ ἐν ἡμῖν δὲ ἐστὶν εἰκότα φυτοῖς, ὄνυχές τε καὶ τρίχες· ἐστὶ δὲ ἡ φύσις ἕξις ἤδη κινουμένη. ψυχὴ δὲ ἐστὶ φύσις προσειληφυῖα φαντασίαν καὶ ὀρμὴν· αὕτη κοινὴ καὶ τῶν ἀλόγων ἐστὶν· ἔχει δὲ καὶ ὁ ἡμέτερος νοῦς ἀναλογοῦν τι ἀλόγου ψυχῆ. πάλιν ἡ διανοητικὴ δύναμις ἰδίᾳ τοῦ νοῦ ἐστὶ, καὶ κοινὴ μὲν τάχα καὶ τῶν θειοτέρων φύσεων, ἰδίᾳ δὲ ὡς ἐν θνητοῖς ἀνθρώπων· αὕτη δὲ διττὴ, ἡ μὲν καθ’ ἣν λογικοὶ ἐσμὲν νοῦ μετέχοντες, ἡ δὲ καθ’ ἣν διαλεγόμεθα. ἐστὶν <οὖν καὶ> ἄλλη δύναμις ἐν ψυχῆ τούτων ἀδελφὴ, ἡ αἰσθητικὴ, περὶ ἧς ἐστὶν ὁ λόγος·

dualistic thinking is, of course, not held by the more monistic Stoics, but is available to both Middle Platonists and Peripatetics.¹³⁸ The use basic list of physical terms that Philo posits is ἐκτικὴν φυσικὴν ψυχικὴν διανοητικὴν,¹³⁹ a list to which we shall return momentarily. While Philo is not here interested in a robust cosmology, he is using the physical descriptions of the cosmos as applied to living things. This stratification of the parts of the soul is also a division in φύσις. This historical link to Stoic accounts of physics helps to reinforce Philo’s position in the history of philosophy, but also serve in a roundabout way to showcase Cicero’s claim that the doctrines of Stoic and Peripatetic thinkers of this period differ in form of expression but agree in substance. Philo maintains a physical doctrine that accounts for human capacity to receive new information, act and change upon receipt of such information, and even accounts for interaction between God and human beings. His familiarity with this series of doctrines is central to his account of God’s creation of the world, as well as what he sees as the necessary distinctions between Divine reality and the profane reality of human existence. This necessary distinction allows him to use Stoic terminology for the division of the parts of the soul, while maintaining a Peripatetic distance between God and φύσις that would not be available to Stoic thinkers.

Philo’s understanding of the physics of the soul and the bodies of living beings is deeply indebted to a both Stoic and Peripatetic conceptions of the parts of the soul, but may also mirror some of the ideas set forth in the *Timaeus*. It is not my purpose here to show a direct lineage of the earlier thinkers to Philo, but rather to establish that his conceptions regarding the soul are locatable in the general ebb and flow of philosophical discourse available in first century

¹³⁸ I will leave aside any arguments on whether Plato or Aristotle can be counted as Substance Dualists in the way post-Cartesian thinkers conceive of substance dualism and simply state that I see no reason at all to read them in such an anachronistic manner. At the very least Plato and Aristotle suggest that there *could be* distinct modes of existence for the soul and the body. The soul could exist as a form—either a form with independent existence, or as hylomorphic with the body. Peripatetics can allow for more forms of existence still, depending on their estimation of the mode of existence of aether and the Unmoved Mover (as the UMM can have no material cause).

¹³⁹ This list is found in both the *Allegorical Interpretation of Genesis II* at 22a-24b, and again in greater detail in *The Unchangeableness of God* at 35a-50l

Alexandria—the sort of information that Cicero would have us believe is readily available to students of various schools of philosophy. In the expanded consideration that he gives in *The Unchangeableness of God* (*Deus*, hereafter) Philo again lists these four parts of the created order of living beings as ἔξει, φύσει, ψυχῆ, and λογικῆ ψυχῆ.¹⁴⁰ Philo engages in a detailed explanation of each of these various parts of the created order, but its final part is clearly the most significant.

The first property to be considered is ἔξις. This property of body can be found in such unimpressive things as stones, sticks,¹⁴¹ and parts of severed body. He likens this part of existence to a breath that holds a thing to itself—from the innermost part to the outermost edge and back again. He even likens this property to a competitive race where the runner must complete a run from a beginning point to a second point and then return again whence he started.¹⁴² This property seems to be a simple description of the necessary condition of any particular existent, and so Philo does not give it a lengthy treatment.

After the brief description of ἔξις, he quickly turns to φύσις. It is at this point that Philo most clearly shows some familiarity with a Peripatetic conception of parts of the soul. He discusses how growth is specifically available to plants. In a passage very reminiscent of Aristotle's similar discussion in *De Anima* II, where Aristotle assigns the nutritive part of soul to plants. Philo's account of this power is similar to Aristotle's own. Philo accounts for this property of living entities thus, "Growth God assigned to plants. It is a compound of many

¹⁴⁰ Philo. *On The Unchangeableness of God. On Husbandry. Concerning Noah's Work As a Planter. On Drunkenness. On Sobriety*. Translated by F. H. Colson, G. H. Whitaker. Loeb Classical Library 247. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1930. 35.a-b

¹⁴¹ Marcus Aurelius also assigns the property of ἔξις to stones and sticks in *Meditations* 6.14. See A.S.L. Farquharson, *The meditations of the emperor Marcus Aurelius*, vol. 1, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1944

¹⁴² Philo *The Unchangeableness of God*, 35a-36e.

capacities, that of taking nourishment, of undergoing change, and that of increasing.”¹⁴³

Aristotle’s account runs as follows,

But the word living is used in many senses, and we say that a thing lives if any one of the following is present in it—mind, sensation, movement or rest in space, besides the movement implied in nutrition and decay or growth. Consequently all plants are considered to live, for they evidently have in themselves a capacity and first principle by means of which they exhibit both growth and decay in opposite directions; for they do not grow up and not down, but equally in both directions, and in every direction, and they are nourished and continue to live, as long as they are able to absorb food.¹⁴⁴

While it is likely too grand to claim that there is real textual transmission from Aristotle to Philo, we can see similar themes, and a few words used in similar fashion. The nutritive part of the soul is clearly important to Philo, and he commits himself to an easy and readily available set of Peripatetic descriptions of how nourishment feeds growth. He also aligns this capacity for growth and nourishment with the ancient idea that φύσις still carries the biological sense of growth for which Cornford argued. Where Philo differs from the Stoics and Peripatetics is his insistence that this biological unity is given by God and is not *sui generis*. Philo is clearly indebted to Aristotle’s basic articulation of how nutrition functions in plant-life at this point, even if that influence is not perfectly direct.

Philo then turns his attention to the difference between the type of life had by plants and animals, namely ψυχή. Once again, he follows a Peripatetic division in assigning sensation to Animals as the distinguishing factor, but also as an explanation of their movement. Philo’s explanation at this point is rudimentary in comparison to Aristotle’s treatment of the same issue, but the brevity and imprecision are hardly surprising. Philo’s concern is not an accurate psychology of creatures (animal or human) but rather to provide just enough explanation to make

¹⁴³ Philo, *The Unchangeableness of God*, 37a-c Τὴν δὲ φύσιν ἀπένειμε τοῖς φυτοῖς κερασάμενος αὐτὴν ἐκ πλείστον δυνάμεων, θρεπτικῆς τε καὶ μεταβλητικῆς καὶ αὐξητικῆς.

¹⁴⁴ Aristotle, *De Anima* 413a22-25. πλεοναχῶς δὲ τοῦ ζῆν λεγομένου, κἂν ἔν τι τούτων ἐνυπάρχη μόνον, ζῆν αὐτό φαμεν, οἷον νοῦς, αἴσθησις, κίνησις καὶ στάσις ἢ κατὰ τόπον, ἔτι κίνησις ἢ κατὰ τροφήν καὶ φθίσις τε καὶ αὐξήσις. W.D. Ross, *Aristotle. De anima*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1961 (repr. 1967).

an allegorical connection between the soul of a sage and the sort of existence possessed by God and God alone. Accordingly the explanation of the senses in animals takes only five sentences.

What significance, if any, can be attributed to the difference between the use of *διανοητικὴν* in the *Allegorical Commentary* and the use of *λογικῆ ψυχῆ* in the *Deus*. is unclear, but the list is otherwise semantically consistent. While this difference in terms could be significant, it seems unnecessary to posit an inconsistency in Philo's thinking here. Plato and Aristotle use *διανοητικὴν* in a similar manner, and it is reasonable to think that this term could be seen by Philo as simply synonymous with *λογικῆ ψυχῆ*. Philo's technical usage may not be as exacting as it could have been, but he does preserve the requisite distinctions inherent in these various semantic artifacts.

At the very least we are aware that Plato uses *διανοητικός* in the *Timeaeus* to compare the proper motions of the "rational soul" that moves the body of the individual human person to the proper motions of "the all." This use of *διανοητικός* is notably used to contrast the self-caused motions of the soul with the less excellent motions of pure body. Aristotle uses *διανοητικός* as a contrast between intellectual and moral *ἠθικῆς* virtues, again preserving the hierarchy of excellence proper to various parts of the soul. As for *λογικῆ ψυχῆ*, we find a term that is not used much by Platonists nor Peripatetics, but rather by Stoics. Though it is some time later, we see Marcus Aurelius allude to this very physical doctrine in *Meditations* 6.14.¹⁴⁵ The physical doctrines of Aristotle and the Stoics were distinct, but to a person not deeply entrenched in one school or the other these peculiarities of technical discourse are less than obvious. Philo, in this case, shows a use of slightly divergent terms in physics and first philosophy as synonymous, and,

¹⁴⁵ Marcus Aurelius specifically assigns the property of *ψυχὴν λογικὴν καὶ κοινωνικῶς* as the best or most perfected sort of soul—presumably the soul of the sage, as the one who praises this sort of soul no longer turns after anything else, giving us a more truncated version of Philo's list of physical principles of existent entities. Again, see Farquharson.

following Cicero, can be seen as surveying the philosophical landscape and conflating some ideas of the Middle Platonists, Stoics, and Peripatetics.

While Philo's conception of the soul as based in a φύσις that is a created order, rather than a sempiternal existent, this conception of the soul forms the basis for comparison to the nature and ψυχή of the Divine. The first important distinction that Philo makes in *Deus*. is that God cannot be *overcome* by change or by passion. This appeal to invincibility and impassibility as the cause of and reason for DDI is, by this point in history, rather to be expected. In no ways can Philo accept that causation flows from creation to the Divine, not even as a form of response to the created order in particular temporal states. Since Philo has been dealing thus far with an interpretation of Genesis, he must now deal with a passage that forms a direct challenge to his physical doctrines, his psychology of the Divine, and his conceptions of causation;

The LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intention of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And the LORD regretted that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him to his heart. So the LORD said, "I will blot out man whom I have created from the face of the land, man and animals and creeping things and birds of the heavens, for I am sorry that I have made them."¹⁴⁶

Much like the Abraham, Philo is faced with a seeming absurdity. He is convinced that God is not able to be affected by things lesser than Godself. His philosophical leanings will not allow that the Divine can suffer changes at the hands of any lesser entity, or even any substantive change at all. Yet here in the Torah he is confronted with a dual problem, God is grieved, and God commits to a change of action because of the grief He experiences.

Philo is exceedingly clear that we must not attribute change to God because of interactions with created entities. He quotes the passage from the LXX available to him, and responds in a fashion that makes abundantly clear his objection;

¹⁴⁶ Genesis 6:5-7 ESV

Let us extend our discussion to embrace the words that follow. “The Lord God,” says Moses, “seeing that the wickedness of men were multiplied upon the earth and that every man intended evil in his heart diligently all his days, God had it in His mind that He had made man upon the earth, and He bethought Him. And God said, I will boot out man, whom I made, from the face of the earth.”

Perhaps some of those who are careless inquirers will suppose that the Lawgiver is hinting that the Creator repented of the creation of men when He beheld their impiety, and that this was the reason why He wished to destroy the whole race. Those who think thus may be sure that they make the sins of these men of old time seem light and trivial through the vastness of their own godlessness. For what greater impiety could there be than to suppose that the Unchangeable changes? Indeed some maintain that even among men vacillation of mind and judgement is not universal; for those who study philosophy in guilelessness and purity, it is held, gain from their knowledge this as their chief reward, that they do not change with changing circumstances, but with unbending steadfastness and firm constancy take in hand all that it behooves them to do.¹⁴⁷

While Philo does not at the outset of this objection explain why God ought to be changeless, he does engage in a curious sort of reasoning. Having discussed the virtues in the first section of the *Deus.*, he now turns to a sort of reverse allegory in order to make his point about the immutable nature of God. He examines the soul of the philosopher as a means to understand the soul of God. Once again we see the link between physics and theology, and Philo uses an Aristotelian method (i.e. using physics to study the Divine) to make cataphatic inferences concerning God’s unchanging nature.

This analogy with the soul of a sage or a fully formed philosopher has a venerable history. We have seen this same conception of the soul of the philosopher as constant and unflappable, even changeless in Plato’s use of the character of Theaetetus, in the purity of the

¹⁴⁷ Philo, The Unchangeableness of God, V. τὰ δ’ ἀκόλουθα τῷ λόγῳ συνυφήνωμεν. “ιδῶν” οὖν φησι “κύριος ὁ θεὸς ὅτι ἐπληθύνθησαν αἱ κακίαι τῶν ἀνθρώπων ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς, καὶ πᾶς τις διανοεῖται ἐν τῇ καρδίᾳ ἐπιμελῶς τὰ πονηρὰ πάσας τὰς ἡμέρας, ἐνεθυμήθη ὁ θεός, ὅτι ἐποίησε τὸν ἄνθρωπον ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς, καὶ διενοήθη. καὶ εἶπεν ὁ θεός· ἀπαλείψω τὸν ἄνθρωπον ὃν ἐποίησα ἀπὸ προσώπου τῆς γῆς.” ἴσως τινὲς τῶν ἀνεξετάστων ὑποτοπήσουσι τὸν νομοθέτην αἰνίττεσθαι, ὅτι ἐπὶ τῇ γενέσει τῶν ἀνθρώπων ὁ δημιουργὸς μετέγνω κατιδῶν τὴν ἀσεβειαν αὐτῶν, ἧς χάριν αἰτίας ἐβουλήθη σύμπαν διαφθεῖραι τὸ γένος. ἀλλ’ ἴστωσαν ὅτι ταῦτα δοξάζοντες ἐπελαφρίζουσι καὶ ἐπικουφίζουσι τὰ τῶν παλαιῶν ἐκείνων ἀμαρτήματα δι’ ὑπερβολὴν τῆς περὶ αὐτοὺς ἀθεότητος. τί γὰρ ἂν ἀσεβήματα μείζον γένοιτο τοῦ ὑπολαμβάνειν τὸν ἄτρεπτον τρέπεσθαι; καίτοι | τῶν ἀξιούντων μηδὲ πάντας ἀνθρώπους ταῖς γνώμαις ἐπαμφοτερίζειν· τοὺς γὰρ ἀδόλως καὶ καθαρῶς φιλοσοφήσαντας μέγιστον ἐκ τῆς ἐπιστήμης ἀγαθὸν εὔρασθαι τὸ μὴ τοῖς πράγμασι συµμεταβάλλειν, ἀλλὰ μετὰ στερρότητος ἀκλινοῦς καὶ παγίου βεβαιότητος ἅπασιν τοῖς ἀρμόττουσιν ἐγγχειρεῖν.

One in the *Timaeus*, and in the closing books of the *Republic*. We have also seen this innate striving for pure constancy in Aristotle's *De Anima*, book 10 of *Nicomachean Ethics*, and the activity of all of nature as oriented toward the Final Cause that is the Unmoved Mover in *Physics* and *Metaphysics*. In addition, we see this same sort of striving for immobility in the Stoic doctrine of the Sage, who has become invincible to the changing fortunes of the world. While a detailed analysis of Stoic doctrine is beyond our purpose here, Cicero points out that this same orientation toward the unchanging constancy of *Pronoia* in the Stoics has continued to organize their ethical principles until this point, and this same motivation continues in Seneca, Epictetus, and Marcus Aurelius. This conception of the philosophical Sage as approaching the divine is most easily and closely seen in the death of Socrates as Plato records it in the *Phaedo*. It should come as no surprise, then, that Philo constructs this passage about his understanding of the DDI with analogy to his own preferred Sage, Abraham. The virtues of Abraham are just such as are required to explain God's immutability in Philo's system, and will be, so he thinks, sufficient to establish that God is in fact constant and invincible in a way that is quite in line with how the DDI has thus far been utilized.

Abraham's (whom he titles Ἀβραάμ τοῦ τελείου) chief virtue, as Philo sees it, is that Abraham is able to act in constancy of perfect character, without any reticence or back-turning.

He brings to God the dearly loved, the only trueborn offspring of the soul, that clearest image of self-learned wisdom, named Isaac, and without a murmur renders, as in duty bound, that fitting thank-offering. But first he bound, as the law tells us, the feet of the new strange victim, either because having once received God's inspiration he judged it right to tread no more aught that was mortal, or it may be that he was taught to see how changeable and inconstant was creation, through his knowledge of the unwavering steadfastness that belongs to the Existent; for in this we are told that he had put his trust.¹⁴⁸

¹⁴⁸ Philo, *The Unchangeableness of God*. I.4. ὅς τὸ ἀγαπητὸν καὶ μόνον τῆς ψυχῆς ἔγγονον γνήσιον, τῆς αὐτοματοῦς σοφίας εἰκόνα ἐναργεστάτην, ἐπὶ κλησὶν Ἰσαάκ, ἀνάγει θεῶ καὶ ἀποδίδωσι μετὰ πάσης εὐθυμίας ἀναγκαῖον καὶ ἀρμόττον χαριστήριον συμποδίσας, ὡς φησὶν ὁ νόμος, τὸ καινουργηθὲν ἱερεῖον, ἥτοι παρόσον ἐπ' οὐδενὸς θνητοῦ βαίνειν ἅπαξ ἐπιθειάσας ἡξίου, ἢ παρόσον ἀνίδρυτον καὶ ἄστατον κατεῖδε τὴν γένεσιν, ὅτε τὴν περὶ τὸ ὄν ἀνενδοίαστον ἔγνω βεβαίωτητα, ἣ λέγεται πεπιστευκέναι.

Here we see Abraham acting not out of mere capitulation to greater powers, of the whim of divine caprice, but out of a perfection of character that would allow him to be no less steady than God Godself. Philo insists that the giving up of the firstborn son is an analogy to acting with perfect virtue. Hannah gives up Samuel in just such a way. Rather than be obsessed with keeping her firstborn son, her greatest virtue, she freely consigns to God because God gave such a virtue in the first place. It is this constancy of character that Philo assigns to the virtuous person when he compares the soul of the Sage to a well-made and tuned lyre¹⁴⁹ that must be perfectly balanced and exist in perfect internal harmony in order to function correctly. The Lyre's virtue comes not from outside itself, but from the perfect proportions that exist inside its own being. If it lacks any internal perfection, it becomes unworthy to play any great music. The sage's soul is similarly perfect, and by analogy Philo reasons that God must therefore be even more changeless.

Oh! if the soul of man, when it feels the soft breeze of wisdom and knowledge can dismiss the stormy surge which the fierce burst of the gale of wickedness has suddenly stirred, and levelling the billowy swell can rest in unruffled calm under a bright clear sky, can you doubt that He, the Imperishable Blessed One, who has taken as His own the sovereignty of the virtues, of perfection itself and beatitude, knows no change of will, but ever holds fast to what He proposed from the first without any alteration?¹⁵⁰

He goes on to insist that humans must needs always be subject to change, but that this quality of humanity is not a strength, but a weakness peculiar to our imperfect existence. "God," he says, "has no such fickleness."¹⁵¹

¹⁴⁹ Philo, *The Unchangeableness of God*, 24-25.

¹⁵⁰ Philo, *The Unchangeableness of God*, 26. ὅπου γοῦν ἀνθρώπων ψυχὴ τὸν πολὺν κλύδωνα καὶ σάλον, ὃν καταρραγὲν σφοδρὸν πνεῦμα τὸ κακίας αἰφνίδιον ἠγειρεν, ἐπιστήμης καὶ σοφίας αὔραις ἀποτίθεται καὶ τὸ κυμαῖνον καὶ παρωδηκὸς ὑφεῖσα νημέφ' εὐδία χρωμένη γαληνιάζει, εἴτ' ἐνδοιάζεις, ὅτι ὁ ἄφθαρτος καὶ μακάριος καὶ τῶν ἀρετῶν καὶ αὐτῆς τελειότητος καὶ εὐδαιμονίας ἀνημμένος τὸ κράτος οὐ χρῆται γνώμης μεταβολῆ, μένει δὲ ἐφ' ὧν ἐξ ἀρχῆς ἐβουλεύσατο οὐδὲν αὐτῶν μετατιθεῖς;

¹⁵¹ Philo, *The Unchangeableness of God*, 28c. ὁ δὲ θεὸς οὐχ ἀψίκορος.

Philo takes a brief aside to argue for the necessary atemporality of God (which is by no means trivial), but the substance of his argumentation for DDI is found in the definition of his physical terms—God’s atemporality is merely a feature of his peculiar mode of existing as Creator of the cosmos. In this regard Philo is clearly attempting to articulate the primacy of God as Creator of the universe, and therefore of time. He actually borrows familial analogies in order to explain the derivative nature of time and justify God’s omniscience of future events.

[God] employs the forethought and foreknowledge which are virtues peculiarly His own, and suffers nothing to escape His control or pass outside His comprehension. For not even about the future can uncertainty be found with Him, since nothing is uncertain or future to God. No one doubts that the parents must have knowledge of his offspring, the craftsman of his handiwork, the steward of things entrusted to his stewardship. But God is very truth the father and craftsman and steward of the heavens and the universe and all that is therein. Future events lie shrouded in the darkness of some time that is yet to be at different distances, some near, some far. But God is the maker of time also, for He is the father of time’s father, that is of the universe, and has caused the movements of the one to be the source of the generation of the other. Thus time stands to God in the relation of a grandson. For this universe, since we perceive by our senses is the younger son of God. To the elder son, I mean the intelligible universe, He assigned the place of firstborn, and purposed that it should remain in His own keeping. So this younger son, the world of our senses when set in motion, brought that entity we call time to the brightness of it’s rising. And thus with God there is no future, since He has made the boundaries of the ages subject to Himself. For God’s life is not a time, but eternity, which is the archetype and pater of time; and in eternity there is no past nor future, but only present existence.¹⁵²

For comparison, in *On the Creation* he explains God’s eternity as follows,

Then he says that “in the beginning God made the heaven and the earth,” taking “beginning” not, as some think, in a chronological sense, for time was not before there was a world. Time began either simultaneously with the world or after it. For since time is a measured space

¹⁵² Philo, *The Unchangeableness of God*, 29g-32h. και προμηθειά και προνοία χρόμενος, οικείαις ἀρεταῖς, οὐδὲν ἀπελευθεριάζειν και ἔξω τῆς ἑαυτοῦ καταλήψεως βαίνειν ἔῃ· ἐπειδήπερ οὐδ’ ἡ τῶν μελλόντων ἀδηλότης αὐτῷ συμβατή· οὔτε γὰρ ἄδηλον οὔτε μέλλον οὐδὲν θεῷ. δῆλον μὲν οὖν, ὅτι και τῶν γεννηθέντων τὸν φυτεύσαντα και τῶν δημιουργηθέντων τὸν τεχνίτην και τὸν ἐπίτροπον τῶν ἐπιτροπευομένων ἐπιστήμονα [ἀναγκαῖον] εἶναι δεῖ. ὁ δὲ θεὸς πατήρ και τεχνίτης και ἐπίτροπος τῶν ἐν οὐρανῷ τε και κόσμῳ πρὸς ἀλήθειαν ἐστι. και μὴν τά γε μέλλοντα συσκιάζεται ὑπὸ τοῦ αὐθις χρόνου, τοτὲ μὲν βραχεῖ, τοτὲ δὲ μακρῷ διαστήματι. δημιουργὸς δὲ και χρόνου θεός· και γὰρ τοῦ πατρὸς αὐτοῦ πατήρ—πατήρ δὲ χρόνου κόσμος—τὴν κίνησιν αὐτοῦ γένεσιν ἀποφίνας ἐκείνου· ὥστε υἱοῦ τῆς τάξιν ἔχειν πρὸς θεὸν τὸν χρόνον. ὁ μὲν γὰρ κόσμος οὗτος νεώτερος υἱὸς θεοῦ, ἅτε αἰσθητὸς ὢν· τὸν γὰρ πρεσβύτερον [οὐδένα εἶπε]—νοητὸς δ’ ἐκείνος—πρεσβειῶν ἀξιώσας παρ’ ἑαυτῷ καταμένειν διανοήθη. οὗτος οὖν ὁ νεώτερος υἱὸς ὁ αἰσθητὸς κινήσει τὴν χρόνου φύσιν ἀναλάμψαι και ἀνασχεῖν ἐποίησεν. ὥστε οὐδὲν παρὰ θεῷ μέλλον τῷ και τὰ τῶν χρόνων ὑπηγμένῳ πέρατα· και γὰρ οὐ χρόνος, ἀλλὰ τὸ ἀρχέτυπον τοῦ χρόνου και παράδειγμα αἰῶν ὁ βίος ἐστὶν αὐτοῦ· ἐν αἰῶνι δὲ οὔτε παρελήλυθεν οὐδὲν οὔτε μέλλει, ἀλλὰ μόνον ὑφέστηκεν.

determined by the world's movement, and since movement could not be prior to the object moving, but must of necessity arise either after it or simultaneously with it, it follows of necessity that time also is either coeval with or later born than the world. To venture to affirm that it is elder born would be to do violence to philosophic sense.¹⁵³

Philo's conception of God at this point is a hybridization of a Middle Platonic and Peripatetic conceptions of deity. The language of the Demiurge follows Plato, but his particular attribution of atemporality is more similar to Aristotle's conception of the Unmoved Mover as being necessarily outside of time for essentially physical reasons. Accordingly, we can understand that his articulation of God's immutability incorporates atemporality not as a primary cause of immutability, but as a consequence of it. The atemporality of God is used to justify the flow of causation in a way that will become standard in Christian theological use in the coming centuries—particularly the articulation of foreknowledge and creative actions not as events in a chronological series but as a logical series.¹⁵⁴

There are, of course, other passages the Tanakh that affirm God's immutability,¹⁵⁵ but Philo does not focus on these passages. Nevertheless, Philo's contributions to philosophical theology in general, and both Judaism and Christianity can hardly be overstated, and his commitment to the DDI as a doctrine that explains God's causal relationship to the created order is the key to his influence. His commitment to a fully transcendent deity who is independent, invincible, and self-existent, but one that also orders the cosmos in a conscious and intentional way without undergoing any internal change. While it is a consequence of his argument rather than the main thrust, the distinction between God's intentional actions *qua* the actions of

¹⁵³ Philo, *On the Creation*. 26a-27a. Φησὶ δ' ὡς “ἐν ἀρχῇ ἐποίησεν ὁ θεὸς τὸν οὐρανὸν καὶ τὴν γῆν,” τὴν ἀρχὴν παραλαμβάνων, | οὐχ ὡς οἰονταί τινες, τὴν κατὰ χρόνον· χρόνος γὰρ οὐκ ἦν πρὸ κόσμου, ἀλλ' ἢ σὺν αὐτῷ γέγονεν ἢ μετ' αὐτόν· ἐπεὶ γὰρ διάστημα τῆς τοῦ κόσμου κινήσεως ἐστὶν ὁ χρόνος, προτέρα δὲ τοῦ κινουμένου κινήσις οὐκ ἂν γένοιτο, ἀλλ' ἀναγκαῖον αὐτὴν ἢ ὕστερον ἢ ἅμα συνίστασθαι, ἀναγκαῖον ἄρα καὶ τὸν χρόνον ἢ ἰσῆλικά κόσμου γεγόνεαι ἢ νεώτερον ἐκείνου· πρεσβύτερον δ' ἀποφαίνεσθαι τοιμᾶν ἀφιλόσοφον.

¹⁵⁴ See Philo, *On the Creation* 27a-h.

¹⁵⁵ Passages include Genesis 18:25; Numbers 23:19; 1 Samuel 15:29; 2 Samuel 22:31; 1 Kings 8:56; Job 23:13; Psalm 33:11, 102:26, 103:17; Proverbs 19:21; Ecclesiastes 3:14; Isaiah 14:24, 31:2, 46:9; and Malachi 3:6.

creation, but not as caused by the creation paves the way for further concepts of divine omnipotence, innocence, and beneficence. Whether Philo succeeds perfectly in dissolving any tension between immutability and intercessory action is up to the reader of his arguments, but his foray into this topic is seminal for how later thinkers establish divine attributes. While his method is mostly apophatic, he makes powerful use of analogy to make cataphatic claims as to God's mode of existence and motivational structure that allow God to exist in meaningful covenant with both Israel and the world in general.

Early Epistles and Immutability

The text of the New Testament is not a philosophical treatise on any topic, nevertheless there are some important passages from the Early and Pauline epistles that merit consideration. While Philo's articulation of various parts of the Torah are clear attempts to show a continuity between Jewish scripture and history with Hellenic ideas, the New Testament and other early Christian writings are attempts to articulate a fundamentally similar synthesis, but with a peculiar *τέλος*. The synthesis that occurs in these documents are fundamentally functions to explicitly control the doxastic practices of the nascent sect.

The narrative books are not as useful for finding explicitly robust philosophical theology, but are rather like source material to be incorporated into systematic thought that comments on them. That is not to say that there is no content to seek in the Gospels and Acts, but that these books deal primarily with the person, work, and character of Jesus of Nazareth. The focus on Jesus means that the books are not written in a critical or speculative fashion, but rather serve to express the ideals and virtues embodied in the person who is the subject matter of the books. Particularly, as Jesus is human, the language used of him in these texts is thoroughly

anthropomorphic, and does not focus on philosophical speculation about divine nature, and does not admit of robust philosophical discourse on the non-anthropomorphic attributes of Deity. In these narrative texts the closest we come to finding explicit claims about the nature of Deity are those polemic texts that attempt to show the continuity between the covenant(s) made with the patriarchal and monarchical characters of the Tanakh (most explicitly Abraham and David) and the new covenant cut in Jesus of Nazareth and communicated through the apostles. These claims are diverse and manifold and include the genealogical accounts found in Matthew 1:1-17 (in which Jesus is tied to both Abraham and David) and Luke 3:23-38 (which also ties Jesus to these patriarchs, but extends back to the creation account by naming Adam), as well as the use of Tanakh passages interpreted to apply specifically to the life and work of Jesus. The repeated use of Isaiah 52:13-53:12 as direct prophecy of the Passion is most widely publicized and easily recognized text of this kind, but other texts are also clear. The Sermon on the Mount is polemic in this fashion when Jesus quotes sections of Mosaic Law with the formulaic “you have heard it said [. . .] but I say to you”¹⁵⁶ are clear references to the continuity of divine authority of the Torah being superseded by Jesus’s authority. In Matthew 11 Jesus identifies himself to messengers sent by John the Baptizer by weaving together passages from Isaiah 35:5-6, 61:1-2, and 8:14. Again in Luke 4:17-30 Jesus identified himself by quoting Isaiah 61:1-2, but this account is more polemic against Jewish readers, because of the claim that his words would be spread to the gentiles—just as Elijah helped a widow in the land of Sidon,¹⁵⁷ and how Elisha did not heal the Israelite lepers, but rather Naaman the Syrian.¹⁵⁸ There are other passages, but these kinds of polemics are intended by Christians to show a legitimizing continuity between the contents of the Tanakh and their own scriptures. These polemics allow for Christians to utilize all

¹⁵⁶ Matthew 5:21-22, 5:27-28, 5:31-32, 5:33-34, 5:38-39, 5:43-44.

¹⁵⁷ Luke 4:26 is referencing the contents of 1 Kings 17:1-24.

¹⁵⁸ Luke 4:27 is referencing the contents of 2 Kings 5:1-14.

of the theological passages of the Tanakh, but also allow for their peculiar spin on them. This list is illustrative of how Christians use older passages to claim the divinity of Jesus, but it is far from exhaustive.

The epistolary literature is more explicit and helpful when dealing with direct doctrinal matters, and accordingly I will focus mainly on the epistles. The Pauline epistles make up the bulk of the New Testament, but they are not the only places we may seek explanations about Divine nature. There are two explicit claims for divine immutability in the text of the New Testament. The first is found in Hebrews 6:13-20,¹⁵⁹

For when God made a promise to Abraham, since he had no one greater by whom to swear, he swore by himself, saying, “Surely I will bless and multiply you.” And thus Abraham, having patiently waited, obtained the promise. For people swear by something greater than themselves, and in all their disputes an oath is final for confirmation. So when God desired to show more convincingly to the heirs of the promise the unchangeable character of his purpose, he guaranteed it with an oath, so that by two unchangeable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie, we who have fled for refuge might have strong encouragement to hold fast to the hope set before us. We have this as a sure and steadfast anchor of the soul, a hope that enters into the inner place behind the curtain, where Jesus has gone as a forerunner on our behalf, having become a high priest forever after the order of Melchizedek.¹⁶⁰

It is significant to note that the oath God takes here is an oath sworn by himself, because he could swear by nothing greater. This concept of God swearing by himself is hardly new. It occurs in Genesis 22:16, Isaiah 45:23, Jeremiah 22:5, 49:13 & 51:14, and Amos 6:8.¹⁶¹ The idea that the only surety by which God could swear would be himself, as oaths must be taken by

¹⁵⁹ All Greek from the New Testament will come from [Cambridge Greek Testament: Greek Text](#). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012.

¹⁶⁰ τῷ γὰρ Ἀβραάμ ἐπαγγειλάμενος ὁ θεός, ἐπεὶ κατ’ οὐδενὸς εἶχεν μείζονος ὁμόσαι, ὥμοσεν καθ’ ἑαυτοῦ, ¹⁴ λέγων, Εἰ μὴν εὐλογῶν εὐλογήσω σε καὶ πληθύνων πληθυνῶ σε· ¹⁵ καὶ οὕτως μακροθυμήσας ἐπέτυχεν τῆς ἐπαγγελίας. ¹⁶ ἄνθρωποι γὰρ κατὰ τοῦ μείζονος ὀμνύουσιν, καὶ πάσης αὐτοῖς ἀντιλογίας πέρας εἰς βεβαίωσιν ὁ ὄρκος· ¹⁷ ἐν ᾧ περισσώτερον βουλόμενος ὁ θεὸς ἐπιδείξει τοῖς κληρονόμοις τῆς ἐπαγγελίας τὸ ἀμετάθετον τῆς βουλῆς αὐτοῦ ἐμεσίτευσεν ὄρκῳ, ¹⁸ ἵνα διὰ δύο πραγμάτων ἀμεταθέτων, ἐν οἷς ἀδύνατον ψεύσασθαι θεόν, ἰσχυρὰν παράκλησιν ἔχομεν οἱ καταφυγόντες κρατῆσαι τῆς προκειμένης ἐλπίδος, ¹⁹ ἦν ὡς ἄγκυραν ἔχομεν τῆς ψυχῆς ἀσφαλῆ τε καὶ βεβαίαν καὶ εἰσερχομένην εἰς τὸ ἐσώτερον τοῦ καταπετάσματος, ²⁰ ὅπου πρόδρομος ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν εἰσηλθεν Ἰησοῦς, κατὰ τὴν τάξιν Μελχισεδέκ ἀρχιερεὺς γενόμενος εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα.

¹⁶¹ There are, of course, other incidents of God swearing oaths, but these are the explicit instances in which God swears by himself. Some other passages in which God takes oaths are Deuteronomy 19:8, 28:9; 2 Samuel 3:9, Amos 4:2 (in which God swears by his holiness, not himself).

something more sure than the one who swears them, is a clear acknowledgement of the argument that there can be nothing greater than God. This standard of a supreme Deity with whom nothing whatsoever is coequal, shows that Xenophanes's old claim about one god greatest among gods and men has clearly found solid footing in the centuries since it was first sung. In addition, in Deuteronomy 6, the Israelites during instruction for how they are to live in the promised land of Canaan they are expressly told "It is the LORD your God you shall fear. Him you shall serve and by his name you shall swear. You shall not go after other gods, the gods of the peoples who are around you—for the LORD your God in your midst is a jealous God—lest the anger of the LORD your God be kindled against you, and he destroy you from off the face of the earth."¹⁶² Swearing by YHWH is clearly an injunction that calls for the highest level of seriousness in the Tanakh, and this level of seriousness only increases when it is God who takes the oath.

This passage in Hebrews references the oath God took in Genesis 22:16, which occurs during the sacrifice of Isaac.¹⁶³ Specifically the significant term used here is ἀμετάθετος, which is the privation of μεταίθημι—a term that Philo also uses to discuss God's lack of change.¹⁶⁴ We must be careful, however, not to move too quickly here. This passage does not directly address the ontology of the divine, but rather the character of the divine. The things that are said to be unchangeable here are the character of God's purpose, and the oath that God makes, rather than God's substance. At this point it is still necessary to at least allow for the possibility that the author of Hebrews does not necessarily espouse a robust divine simplicity, especially because of the puzzles that the doctrine of incarnation raises. A doctrine of simplicity would make either of these things (God's character or promises) identical with God's existence, but such a move may

¹⁶² Deuteronomy 6:13-14. *ESV*.

¹⁶³ Both God's and Abraham's actions in this passage have already been discussed in Chapter 1.

¹⁶⁴ See *Deus*. 26 and footnote [22].

be too quick here.¹⁶⁵ Regardless of this lack of focus on ontology, we do see a clear focus on divine character and intention. God's character and promises remain as robustly immutable here as they did in the sacrifice of Isaac that this passage is invoking. The argument from the author of Hebrews is nearly identical to that found in Genesis. There is a seeming absurdity—the Tanakh gave a particular set of promises (most particularly to Abraham and David) and despite all appearances to the contrary (specifically the exile, the lack of the articles to fill the temple, and the fact that Jesus of Nazareth did not come as a military monarch) the author claims that the promises are fulfilled.

Just as we have seen in previous literature, the author of this epistle's motivation for claiming God's lack of μεταίθημι is not caused by ontological speculation, but is the result of attempting to understand God in the context of covenant. Unlike the people of Israel, unlike the very creation itself, God undergoes no alteration nor movement. Quite literally he cannot be placed or displaced. Thus the word used has physical and spatial overtones,¹⁶⁶ but is applied to God by reason of motivational structure rather than physical contemplation. Just as in Philo we see here a sort of unification of previous ideas that have become more common knowledge. It is these ideas that allow for the divine covenant constancy to be combined with more physical contemplation that lay the groundwork for a more robustly philosophical theology of Divine immutability.

The second place that the New Testament letters make explicit claim to divine changelessness is in James 1:17. Once again, we see clear parallels to Philo's understanding of the connection between the human and divine in this passage,

¹⁶⁵ While some thinkers may already be committed to a robust doctrine of divine simplicity at this point in history the question of a robust doctrine of divine simplicity is outside of the scope of this work.

¹⁶⁶ Perhaps there is some theoretical connection to Cornford's reading of *moira* here?

Blessed is the man who remains steadfast under trial, for when he has stood the test he will receive the crown of life, which God has promised to those who love him. Let no one say when he is tempted “I am tempted by God,” for God cannot be tempted with evil, and he himself tempts no one. But each person is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own desire. Then desire when it has conceived gives birth to sin, and sin when it is fully grown brings forth death.

Do not be deceived, my beloved brothers. Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change. Of his own will he brought us forth by the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures.¹⁶⁷

Here the operative phrase is “παρ’ ᾧ οὐκ ἔνι παραλλαγή ἢ τροπῆς ἀποσκίασμα.” Interestingly the terms here are less physical and psychological—they have more to do with power. In particular τροπή can have both meteorological and strategic connotations. While the meteorological connotations have some physical bias, the strategic connotations seem to be far more front and center in James’s account. This epistle exists less to show the continuity of sacred documents, and more to call the individual hearer to account by reminding them how they should live in the here and now. Accordingly it is less contextual and contiguous than the book of Hebrews. Because of this different focus, the claims here are accordingly less aligned with natural philosophy. Nevertheless, the epistle shares the Christological polemic that ties Jesus to Abraham, though in a less Philonic fashion.

Though the passages just listed are the most explicit claims to the DDI in the text of the New Testament, there are some important implicit acknowledgements of divine changelessness in the Pauline literature. Paul makes implicit reference to immutability in the opening lines of the Epistle to the Romans.

¹⁶⁷ James 1:12-18. *ESV*. ¹² Μακάριος ἀνὴρ ὃς ὑπομένει πειρασμόν, ὅτι δόκιμος γενόμενος λήμψεται τὸν στέφανον τῆς ζωῆς, ὃν ἐπηγγέιλαι τοῖς ἀγαπῶσιν αὐτόν. ¹³ Μηδεὶς πειραζόμενος λεγέτω ὅτι ἀπὸ θεοῦ πειράζομαι. ὁ γὰρ θεὸς ἀπειραστός ἐστὶν κακῶν, πειράζει δὲ αὐτὸς οὐδένα. ¹⁴ ἕκαστος δὲ πειράζεται ὑπὸ τῆς ἰδίας ἐπιθυμίας ἐξελκόμενος καὶ δελεαζόμενος. ¹⁵ εἴτα ἡ ἐπιθυμία συλλαβοῦσα τίκει ἁμαρτίαν, ἡ δὲ ἁμαρτία ἀποτελεσθεῖσα ἀποκύει θάνατον. ¹⁶ Μὴ πλανᾶσθε, ἀδελφοί μου ἀγαπητοί. ¹⁷ πᾶσα δόσις ἀγαθὴ καὶ πᾶν δῶρημα τέλειον ἄνωθεν ἐστὶν καταβαῖνον ἀπὸ τοῦ πατρὸς τῶν φώτων, παρ’ ᾧ οὐκ ἔνι παραλλαγή ἢ τροπῆς ἀποσκίασμα. ¹⁸ βουληθεὶς ἀπεκύησεν ἡμᾶς λόγῳ ἀληθείας, εἰς τὸ εἶναι ἡμᾶς ἀπαρχὴν τινα τῶν αὐτοῦ κτισμάτων.

For what can be known about God is plain to [ungodly and unrighteous humans], because God has shown it to them. For his invisible attributes, namely his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in things that have been made. So they are without excuse. For although they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their foolish hearts were darkened. Claiming to be wise, they became fools, and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man and birds and animals and reptiles.¹⁶⁸

This passage contains obvious parallels to earlier thinkers, and indeed, even to Xenophanes's now ancient complaint about anthropomorphisms and theriomorphisms. In addition, Paul affirms that the more transcendent attributes of God are knowable through examination of the cosmic order—a technique used by both Greeks and Israelites in order to form analogies that inform their philosophical theology. Another claim in this same vein comes in Romans 9 where Paul is discussing the inclusion of the Gentiles and the exclusion of some Jews in the new covenant. He writes,

But it is not as though the word of God has failed. For not all who are descended from Israel belong to Israel, and not all are children of Abraham because they are his offspring, but “Through Isaac shall your offspring be named.” This means that it is not the children of the flesh who are the children of God, but the children of the promise are counted as offspring. For this is what the promise said: “About this time next year I will return and Sarah shall have a son.” And not only so, but also when Rebecca had conceived children by one man, our forefather Isaac, though they were not yet born and had done nothing either good or bad—in order that God's purpose of election might continue, not because of works but because of his call—she was told, “The older will serve the younger.”¹⁶⁹

Once again, here, the work being done is not of an ontological nature, but on the idea of God's constancy in covenant despite the appearance of drastic change in the nature of that covenant.

¹⁶⁸ Romans 1:19-23, *ESV*. ¹⁹ διότι τὸ γνωστὸν τοῦ θεοῦ φανερόν ἐστιν ἐν αὐτοῖς, ὁ θεὸς γὰρ αὐτοῖς ἐφάνερωσεν.

²⁰ τὰ γὰρ ἀόρατα αὐτοῦ ἀπὸ κτίσεως κόσμου τοῖς ποιήμασιν νοούμενα καθορᾶται, ἢ τε αἰδῖος αὐτοῦ δύναμις καὶ θεϊότης, εἰς τὸ εἶναι αὐτοὺς ἀναπολογήτους, ²¹ διότι γνόντες τὸν θεὸν οὐχ ὡς θεὸν ἐδόξασαν ἢ ἠυχαρίστησαν, ἀλλὰ ἐματαιώθησαν ἐν τοῖς διαλογισμοῖς αὐτῶν καὶ ἐσκοτίσθη ἡ ἀσύνετος αὐτῶν καρδιά· ²² φάσκοντες εἶναι σοφοὶ ἐμωράνθησαν, ²³ καὶ ἠλλάξαν τὴν δόξαν τοῦ ἀφθάρτου θεοῦ ἐν ὁμοιώματι εἰκόνης φθαρτοῦ ἀνθρώπου καὶ πετεινῶν καὶ τετραπόδων καὶ ἐρπετῶν.

¹⁶⁹ Romans 9:6-12, *ESV*. ⁶ Οὐχ οἷον δὲ ὅτι ἐκπέπτωκεν ὁ λόγος τοῦ θεοῦ. οὐ γὰρ πάντες οἱ ἐξ Ἰσραὴλ, οὗτοι Ἰσραὴλ· ⁷ οὐδ' ὅτι εἰσὶν σπέρμα Ἀβραάμ, πάντες τέκνα, ἀλλ' Ἐν Ἰσαὰκ κληθήσεται σοι σπέρμα. ⁸ τοῦτ' ἐστιν, οὐ τὰ τέκνα τῆς σαρκὸς ταῦτα τέκνα τοῦ θεοῦ, ἀλλὰ τὰ τέκνα τῆς ἐπαγγελίας λογίζεται εἰς σπέρμα· ⁹ ἐπαγγελίας γὰρ ὁ λόγος οὗτος *Κατὰ τὸν καιρὸν τοῦτον ἐλεύσομαι καὶ ἔσται τῇ Σάρρα υἱός*. ¹⁰ οὐ μόνον δέ, ἀλλὰ καὶ Ῥεβέκκα ἐξ ἑνὸς κοίτην ἔχουσα, Ἰσαὰκ τοῦ πατρὸς ἡμῶν· ¹¹ μήπω γὰρ γεννηθέντων μηδὲ πραξάντων τι ἀγαθὸν ἢ φαῦλον, ἵνα ἡ κατ' ἐκλογὴν πρόθεσις τοῦ θεοῦ μένη, οὐκ ἐξ ἔργων ἀλλ' ἐκ τοῦ καλοῦντος, ¹² ἔρρηθη αὐτῇ ὅτι *Ὁ μείζων δουλεύσει τῷ ἐλάσσονι*.

This work may not be contiguous with physical contemplation, it does show continuity with the concern for divine motivation, and seeks to show how despite appearances of change, the Divine can be intrinsically immutable. Paul stresses this point again in Romans 11, and in a similar passage in Philippians 3:4-11. Galatians chapter 3 attempts to show a similar continuity between the Abrahamic covenant and the budding Followers of the Way, despite the difference in doctrine, and he gives another parallel passage in Galatians 4:21-31.

These passages do not necessarily give a more philosophical account of the very nature of deity, and the other texts of Pauline literature are more concerned with the sectarian doctrinal standards of belief and conduct than they are with philosophical theology. This continuity of divine intention is stressed in other locations, however. The stoning of Stephen¹⁷⁰ is introduced by a lengthy speech about how the new covenant is continuous with the new covenant mirrors these Pauline claims. Likewise the claims made in Paul's address to the Areopagus mirror the anti-anthropomorphic stance given in the epistles, and seeks to forge a means of continuity between philosophical speculation and covenant consistency based in the creation account.¹⁷¹

All in all, the New Testament writings, and the early epistolary literature in particular, are not robust explorations of philosophical theology. They are source material upon which further systematic theological and philosophical explorations dwell. Nevertheless, this material can be seen as meaningful in the overall conversation between those individuals who engage in speculation as regards the essence and activity of the Divine. The material is naturally polemic in fashion and tone—but the ideas contained and communicated therein do not make the material either unimportant or uninteresting. Aristotle's work was also quite polemic, and his contributions also stand unstained despite his sometimes radical interpolations. The primary texts

¹⁷⁰ The entirety of Acts 7 deals with this account.

¹⁷¹ Acts 17:16-35. The creation claim is explicit in v. 24, and the continuity with the Greek tradition is found in v. 28.

of the New Testament, much like Philo's writings, serve to bring together two schools of thought regarding the divine. The synthesis of these traditions—the Hellenic Roman and the Hellenized Jewish—serve to forge a way to think in a monotheistic fashion that takes the DDI to be something that also allows for divine action in a particularly direct form. The most difficult problem raised for the ontological version of the DDI in the New Testament text comes from the combination of the Trinitarian doctrine derived from the source material combined with the clear and central doctrine of the Incarnation. If the DDI is primarily understood to be an ontological category of existence that is identified with the nature of the Divine, then the mystery of how these things could hang together becomes quite opaque. If, on the other hand, the DDI is primarily understood to be about intrinsic divine causation that flows from the essence of divine motivation and is most clearly expressed through Covenant Constancy, then the mysterious nature of the DDI is far more understandable and salutary to the early Christians. This focus on Divine motivation and faithfulness to God's own purposes despite apparently absurd circumstances makes the budding religion both sensible and attractive to the Middle Platonic and Stoic audiences to which it is being spread in the first century Roman Empire. We shall have more to say concerning the how the Pauline literature and passages are interpreted and used when we come to the writings of Justin Martyr.

CHAPTER SIX

JUSTIN MARTYR AND THE DDI IN THE CONTEXT OF THE 2ND CENTURY

As the final step in our examination of the development of the DDI in the ancient and period we will consider the extant writings of Justin Martyr. Justin is an apologist for second century Christians and the doctrines and practices of those Christians in his time period. The second century marks the twilight of Middle Platonism before the work of Plotinus in the third century. The extant works of Justin are not treatises about philosophical topics, but are rather specific apologies aimed at peculiar audiences. Accordingly, we will not see a great deal of development of philosophical topics, much less a robust philosophical treatise on any particular idea. Rather, what we see is the use of fairly established doctrines in the service of these kinds of apologies. Accordingly, we will examine sections of his first and second apologies and the Dialogue with Trypho to see what place the DDI takes in his work, and how it is useful for accomplishing his goals—the establishment of the legitimacy and truth of Christianity. To understand him and his ideas, we will briefly examine his context, and then set those texts within it.

Second Century Philosophy and Bibliophilia

The second century is still a time period in which inquiry and philosophy is not a specialized enterprise, rather it maintains its pluralistic focus. In this way it is more contiguous with the attitudes of Cicero and Philo than it is with even the attitudes of Medieval period, much less any Modern or Post-modern attitudes. Hellenic philosophy in general, including Middle

Platonism, as well as the Judaism and Christianity of the period share in an attitude that is a direct product of the Axial Age: bibliophilia. The bibliophilic state of philosophy in the second century CE period is not, perhaps, a very philosophically interesting subject in and of itself. It does, however, help one to understand Justin's interaction with Philosophy, and why he conceives of Christianity as the complete philosophy. Betegh sets out an account of the great authority and even reverence accorded to texts by the philosophers of the late centuries BCE and early centuries CE. This period saw the demise of the centralized schools in Athens, and philosophy underwent a sort of diaspora throughout the Roman Empire. This diaspora led to an increased reliance on texts for accurate information concerning the "orthodoxy" of the school one studied with. Betegh maintains that "the attitude toward authoritative texts, especially in the Platonic tradition, gradually gained a spiritual dimension: centrally important texts were considered sacred, and their study a religious act."¹⁷² The dedication to texts as a legitimating factor in philosophical investigation—indeed as containing the truth that must be puzzled out—was also a potent concept in the Judaism of late antiquity. It is beyond doubt that the early Christians quickly developed bibliophilic tendencies of their own.¹⁷³ The letters of Paul were in circulation in the 1st century CE, and the process of ratification of the Canon was already occurring in the second century. This shared bibliophilic orientation across intellectual, cultural, and religious boundaries shows how deeply the people of the second century respected—even venerated—the written word. Christianity was a religion of the book, and spread through the dissemination of letters and written works. It is easy to see how Justin could have latched onto a bibliophilic tradition which claimed to correct Judaism—a religion which was thought to have

¹⁷² Gábor Betegh. "The Transmission of Ancient Wisdom." In *The Cambridge History of Philosophy in Late Antiquity*, Lloyd P. Gerson, 25-38. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010, 26.

¹⁷³ Codices are the earliest Christian artifacts. Letters and collections of letters, as well as scriptural texts are centrally important in Christianity's self-definition.

texts from much more ancient sources (i.e. Moses)—from which Plato was thought to have borrowed.

Bibliophily contributes towards what I term philosophical syncretism. In the ancient world religious syncretism was the norm among both the educated and the simple,¹⁷⁴ so it comes as little surprise that philosophers also attempt to reconcile differences of opinion through syncretistic practice. Though the Pythagoreans, the Stoics, the Platonists and the Peripatetics saw themselves as distinct schools with an exclusive purview on the true philosophy (or at least the true interpretation of the writings of the masters), there was a good deal of inter-school influence occurring during this period. The decentralized and bibliophilic state of philosophical investigation led to more discussion between philosophical sects than would have happened when each sect had its own base of operations. Justin recognizes this state of affairs in the *Dialogue* when he informs us that Trypho recognized his dress as that of a philosopher—though not necessarily as a philosopher of a certain school. The dress of a philosopher covers the individuals of any given school—it does not seem that one could have looked at a given individual and said “Hail O Platonic!” with anywhere near the certainty that one could have with said “Hail O Philosopher!” The Stoics, for example, started to adopt Plato and Aristotle as philosophical authorities as early as the second century BCE with the writings of Panaetius, and Galen seems to have had access to Panaetius in the second century CE.¹⁷⁵ We have already seen the inter-penetration of the schools when we considered the work of Cicero and Philo Judaeus, but that syncretism has continued into the second century seemingly without pause.

¹⁷⁴ We have many examples of religious syncretism—Greeks and Romans adopt Egyptian gods for example. Perhaps one of the more apparent examples of this phenomenon is Socrates’s tendency to swear “by the dog,” that is by the theriomorphic Egyptian god Anubis, in Plato’s dialogs.

¹⁷⁵ Betegh, 27.

Complicating the matter even more than simple philosophical syncretism is the lack of a central figure who shaped the discussion in this period. Early Platonism in the Academy had headmasters who were able to shape the discussion of Plato's works in a more monolithic fashion than was possible after the fall of the old Academy. There is in Middle Platonism simply no analog to Plato or to Plotinus. The lack of a central controlling figure in Middle Platonism results in a lack of cohesion among those who would consider themselves Platonists. The result is that scholars are able to see in certain thinkers of the period a general orientation toward texts and philosophy that is termed "Middle Platonism." The combination of philosophical syncretism and the lack of cohesion in Middle Platonism makes it difficult to classify any thinker of the period as being a "pure Platonist." The dialectic of the period simply does not allow for perfectly clear lines to be drawn in the sand, and so the thinkers of this period can be thought of as existing on a spectrum from more to less Platonic. What we cannot do is to ask them for their school ID badge so as to clearly identify them as purely Platonic, Stoic, Pythagorean, or Peripatetic.¹⁷⁶ If a Stoic can love some Platonic doctrines, and a Platonist can be enraptured some Pythagorean doctrines and no one sees this as a problem, then the waters become increasingly muddied.¹⁷⁷ For this reason it is easier to see that Justin has some reason to believe that his Christianity is actually the most pure and true form of Platonism, particularly because of his dedication to the myth that all Greek philosophy has its source in the writings of Moses.

Justin's claims and appeals to philosophy and philosophical schools are found primarily in his *Dialogue with Trypho* in which he claims to have sought admittance to schools of the

¹⁷⁶ This should cause little worry in us, however, because this state of affairs is probably more the historical rule than the exception. It is often not the case that individual thinkers are of "purely" one school or another.

¹⁷⁷ This is not to say that there is no concept of differentiation between the schools merely that it tends to be a more parochial matter of avowing a particular strain of the school in question. We saw this same attitude evidenced in Cicero's characterizations of the schools in the first century BCE. While the Stoics and the Peripatetics did not see their doctrines as conceptually contiguous, Cicero did.

Stoics, the Pythagoreans, the Peripatetic, and finally the Platonists. The first three he found mostly useless (or wasn't accepted into their school at all in the case of the Pythagoreans), but Platonism deeply appealed to him. Justin tells us why he is compelled towards philosophical investigation in general. In the opening exchange he has with Trypho he explains quite clearly what philosophy is for,

“How,” I asked, “can you gain as much from philosophy as from your own lawgiver and prophets?”

“Why not,” he replied, “for do not the philosophers speak always about God? Do they not constantly propose questions about his unity and providence? Is this not the task of philosophy, to inquire about the Divine?”

“Yes, indeed,” I said, “we, too, are of the same opinion. But the majority of the philosophers have simply neglected to inquire whether there is one or even several gods, and whether or not a divine providence takes care of us, as if this knowledge were unnecessary to our happiness.”¹⁷⁸

Justin is unambiguous here in his claim that Philosophy aims at theological knowledge, and that is why he is so enamored of it. As clear as this is, he is even more forceful a few chapters later when he recounts his meeting with the old man that lead him to Christianity.

“Tell me,” he asked, “what is philosophy and what is the happiness it engenders, if there is nothing which prevents your speaking.”

“Philosophy,” I answered, “is the knowledge of that which exists, and a clear understanding of the truth; and happiness is the reward of such knowledge and understanding.”¹⁷⁹

He also claims that he followed Platonism because,

¹⁷⁸ *The First Apology, The Second Apology, Dialogue with Trypho, Exhortation to the Greeks, Discourse to the Greeks, The Monarchy or The Rule of God.* Translated by Thomas B. Falls. Vol. 6. Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, Inc., 1948. <https://muse.jhu.edu/book/21466>. p.148. Chapter 1.

Καὶ τί ἂν, ἔφην ἐγώ, τοσοῦτον ἐκ φιλοσοφίας σὺ τ' ἂν ὠφελῆθῃς, ὅσον παρὰ τοῦ σοῦ νομοθέτου καὶ τῶν προφητῶν; Τί γάρ; οὐχ οἱ φιλόσοφοι περὶ θεοῦ τὸν ἅπαντα ποιοῦνται λόγον, ἐκεῖνος ἔλεγε, καὶ περὶ μοναρχίας αὐτοῖς καὶ προνοίας αἱ ζητήσεις γίνονται ἐκάστοτε; ἢ οὐ τοῦτο ἔργον ἐστὶ φιλοσοφίας, ἐξετάζειν περὶ τοῦ θείου; Ναί, ἔφην, οὕτω καὶ ἡμεῖς δεδοξάκαμεν. ἀλλ' οἱ πλείστοι οὐδὲ τούτου πεφροντίκασιν, εἴτε εἷς εἴτε καὶ πλείους εἰσὶ θεοί, καὶ εἴτε προνοοῦσιν ἡμῶν ἐκάστου εἴτε καὶ οὐ, ὡς μηδὲν πρὸς εὐδαιμονίαν τῆς γνώσεως ταύτης συντελοῦσης. Greek text for the *Dialogue* is from E.J. Goodspeed, *Die ältesten Apologeten*, Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1915: 90-265.

¹⁷⁹ Justin, 152. *Dialogue with Trypho* Chapter 3. Τί γάρ ἐστὶ φιλοσοφία, φησί, καὶ τίς ἡ εὐδαιμονία ὑτῆς, εἰ μὴ τι κωλύει φράζειν, φράσον. Φιλοσοφία μὲν, ἦν δ' ἐγώ, ἐπιστήμη ἐστὶ τοῦ ὄντος καὶ τοῦ ἀληθοῦς ἐπίγνωσις, εὐδαιμονία δὲ ταύτης τῆς ἐπιστήμης καὶ τῆς σοφίας γέρας

“Plato truly states,” I retorted, “that the eye of the mind has this special power, which has been given to us in order that we may see with it, when it is pure, the very Being who is the cause of everything the mind perceives, who has neither color, nor form, nor size, nor anything the eye can see, but who is beyond all essence, who is ineffable and indescribable, who alone is beautiful and good, and who comes at once into the souls which are well disposed because of their affinity to and desire of seeing Him.”¹⁸⁰

This is the primary goal of philosophy for Justin. He wishes to experience God through the intellectual capacity of his soul. As far as he is concerned, the goals of philosophical contemplation and religious devotion are the same.

He does draw a very specific distinction between religious devotion and the activities of the philosophical schools, however, and that is the content that drives their activity. When addressing Trypho as their dialogue opens, he asks, “‘How,’ I asked, ‘can you gain as much from philosophy as from your own lawgiver and prophets?’”¹⁸¹ He believes that Moses is the font of all philosophy,¹⁸² and therefore there should be no need for Trypho or any other Jew to seek some sort of wisdom beyond the font from which it flows. This tendency, however, reinforces the bibliophilic nature of Justin’s conception of Philosophy. He also prizes the antiquity of the thought, and the specific words used in the texts to an extreme degree. In this regard he is very similar to Philo Judaeus (whose passages on the use of numbers in the creation account is rather similar in its exacting nature). The distinction in source material but not between method may seem odd to a 21st century thinker, but as we have seen in previous chapters the ancient perspective does not insert the dissonance or distance between epistemology and ontology with which we are so comfortable. Without this distance, the idea that there is a single method or

¹⁸⁰ Justin, 154. *Dialogue with Trypho* Chapter 4. Φησὶ γὰρ Πλάτων, ἦν δ’ ἐγώ, αὐτὸ τοιοῦτον εἶναι τὸ τοῦ νοῦ ὄμμα καὶ πρὸς τοῦτο ἡμῖν δεδόσθαι, ὡς δύνασθαι καθορᾶν αὐτὸ ἐκεῖνο τὸ ὄν εἰλικρινεῖ αὐτῷ ἐκεῖνο, ὃ τῶν νοητῶν ἀπάντων ἐστὶν αἴτιον, οὐ χρῶμα ἔχον, οὐ σχῆμα, οὐ μέγεθος, οὐδὲ οὐδὲν ὧν ὀφθαλμὸς βλέπει· ἀλλὰ τι ὄν τοῦτ’ αὐτό, φησὶ, ὃν ἐπέκεινα πάσης οὐσίας, οὔτε ῥητὸν οὔτε ἀγορευτόν, ἀλλὰ μόνον καλὸν καὶ ἀγαθόν, ἐξαιφνης ταῖς εἰ πεφυκυῖαις ψυχαῖς ἐγγινόμενον διὰ τὸ συγγενὲς καὶ ἔρωτα τοῦ ἰδέσθαι.

¹⁸¹ Justin, 148. *Dialogue with Trypho* Chapter 1

¹⁸² This claim is found in Chapter 60 of the *Apology I*. He claims that the evidence is found in the use of the χ in the *Timaeus* and correlates that with the idea that Moses lifted up the bronze serpent on a cross in Numbers 21.

route for thinking makes a great deal of sense, and Parmenides's principles still hold sway over the minds of second century thinkers.

He makes even more of this distinction and of the significance of texts when he offers an explanation for the existence of the various philosophical schools. Justin is concerned to articulate why Christianity is pure and true philosophy, and thus to exert its excellence over all other philosophical schools, and then afterwards to assert it as the true interpretation of Hebrew Scripture. In order to accomplish this goal he claims that,

Philosophy is indeed one's greatest possession, and is most precious in the sight of God, to whom it alone leads us and to whom it unites us, and they in truth are holy men who have applied themselves to philosophy. But, many have failed to discover the nature of philosophy, and the reason why it was sent down to men; otherwise, there would not be Platonists, or Stoics, or Peripatetics, or Theoretics, or Pythagoreans, since this science of philosophy is always one and the same. Now, let me tell you why it has at length become so diversified. They who first turned to philosophy, and, as a result, were deemed illustrious men, were succeeded by men who gave no time to the investigation of the truth, but, amazed at the courage and self-control of their teachers as well as with the novelty of their teachings, held that to be the truth which each had learned from his own teacher. And they in turn transmitted to their successors such opinions, and others like them, and so they became known of the name of him who was considered the father of the doctrine.¹⁸³

It is clear that Justin believes that the teachings, or the actual words of the teachers, are more important than the persons of the teachers themselves. This is a fascinating development because of the emphasis placed upon virtue and character in ancient forms of ethical theory, but it makes sense in light of Justin's focus on a Christian form of Logos doctrine. This doctrine is key to understanding how the DDI functions in his thinking, given the peculiarity and specific problems raised by the Incarnation. We shall return to that topic later.

¹⁸³ Justin, 149. *Dialogue with Trypho* ch. 2. ἔστι γὰρ τῷ ὄντι φιλοσοφία μέγιστον κτῆμα καὶ τιμιώτατον θεῶ, ᾧ τε προσάγει καὶ συνίστησιν ἡμᾶς μόνη, καὶ ὅσοι ὡς ἀληθῶς οὗτοί εἰσιν οἱ φιλοσοφία τὸν νοῦν προσεσχηκότες. τί ποτε δέ ἐστι φιλοσοφία καὶ οὗ χάριν κατεπέμφθη εἰς τοὺς ἀνθρώπους, τοὺς πολλοὺς λέληθεν; οὐ γὰρ ἂν Πλατωνικοὶ ἦσαν οὐδὲ Στωϊκοὶ οὐδὲ Περιπατητικοὶ οὐδὲ Θεωρητικοὶ οὐδὲ Πυθαγορικοὶ, μᾶς οὕσης ταύτης ἐπιστήμης. οὗ δὲ χάριν πολύκρανος ἐγενήθη, θέλω εἰπεῖν. συνέβη τοῖς πρώτοις ἀγαμένοις αὐτῆς καὶ διὰ τοῦτο ἐνδόξοις γενομένοις ἀκολουθῆσαι τοὺς ἔπειτα μηδὲν ἐξετάσαντας ἀληθείας περὶ, καταπλαγέντας δὲ μόνον τὴν καρτερίαν αὐτῶν καὶ τὴν ἐγκράτειαν καὶ τὸ ξένον τῶν λόγων ταῦτα ἀληθῆ νομίσει ἅ παρὰ τοῦ διδασκάλου ἕκαστος ἔμαθεν, εἶτα καὶ αὐτούς, τοῖς ἔπειτα παραδόντας τοιαῦτα ἄλλα καὶ ἄλλα τούτοις προσεικότα, τοῦτο κληθῆναι τοῦνομα, ὅπερ ἐκαλεῖτο ὁ πατὴρ τοῦ λόγου.

The last evidence for Justin's absolute bibliophilia is the entirety of *Dialogue*, as well as the two *Apologies*. Justin almost compulsively quotes from other authors, particularly scripture. He quotes lengthy passages of text from the Septuagint in the *Dialogue*, particularly from Isaiah, and even in the *Apologies* we see appeals to scriptural traditions added to claims about the nature of non-Christian philosophers.¹⁸⁴

Justin's Version of the DDI

In the *Apology I*, Justin makes a few claims about God's changelessness. They are found in *Apology I*, chapter 10 where Justin asserts God's aseity.

But we have learned from tradition that God has no need of the material gifts of men, since we see that He is the Giver of all things. [Acts 17:25] We have been taught, are convinced, and do believe that He approves of only those who imitate his inherent virtues, namely, temperance, justice, love of man, and any other virtue proper to God who is called by no given name. We have also been instructed that God, in the beginning, created in His goodness everything out of shapeless matter [compare to 2 *Apol.* 5] for the sake of men. And if men by their actions prove themselves worthy of His plan, they shall, we are told, be found worthy to make their abode with Him and to reign with Him, free from all corruption and pain. Just as, in the beginning He created us when we were not, so also, we believe, He will consider all those who choose to please Him, because of their choice, to be worthy of eternal life in His presence. Our creation was not in our own power. But this--to engage in those things that please Him and which we choose by means of the intellectual faculties He has bestowed on us--this makes our conviction and leads us to faith. Indeed, we think it is for the good of all men that they are not prevented from learning these things, but are even urged to consider them. For, what human laws were unable to effect, the Divine Word would have accomplished, had not the evil demons enlisted the aid of the various utterly evil inclinations, which are in every man by nature, and scattered many false and ungodly accusations--none of which, however, applies to us.¹⁸⁵

¹⁸⁴ For competing takes on Justin's philosophical training see M.J. Edwards. "On the Platonic Schooling of Justin Martyr." *The Journal of Theological Studies* 42, no. 1 (April 1991): 17-34. www.jstor.org. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/23965141>. and R M. Price "'Hellenization" and Logos Doctrine in Justin Martyr." *Vigiliae Christianae* 42, no. 1 (March 1988): 18-23. www.jstor.org. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1584467>. Each articulates a different conception of Justin's familiarity and use of Hellenic thought and the interaction of Middle Platonism with Christianity.

¹⁸⁵ Justin, 42-43 *Apology I*, chapter 10. Greek text is from D. Minns and P. Parvis, *Justin, Philosopher and Martyr, Apologies* [Oxford Early Christian Texts Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009]

Ἄλλ' οὐ δέεσθαι τῆς παρὰ ἀνθρώπων ὑλικῆς προσφορᾶς προσειλήφαμεν τὸν θεόν, αὐτὸν παρέχοντα πάντα ὀρῶντες· ἐκείνους δὲ προσδέχεσθαι αὐτὸν μόνον δεδιδάγμεθα καὶ πεπείσμεθα καὶ πιστεύομεν, τοὺς τὰ προσόντα αὐτῷ ἀγαθὰ μιμουμένους, σωφροσύνην καὶ δικαιοσύνην καὶ φιλάνθρωπίαν καὶ ὅσα οἰκεῖα θεῷ ἐστὶ, τῷ μηδενὶ

This passage will put Justin at odds with later thinkers on some specific theological points, but it does particularly engage with the idea of Divine motivation. Once again here we see the idea that God has no need of supply or support. God's nature is such that there is in God no need, desire, want, or lack that would make gifts either necessary or even interesting to God. It is interesting that the translator identifies Acts 17:25 as the source of this idea, as it is clearly found in the traditions of the philosophers as well. Indeed, this very quotation comes from Paul's address to the Areopagus in which he quotes Epimenides of Crete and Arastus's *Phainomena*.

After this passage, we see the issue of the DDI return in chapter 13 where he explicitly describes God as unchanging and eternal,

What sensible person will not admit that we are not atheists, since we worship the Creator of this world and assert, as we have been taught, that He has no need of bloody sacrifices, libations, and incense. But we praise Him to the best of our power by prayer and thanksgiving for all our nourishment. We have been instructed that the only worship worthy of Him is not to consume by fire those things that He created for our sustenance, but to employ them for the good of ourselves and the needy, and, with thankful voices, to offer Him solemn prayers and hymns for our own creation, for the preservation of our health, for the variety of things, and for the changes of the seasons, and to beseech Him in prayer that we may rise to life everlasting because of our faith in Him. Our Teacher of these things is Jesus Christ, who was born for this end, and who was crucified under Pontius Pilate, prosecutor of Judea, in the reign of Tiberius Caesar. We shall prove that we worship Him with reason, since we have learned that He is the Son of the living God Himself, and believe Him to be in the second place, and the Prophetic Spirit in the third. For this they accuse us of madness, saying that we attribute to a crucified man a place second to the unchanging and eternal God, the Creator of all things, but they are ignorant of the mystery which lies herein. To this mystery we entreat you to give your attention, while we explain it to you.¹⁸⁶

ὄνοματι θετῷ καλουμένῳ. καὶ πάντα τὴν ἀρχὴν ἀγαθὸν ὄντα δημιουργῆσαι αὐτὸν ἐξ ἀμόρφου ὕλης δι' ἀνθρώπους δεδιδάγμεθα, οἱ ἐὰν ἀξιῶσι τῷ ἐκείνου βουλευμάτι ἑαυτοὺς δι' ἔργων δεῖξωσι, τῆς μετ' αὐτοῦ ἀναστροφῆς καταξιοθῆναι προσειλήφαμεν συμβασιλεύοντας, ἀφάρτους καὶ ἀπαθεῖς γενομένους. ὃν τρόπον γὰρ τὴν ἀρχὴν οὐκ ὄντας ἐποίησε, τὸν αὐτὸν ἡγούμεθα τρόπον διὰ τὸ ἐλέσθαι τοὺς αἰρούμενους τὰ αὐτῷ ἀρεστὰ καὶ ἀφθαρσίας καὶ συνουσίας καταξιοθῆναι. τὸ μὲν γὰρ τὴν ἀρχὴν γενέσθαι οὐχ ἡμέτερον ἦν, τὸ δ' ἐξακολουθῆσαι οἷς φίλον αὐτῷ αἰρούμεθα, οὐς δι' ὧν αὐτὸς ἐδώρησατο λογικῶν δυνάμεων πείθει τε καὶ εἰς πίστιν ἄγει. καὶ ὑπὲρ πάντων ἀνθρώπων ἡγούμεθα εἶναι τὸ μὴ εἶργεσθαι ταῦτα μανθάνειν, ἀλλὰ καὶ προτρέπεσθαι ἐπὶ ταῦτα. ὅπερ γὰρ οὐκ ἠδυνήθησαν οἱ ἀνθρώπειοι νόμοι πρᾶξι, ταῦτα ὁ λόγος θεῖος ὧν εἰργάσατο, εἰ καὶ οἱ φαῦλοι δαίμονες κατεσκέδασαν πολλὰ ψευδῆ καὶ ἄθεα κατηγορήματα, σύμμαχον λαβόντες τὴν ἐν ἐκάστῳ κακίην πρὸς πάντα καὶ ποικίλην φύσει ἐπιθυμίαν, ὧν οὐδὲν πρόσεστιν ἡμῖν.

¹⁸⁶ Justin, 45-46. *Apology I*, chapter 13. Ἄθεοι μὲν οὖν ὡς οὐκ ἐσμεν, τὸν δημιουργὸν τοῦδε τοῦ παντὸς σεβόμενοι, ἀνευδὲ ἀιμάτων καὶ σπονδῶν καὶ θυμιαμάτων, ὡς ἐδιδάχθημεν, λέγοντες, λόγῳ

Clearly we have here a claim that insists that God is immutable because of God's own perfections. At this point in our study, the aseity and impassibility of the Divine are well documented as being the reason for God's different mode of existence and action, and come as no surprise. What is difficult to understand is the last two sentences. The place of the Son and the Prophetic Spirit seem to share in some sort of Divine Nature, but the exact parameters of that sharing are not spelled out here. Justin actively uses the Trinitarian formula for baptism, but whether his theology is robustly Trinitarian or Subordinationist is underdetermined. Regardless of his position on these theological standards, he does affirm that God, the Creator of all things, is both eternal and unchanging.

In Chapter 14 he makes the claim that God is "unbegotten," indicating that God's mode of existence is fundamentally different than every other created thing.

Indeed, we warn you to be careful lest the demons, previously accused by us, should mislead you and turn you from reading and understanding thoroughly what we have said. They strive to make you their slaves and servants. They ensnare, now by apparitions in dreams, now by tricks of magic, all those who do not labor with all their strength for their own salvation--even we, also, after our conversion by the Word have separated ourselves from those demons and have attached ourselves to the only unbegotten God, through His Son. We who once reveled in impurities now cling to purity; we who devoted ourselves to the arts of magic now consecrate ourselves to the good and unbegotten God; we who loved above all else the ways of acquiring riches and possessions now hand over to a community

εὐχῆς καὶ εὐχαριστίας ἐφ' οἷς προσφερόμεθα πᾶσιν, ὅση δύναμις, αἰνοῦντες, μόνην ἀξίαν αὐτοῦ τιμὴν ταύτην παραλαβόντες—τὸ τὰ ὑπ' ἐκείνου εἰς διατροφήν γενόμενα οὐ πυρὶ δαπανᾶν, ἀλλ' ἑαυτοῖς καὶ τοῖς δεομένοις προσφέρειν ἐκεῖνῳ δὲ εὐχαρίστους ὄντας διὰ λόγου πομπᾶς καὶ ὕμνους πέμπειν ὑπὲρ τε τοῦ γεγονέναι καὶ τῶν εἰς εὐρωστίαν πόρων πάντων, ποιότητων μὲν γενῶν καὶ μεταβολῶν ὥρων, καὶ τοῦ πάλιν ἐν ἀφθαρσίᾳ γενέσθαι διὰ πίστιν τὴν ἐν αὐτῷ αἰτήσεις πέμποντες—τίς σωφρονῶν οὐχ ὁμολογήσει; τὸν διδάσκαλόν τε τούτων γενόμενον ἡμῖν καὶ εἰς τοῦτο γεννηθέντα, Ἰησοῦν Χριστόν, τὸν σταυρωθέντα ἐπὶ Ποντίου Πιλάτου, τοῦ γενομένου ἐν Ἰουδαίᾳ ἐπὶ χρόνοις Τιβερίου Καίσαρος ἐπιτρόπου, υἱὸν αὐτὸν τοῦ ὄντος θεοῦ μαθόντες καὶ ἐν δευτέρᾳ χώρᾳ ἔχοντες, πνεῦμά τε προφητικὸν ἐν τρίτῃ τάξει ὅτι μετὰ λόγου τιμῶμεν ἀποδείξομεν. ἐνταῦθα γὰρ μανίαν ἡμῶν καταφανὴν ἀποφαίνονται, δευτέραν χώραν μετὰ τὸν ἄτρεπτον καὶ ἀεὶ ὄντα θεὸν καὶ γεννήτορα τῶν ἀπάντων ἀνθρώπων σταυρωθέντι διδόναι ἡμᾶς λέγοντες, ἀγνοοῦντες τὸ ἐν τούτῳ μυστήριον, ᾧ προσέχειν ὑμᾶς, ἐξηγουμένων ἡμῶν, προτρεπόμεθα.

fund what we possess, and share it with every needy person; we who hated and killed one another and would not share our hearth with those of another tribe because of their [different] customs, now, after the coming of Christ, live together with them, and pray for our enemies, and try to convince those who hate us unjustly, so that they who live according to the good commands of Christ may have a firm hope of receiving the same reward as ourselves from God who governs all. But, lest we seem to quibble, we think it fitting to recall a few of the teachings of Christ, before giving our proofs; it is up to you, as mighty emperors, to consider whether we have been taught and do teach the truth. His sayings were brief and concise, for He was not a sophist, but His word was the power of God.¹⁸⁷

He directly contrasts this unbegotten nature to that of the demons who mislead men and emperors. In this regard he clearly follows the Pauline tradition of admitting that there are powerful “divine” entities that are not fully Divine in their mode of existence. The difference is that the unbegotten God, and the Begotten Son and Prophetic Spirit are special in their mode of existence because none of these things are created. This distinction in perfection and nature renders them perfect and worthy of worship, whereas the demons ought to be shunned and hated. The distinction between demonic beings and the Divine mirrors the distinction made before starting with Xenophanes and echoed by many others, including Philo. He does not innovate here, but rather collates and makes use of argumentation that others have developed to make a point about the nature of God that is within the realm of acceptable philosophical contemplation. This use of the DDI is well within the purpose of the *Apology*, and serves the purpose of

¹⁸⁷ Justin, 46-47. *Apology I* chapter 14. Προλέγομεν γὰρ ὑμῖν φυλάξασθαι μὴ οἱ προδιαβεβλημένοι ὑφ’ ἡμῶν δαίμονες ἐξαπατήσωσιν ὑμᾶς καὶ ἀποτρέψωσι τοῦ ὅλως ἐντυχεῖν καὶ συνεῖναι τὰ λεγόμενα· ἀγωνίζονται γὰρ ἔχειν ὑμᾶς δούλους καὶ ὑπηρέτας καὶ ποτὲ μὲν δι’ ὀνειρῶν ἐπιφανείας ποτὲ δ’ αὖθις διὰ μαγικῶν στροφῶν χειροῦνται πάντας τοὺς οὐκ ἔσθ’ ὅπως ὑπὲρ τῆς αὐτῶν σωτηρίας ἀγωνιζομένους· ὃν τρόπον καὶ ἡμεῖς μετὰ τὸ τῷ λόγῳ πεισθῆναι ἐκείνων μὲν ἀπέστημεν θεῷ δὲ μόνῳ τῷ ἀγεννήτῳ διὰ τοῦ υἱοῦ ἐπόμεθα· οἱ πάλαι μὲν πορνείαις χαίροντες, νῦν δὲ σωφροσύνην μόνην ἀσπαζόμενοι· οἱ δὲ καὶ μαγικαῖς τέχναις χρώμενοι, νῦν τῷ ἀγαθῷ καὶ ἀγεννήτῳ θεῷ ἑαυτοὺς ἀναθεϊκότες· χρημάτων δὲ καὶ κτημάτων οἱ πόρους παντὸς μᾶλλον στέργοντες, νῦν καὶ ἅ ἔχομεν εἰς κοινὸν φέροντες καὶ παντὶ δεομένῳ κοινωνοῦντες· οἱ μισάλληλοι δὲ καὶ ἀλληλοφόνοι καὶ πρὸς τοὺς οὐχ ὁμοφύλους διὰ τὰ ἔθνη καὶ ἐστίας κοινὰς μὴ ποιούμενοι, νῦν μετὰ τὴν ἐπιφάνειαν τοῦ Χριστοῦ ὁμοδίαιτοι γινόμενοι καὶ ὑπὲρ τῶν ἐχθρῶν εὐχόμενοι καὶ τοὺς ἀδίκως μισοῦντας πείθειν πειρώμενοι ὅπως οἱ κατὰ τὰς τοῦ Χριστοῦ καλὰς ὑποθημοσύνας βιώσαντες εὐέλπιδες ὧσι σὺν ἡμῖν τῶν αὐτῶν παρὰ τοῦ πάντων δεσπόζοντος θεοῦ τυχεῖν. ἵνα δὲ μὴ σοφίζεσθαι ὑμᾶς δόξωμεν, ὀλίγων τινῶν τῶν παρ’ αὐτοῦ τοῦ Χριστοῦ διδασκάλων ἐπιμνησθῆναι καλῶς ἔχειν πρὸ τῆς ἀποδείξεως ἡγησάμεθα, καὶ ὑμέτερον ἔστω ὡς δυνατῶν βασιλέων ἐξετάσαι εἰ ἀληθῶς ταῦτα δεδιδάγμεθα καὶ διδάσκομεν. βραχεῖς δὲ καὶ σύντομοι παρ’ αὐτοῦ λόγοι γεγονάσιν, οὐ γὰρ σοφιστὴς ὑπῆρχεν, ἀλλὰ δύναμις θεοῦ ὁ λόγος αὐτοῦ ἦν.

attempting to make Christianity acceptable to the emperor. Making one's school similar enough to existing and accepted schools is exactly the purpose to which Justin wrote this letter.

The next passage in which Justin mentions the DDI comes in chapter 20 of *Apology I*.

Here he uses the fact that philosophy grows out of the soil of μῦθος to show how Christianity is a growth of truth that has analogies with pagan myths.

Indeed, Sibyl and Hystaspes foretold that all corruptible things are to be destroyed by fire. And the so-called Stoic philosophers teach that even God is to be transformed into fire, and they claim that after this evolution the world is to be made over again. We, on the contrary, believe that God, the Maker of all things, is superior to changeable things. If, therefore, we agree on some points with your honored poets and philosophers, and on other points offer a more complete and supernatural teaching, and if we alone produce proof of our statements, why are we unjustly hated beyond all others? When we say that God created and arranged all things in this world, we seem to repeat the teachings of Plato; when we announce a final conflagration [of the world], we utter the doctrine of the Stoics; and when we assert that the souls of the wicked, living after death, will be sensibly punished, and that the souls of the good, freed from punishment, will live happily, we believe the same things as your poets and philosophers. In claiming that we should not worship the work of men's hands, we agree with the comic poet Menander and other writers like him, for they have declared that the creator is greater than the work.¹⁸⁸

Once again, the content is not innovative, but it is cleverly using the language of the day in order to argue for the legitimacy of his sect. In addition, we also see here that God is said to be superior to changeable things. The perfection and dignity of the Divine nature is what sets it above all created and mutable things, and requires that the Divine be immutable.

¹⁸⁸ Justin, 55-56. *Apology I*, chapter 20. Καὶ Σίβυλλα δὲ καὶ Ὑστάσπης γενήσεσθαι τῶν φθαρτῶν ἀνάλωσιν διὰ πυρὸς ἔφασαν. οἱ λεγόμενοι δὲ Στωϊκοὶ φιλόσοφοι καὶ αὐτὸν τὸν θεὸν εἰς πῦρ ἀναλύεσθαι δογματίζουσι καὶ αὐτὸν πάλιν κατὰ μεταβολὴν τὸν κόσμον γενέσθαι λέγουσιν. ἡμεῖς δὲ κρεῖττόν τι τῶν μεταβαλλομένων νοοῦμεν τὸν πάντων ποιητὴν θεόν. εἰ οὖν καὶ ὁμοίως τινὰ τοῖς παρ' ὑμῖν τιμωμένοις ποιηταῖς καὶ φιλοσόφοις λέγομεν ἓνα δὲ καὶ μειζόνως καὶ θείως καὶ μόνοι μετὰ ἀποδείξεως, τί παρὰ πάντας ἀδίκως μισούμεθα; τῷ γὰρ λέγειν ἡμᾶς ὑπὸ θεοῦ πάντα κεκοσμηθῆσαι καὶ γεγενῆσθαι Πλάτωνος δόξομεν λέγειν δόγμα· τῷ δὲ ἐκτύρωσιν γενέσθαι Στωϊκῶν· τῷ δὲ κολάζεσθαι ἐν αἰσθήσει καὶ μετὰ θάνατον οὐσας τὰς τῶν ἀδίκων ψυχάς, τὰς δὲ τῶν σπουδαίων ἀπηλλαγμένας τῶν τιμωριῶν εὖ διάγειν, ποιηταῖς καὶ φιλοσόφοις τὰ αὐτὰ λέγειν δόξομεν· τῷ δὲ καὶ μὴ δεῖν χεῖρω ἀνθρώπου προσκυνεῖν Μενάνδρῳ τῷ κωμικῷ καὶ τοῖς ταῦτα φήσασι ταῦτα φράζομεν, μείζονα γὰρ τὸν δημιουργὸν τοῦ σκευαζομένου ἀπεφίναντο.

Justin clarifies the nature of Divine immutability is not simple stasis or inability to act. It is a perfection of action that does not allow it to be passive or affected by other entities or forces.

In chapter 28 of *Apology I* he claims,

As you may learn by examining our writings, the chief of the wicked demons we call the serpent, Satan, the devil, and Christ foretold that he with his army of demons, and the men who follow him will be cast into the fire [of Hell] to be punished for endless ages. The cause of God's delay in doing this is his regard for mankind, for in His foreknowledge He sees that some will yet be saved by repentance, some who are, perhaps, not yet in existence. Indeed, in the beginning when He created man, He endowed him with the power of understanding, of choosing the truth, and of doing right; consequently, before God no man has an excuse if he does evil, for all men have been created with the power to reason and to reflect. If anyone does not believe that God takes an interest in these things, he will by some artifice imply either that God does not exist, or that though He does exist, He takes delight in evil, or that He is as [as unmoved] as a stone, and that neither virtue nor vice is a reality, but that things are considered good or bad only in the opinion of men: this indeed would be the height of blasphemy and injustice.¹⁸⁹

Here we see two objections raised. The first is clearly an objection to Epicurean ideas about the nature of the Divine as uninterested in the workings of the world, but also a distancing himself from a divine separateness that might be seen in Aristotle. This defense of the nature of God's judgment attempts to insulate God from Epicurean criticisms about the nature of God. Justin, of course, has no interest in the Epicureans, and does not even include them in the list of philosophical schools worthy of mention. The Epicureans' ideas about Divinity being disinterested in the affairs of the world is anathema to Justin's theology which includes the Incarnation. It is perfectly reasonable, therefore, that he would both reject such ideas as vile, and mock them as silly by comparing the Divine to a rock. While there might be a glimmer of humor

¹⁸⁹ Justin, *Apology I*. 64-65. Παρ' ἡμῖν μὲν γὰρ ὁ ἀρχηγέτης τῶν κακῶν δαιμόνων ὄφις καλεῖται καὶ σατανᾶς καὶ διάβολος ὡς καὶ ἐκ τῶν ἡμετέρων συγγραμμάτων ἐρευνήσαντες μαθεῖν δύνασθε· ὄν εἰς τὸ πῦρ πεμφθήσεσθαι μετὰ τῆς αὐτοῦ στρατιᾶς καὶ τῶν ἐπομένων ἀνθρώπων κολασθησομένους τὸν ἀπέραντον αἰῶνα προεμήνυσεν ὁ Χριστός, καὶ γὰρ ἡ ἐπιμονὴ τοῦ μηδέπω τοῦτο πράττει τὸν θεὸν διὰ τὸ ἀνθρώπινον γένος γεγένηται, προγινώσκει γὰρ τινὰς ἐκ μετανοίας σωθήσεσθαι μέλλοντας καὶ τινὰς μηδέπω ἴσως γεννηθέντας, καὶ τὴν ἀρχὴν νοερὸν καὶ δυνάμενον αἰρεῖσθαι τάληθῆ καὶ εὖ πράττειν τὸ γένος τὸ ἀνθρώπινον πεποίηκεν, ὥστ' ἀναπολόγητον εἶναι τοῖς πᾶσιν ἀνθρώποις παρὰ τῷ θεῷ, λογικοὶ γὰρ καὶ θεωρητικοὶ γεγένηται. (4) εἰ δέ τις ἀπιστεῖ μέλειν τούτων τῷ θεῷ, ἢ μὴ εἶναι αὐτὸν διὰ τέχνης ὁμολογήσει ἢ ὄντα χαίρειν κακία φήσει ἢ λίθῳ εἰκότα μένειν καὶ μηδὲν εἶναι ἀρετὴν μηδὲ κακίαν δόξῃ δὲ μόνον τοὺς ἀνθρώπους ἢ ἀγαθὰ ἢ κακὰ ταῦτα ἡγεῖσθαι, ἢ περ μεγίστη ἀσέβεια καὶ ἀδικία ἐστὶ.

in this passage, it is also a criticism that Justin takes seriously. Second, we see that there is a fundamental difference between God's form of immutability and impassability and that of a rock. God's immutability is something totally different from mere stasis. This passage is more than a simple throwaway phrase used to denigrate the Epicurean doctrines. It is a positive statement about the nature of immutability. Despite being more Platonic than Peripatetic, Justin is explicit in his doctrine that God is perfectly perfect, and therefore has no privations or needs that would allow for God to change. Thus the immutability and impassability that he argues for is fundamentally different from impassible things like rocks. Justin thinks about immutability and impassability from a perspective that emphasizes something different than modal distinctions the way we would today.

In *Apology II* Justin does not have nearly as much detail, but in chapter 6 he returns to the idea that God is unbegotten.

No proper name has been bestowed upon God, the Father of all, since He is unbegotten. For, whoever has a proper name received it from a person older than himself. The words Father, and God, and Creator, and Lord, and Master are not real names, but rather terms of address derived from His beneficent deeds. But His Son, who alone is properly called Son, the Word, who was with Him [God, the Father] and was begotten before all things, when in the beginning He [God, the Father] created and arranged all things through Him [the Son], is called Christ, because He was anointed and because God the Father arranged all the things of creation through Him. This name also has an unknown meaning, just as the term 'God,' which is not a real name, but the expression of man's innate opinion of a thing that can scarcely be defined. But 'Jesus,' which is His name both as Man and Savior, has a meaning. For He also became a man, as we stated, [*Apol.* 23 & 33] and was born in accordance with the will of God the Father for the benefit of believers, and for the defeat of the demons. Even now, your own eyes will teach you the truth of this last statement. For many demoniacs throughout the entire world, and even in your own city, were exorcised by many of our Christians in the name of Jesus Christ, who was crucified under Pontius Pilate; and our men cured them, and they still cure others by rendering helpless and dispelling the demons who had taken possession of these men, even when they could not be cured by all the other exorcists, and exploiters of incantations and drugs.¹⁹⁰

¹⁹⁰ Justin, *Apology II*. 125-126. Greek text is from D. Minns and P. Parvis, *Justin, Philosopher and Martyr, Apologies* [Oxford Early Christian Texts Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009]. Note: The Greek text lists this chapter as chapter 5 rather than chapter 6. Ὄνομα δὲ τῶ πάντων πατρὶ θετόν, ἀγεννήτω ὄντι, οὐκ ἔστιν. ὃς γὰρ ἂν

Once again he very clearly insists that there is no generation of the Divine, and that the lack of generation is what sets makes the Divine to be above proper names and above change. The dignity of being ungenerated is a concept about the Divine that stretches back to at least Parmenides's eight fragment. This chapter also introduces the difficulty of the incarnation, particularly in light of the Trinitarian baptism formula, but again, we must return to that topic below.

Finally, in the *Dialog with Trypho* he has some small mentions of the DDI. He defines the Divine as follows, "God is the being who always has the same nature in the same manner, and is the cause of existence to all else."¹⁹¹ Though brief, this is a clear statement that the Divine must be immutable, but the nature of that immutability is considered later at the end of chapter five,

"On the other hand," he continued, "I do not claim that any soul ever perishes, for this would certainly be a benefit to sinners. What happens to them? The souls of the devout dwell in a better place, whereas the souls of the unjust and the evil abide in a worse place, and there they await the judgment day. Those, therefore, who are deemed worthy to see God will never perish, but the others will be subjected to punishment as long as God allows them to exist as long as He wants them to be punished."

"Does not your assertion agree with what Plato taught in his *Timaeus* [41 AB] concerning the world, namely, that it can be destroyed since it is a created thing, but that it will not be destroyed or be destined for destruction since such is the will of God? Don't you think that the same thing could be said of the soul, and, in short, of all other creatures? For whatever

κατ' ὄνομά τι προσαγορεύηται πρεσβύτερον ἔχει τὸν θέμενον τὸ ὄνομα. τὸ δὲ πατήρ καὶ θεὸς καὶ κτίστης καὶ κύριος καὶ δεσπότης οὐκ ὀνόματά ἐστιν, ἀλλ' ἐκ τῶν εὐποιοῦν καὶ τῶν ἔργων προσήσεις. ὁ δὲ υἱὸς ἐκείνου—ὁ μόνος λεγόμενος κυρίως υἱός, ὁ λόγος πρὸ τῶν ποιημάτων καὶ συνῶν καὶ γεννώμενος—Χριστὸς μὲν κατὰ τὸ χρῆσαι καὶ κοσμήσαι τὰ πάντα δι' αὐτοῦ τὸν θεὸν λέγεται, ὄνομα καὶ αὐτὸ περιέχον ἄγνωστον σημασίαν, ὃν τρόπον καὶ τὸ θεὸς προσαγόρευμα οὐκ ὄνομά ἐστιν, ἀλλὰ πράγματος δυσεξηγήτου ἔμφυτος τῇ φύσει τῶν ἀνθρώπων δόξα. Ἰησοῦς δὲ καὶ ἀνθρώπου καὶ σωτήρος ὄνομα καὶ σημασίαν ἔχει. καὶ γὰρ καὶ ἀνθρώπος, ὡς προέφημεν, γέγονε, κατὰ τὴν τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ πατρὸς βουλήν, ἀποκυθῆεις ὑπὲρ τῶν πιστευόντων ἀνθρώπων· καὶ καταλύσει τοὺς δαίμονας, ὡς καὶ νῦν ἐκ τῶν ὑπ' ὄψιν γινομένων μαθεῖν δύνασθε. δαιμονιολήπτους γὰρ πολλοὺς κατὰ πάντα τὸν κόσμον καὶ ἐν τῇ ὑμετέρα πόλει πολλοὶ τῶν ἡμετέρων ἀνθρώπων, τῶν Χριστιανῶν, ἐπορκίζοντες κατὰ τοῦ ὀνόματος Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, τοῦ σταυρωθέντος ἐπὶ Ποντίου Πιλάτου, ὑπὸ τῶν ἄλλων πάντων ἐπορκιστῶν καὶ ἐπαστῶν καὶ φαρμακευτῶν μὴ ιαθέντας, ἰάσαντο· καὶ ἔτι νῦν ἰῶνται, καταργοῦντες καὶ ἐκδιώκοντες τοὺς κατέχοντας τοὺς ἀνθρώπους δαίμονας.
¹⁹¹ Justin, 152. *Dialogue with Trypho* Chapter 3. Τὸ κατὰ τὰ αὐτὰ καὶ ὡσαύτως αἰεὶ ἔχον καὶ τοῦ εἶναι πᾶσι τοῖς ἄλλοις αἴτιον, τοῦτο δὴ ἐστὶν ὁ θεός. οὕτως ἐγὼ ἀπεκρινάμην αὐτῷ· καὶ ἐτέρπετο ἐκεῖνος ἀκούων μου, οὕτως τέ με ἤρετο πάλιν.

exists or shall exist after God has a nature subject to corruption, and therefore capable of complete annihilation, for only God is unbegotten and incorruptible. For this reason He is God, and all other things after Him are created and corruptible. This is also the reason why souls die and are punished, for, if they were unbegotten, they would not have sinned, nor have become so foolish; they would not have been so timid at one time, and so daring at another; nor would they, of their own account, ever have entered into swine, serpents, and dogs. Furthermore, if they were unbegotten, it would not be right to coerce them, for one who is unbegotten is similar and equal to another unbegotten, for, if there were some difference between them, you could not, no matter how you searched, find the cause of such difference; but, after sending your thought always to infinity, you would finally become tired and have to stop before the one Unbegotten and declare that He is the cause of all things. Do you think that these things escaped the notice of Plato and Pythagoras, those wise men who became, so to say, a wall and bulwark of our philosophy?"¹⁹²

These last two paragraphs are particularly important to our study. We see here a direct doctrinal statement that allows us to give some content to Justin's Theology and concept about the nature of ontology and divinity. Aseity is the core Divine characteristic that justifies the DDI.

Justin's version of the DDI is, thus far, not particularly novel, nor complex. It is a fairly standard articulation of the standard reasoning for the dignity and uniqueness of Divine motivation and existence. It is not particularly traceable to one tradition, but rather shows an amount of familiarity with the bibliophilic and syncretic way that philosophy worked for the common populace in the second century, and some exposure to Philo's sort of Hellenized thought. The innovations of Justin come from an attempt to reconcile the two fundamental

¹⁹² Justin, 157-158. *Dialogue with Trypho* Chapter 5.

Ἀλλὰ μὴν οὐδὲ ἀποθνήσκουσιν φημι πάσας τὰς ψυχὰς ἐγὼ· ἔρμαιον γὰρ ἦν ὡς ἀληθῶς τοῖς κακοῖς, ἀλλὰ τί; τὰς μὲν τῶν εὐσεβῶν ἐν κρείττονι ποιὼν χώρῳ μένειν, τὰς δὲ ἀδίκους καὶ πονηρὰς ἐν χείρονι, τὸν τῆς κρίσεως ἐκδεχομένης χρόνον τότε. οὕτως αἱ μὲν, ἄξια τοῦ θεοῦ φανεῖσαι, οὐκ ἀποθνήσκουσιν ἔτι· αἱ δὲ κολάζονται, ἔστ' ἂν αὐτὰς καὶ εἶναι καὶ κολάζεσθαι ὁ θεὸς θέλη.

Ἄρα τοιοῦτόν ἐστιν ὃ λέγεις, οἷον καὶ Πλάτων ἐν Τιμαίῳ αἰνίσσεται περὶ τοῦ κόσμου, λέγων ὅτι αὐτὸς μὲν καὶ φθαρτός ἐστιν ἢ γέγονεν, οὐ λυθήσεται δὲ οὐδὲ τεύξεται θανάτου μοίρας διὰ τὴν βούλησιν τοῦ θεοῦ; τοῦτ' αὐτό σοι δοκεῖ καὶ περὶ ψυχῆς καὶ ἀπλῶς πάντων πέρι λέγεσθαι; ὅσα γὰρ ἐστὶ μετὰ τὸν θεὸν ἢ ἔσται ποτέ, ταῦτα φύσιν φθαρτὴν ἔχειν, καὶ οἷά τε ἐξαφανισθῆναι καὶ μὴ εἶναι ἔτι· μόνος γὰρ ἀγέννητος καὶ ἀφθαρτος ὁ θεὸς καὶ διὰ τοῦτο θεὸς ἐστὶ, τὰ δὲ λοιπὰ πάντα μετὰ τοῦτον γεννητὰ καὶ φθαρτὰ. τοῦτου χάριν καὶ ἀποθνήσκουσιν αἱ ψυχαὶ καὶ κολάζονται· ἐπεὶ εἰ ἀγέννητοι ἦσαν, οὐτ' ἂν ἐξημάρτανον οὔτε ἀφροσύνης ἀνάπλεω ἦσαν, οὐδὲ δειλαὶ καὶ θρασεῖαι πάλιν, ἀλλ' οὐδὲ ἐκοῦσαί ποτε εἰς σύας ἐχώρου καὶ ὄφεις καὶ κύνας, οὐδὲ μὴν ἀναγκάζεσθαι αὐτὰς θέμις, εἴπερ εἰσὶν ἀγέννητοι. τὸ γὰρ ἀγέννητον τῷ ἀγεννήτῳ ὁμοίον ἐστὶ καὶ ἴσον καὶ ταυτόν, καὶ οὔτε δυνάμει οὔτε τιμῇ προκριθεῖν ἂν θατέρου τὸ ἕτερον. (6) ὅθεν οὐδὲ πολλὰ ἐστὶ τὰ ἀγέννητα· εἰ γὰρ διαφορά τις ἦν ἐν αὐτοῖς, οὐκ ἂν εὖροις ἀναζητῶν τὸ αἴτιον τῆς διαφορᾶς, ἀλλ', ἐπ' ἄπειρον αἰεὶ τὴν διάνοιαν πέμπων, ἐπὶ ἐνός ποτε στήσῃ ἀγεννήτου καμῶν καὶ τοῦτο φήσεις ἀπάντων αἴτιον. ἢ ταῦτα ἔλαθε, φημι ἐγὼ, Πλάτωνα καὶ Πυθαγόραν, σοφοὺς ἄνδρας, οἳ ὡσπερ τεῖχος ἡμῖν καὶ ἔρεισμα φιλοσοφίας ἐξεγένοντο;

reasons for positing the DDI in the first place, and using the doctrine to argue for the uniqueness and importance of Christianity, but most importantly, as a means by which to understand the mystery of the incarnation.

Divine Perfection and Covenant Constancy as a Means to Articulate the Philosophical Acceptability of the Incarnation and the Godhead

Justin has to explain a particularly thorny problem that no other thinker, including Paul, had to make sense of: the incarnation.¹⁹³ The Pauline letters focus mainly on the conception of God's immutability as being connected to the mystery of the Covenant including the Gentile population. The articulation of God as immutable is simply stated in the biblical literature rather than argued for. Especially in the Pauline letters, the argumentation that is present is about how Christianity is the legitimate sect of Israelite religiosity. Justin has a similar project in the *Dialogue with Trypho*, he is trying to show that Christian interpretation of the Tanakh is more correct, and he is using the tools of Greek philosophy to manage it. Some of this text turns around how the practice of the so-called Ceremonial Law (usually spoken of as "the circumcision" by early Christians) is unnecessary, and how they worship the same God as that of the Tanakh, but a great deal of Justin's argumentation is actually for the legitimacy of considering Jesus to be Divine. The trouble with this idea, of course, is that Christians also profess that Jesus was human and humans are quite mutable. The question that obviously rises is "How can a man who was born, moved about, grew, ate, and died share the Divine Nature if the Divine is immutable?" Justin will appeal to the DDI in both of the senses I have already

¹⁹³ Paul and the other scriptural authors, of course, articulate the primary source information of the Incarnation. They argue for its necessity for salvation, and for its place in their sectarian readings of the Tanakh, but they do not need to attempt a metaphysical articulation of how it is philosophically salutary. That is not their business. Justin, however, does attempt something like this articulation. The explanation that we have is not as subtle as those proffered by the Cappadocians or Augustine, but his extant writings are not built to address the metaphysical problems directly, as I explained above.

articulated, but places more emphasis on the DDI in the Hebrew context (i.e. Covenant Constancy)—as would be appropriate in a dialogue with a Jewish person. He emphasizes God’s Covenant Constancy in the face of a seemingly absurd mystery as a means of making philosophical and soteriological sense of the Incarnation.

Justin has to overcome the idea that the body is a limitation to, and is problematic for, the incarnation. He references both the idea that the body is a hindrance to pure intellection, and the transmigration of souls into lower forms of animal life. The first overture to this idea is found in the Dialogue when Justin is speaking to the Old Man. They have a dispute about whether or not souls are ungenerated and immortal, and whether souls transmigrate. The Old Man insists that neither of these things can be true, and Justin even sneaks in what appears to be a subtle reference to Balaam’s Ass¹⁹⁴ as a means to argue against the Pythagorean defamation of animal and bodily life is a hindrance to apprehending God. The significant goodness of the body is, of course, particularly important for Christians, as it is necessary for a doctrine of bodily resurrection. In Justin’s relation of the Old Man’s words, we see that the simple intellective nature of human beings is insufficient to understand the Divine Nature. Where before the F3P was enough to bring the human mind and the Divine Mind into contact (or even confuse the

¹⁹⁴ The passage in question is found in chapter 4 of the *Dialogue*. The conversation covers the dignity of even animal bodies. The theme of the necessity of the body is found both in Justin’s Christology and his Soteriology, but this funny little quirk is quite quick. The passage concerning Balaam’s Ass is found in Numbers 22, and in it the Ass is far better equipped to understand the presence of God’s angel and of holy things than the human prophet.

“Then,” he continued, “shall horses and asses see God, or have they ever seen God at any time?”

“No,” I replied, “for not even most men see Him [God]; only those who are honest in their life, and who have been purified through their justice and every other virtue.”

“Then you would say,” he persisted, “that man does not see God because of his affinity with Him, nor because he possesses an intellect, but because he is temperate and just?”

“Certainly,” I answered, “and also because he has the faculty of thinking of God.”

“Would you say,” he asked, “that goats or sheep do an injustice to anyone?”

“They do not in any way do an injustice to anyone,” I replied.

“So, according to your reasoning,” he said, “these animals will see God?”

“No, they won’t,” I answered, “because they are hindered by their bodies.”

“If these animals had the power of speech,” he retorted, “you can be sure that they would have more right to revile our bodies.”

two), Justin does not think that this ontological standard is sufficient. He demands not just that virtue perfect us into our most divine nature, but rather that only perfect virtue could bring us into contact with the Divine. This move is aimed at what Justin considers to be a particular inadequacy of both Platonism and Pythagoreanism, and sets the groundwork for his use of the doctrine of the Spermatic Logos.

The provenance of Justin's exposure to the doctrine of the λόγος σπερματικός and its place in Justin's philosophy has been hotly debated, but there is one aspect that is unexamined, and that is how his rather vague use of this doctrine allows for Justin to postulate an immutable divine entity that can have an incarnational immanence. This move is not made explicitly, but undergirds his theology and forms a bridge to a uniquely Christian form of immanence. In Justin's estimation the spermatic logos allows for human beings to begin to philosophize,¹⁹⁵ but it cannot accomplish all goals. Just as the Old Man communicates it is only one of the necessary conditions for a complete philosophy. One must also have the correct material upon which to contemplate—namely the logos given through the prophets. While this concept clearly does allow for a particular theory of epistemology that includes limits which will become powerful in the Medieval period, it also does the unexpected work of explaining how logos can become incarnate without corrupting the immutable status of God.

The spermatic logos is particularly useful at this point in Justin's argumentation. The idea that the Logos can at some level indwell the intellect of mortal beings provides an analogy for how the Logos itself could be both divinely constant to the mystery of the Divine plan and present in mortal form. The function of this doctrine is not to provide a precisely articulated metaphysical mechanism by which the Divine can indwell the mortal. What it does is provide the link between the Divine and the mortal that Justin was so fond of in his understanding of

¹⁹⁵ See Edwards, *Ibid.*

Platonism.¹⁹⁶ Justin needs his doctrine of the Divine-mortal relationship to avoid two pitfalls. First, he must avoid the pantheism of Stoicism, and second he must avoid the Peripatetic identification of the Divine intellect with human intellect. The spermatic logos is particularly well suited to this task. Edwards argues persuasively for a Middle Platonist use of the spermatic logos that is similar to the doctrines of Numenius.¹⁹⁷ Most significant to our considerations here is his claim about Justin's idea of how the spermatic logos functioned in pagan thinkers. He identifies how the spermatic logos and the Logos of God are related, and identifies 3 principles that are related to the classical model of thinking we have found consistently since Parmenides.

Justin's theory of insight may be concisely expressed as follows. Christians have the unimpeded vision of Christ, the logos of God, and thus perceive the real entities (τὰ ὄντα). Because of the affinity (συγγενέες) between the spermatic logos within them and the true logos, pagans also have a dim perception of these realities, yet the content of their perception is nothing more than a shadow, a seed of veridical knowledge, but one that has yet to ripen into truth. This theology rests upon a number of principles which are not self-evident to modern commonsense. It is possible to identify at least three presuppositions which are distinctive and germane to the present study:

1. A double propagation, first producing the spermatic logos and then engendering the seed
2. A relation of the seed to its original source which co-exists with that of a part to whole and of copy to original.
3. An important and ineradicable distinction between the σπέρμα and the Christ from whom it indirectly proceeds.¹⁹⁸

Edwards goes on to claim that both Justin and Numenius would have accepted the first two principles, but denied the third. This claim should by no means surprise us, as the mindset of the Middle Platonists still hold more closely to the F3P than any Modern or later thinker would find palatable. These three principles easily show exactly the kind of relationship Justin needs to make the mystery of the incarnation acceptable to his audience, and they also show how the DDI

¹⁹⁶ See again the conversation between the Old Man and Justin in the *Dialogue*.

¹⁹⁷ Edwards, 24-29.

¹⁹⁸ Edwards, 25-26.

functions to secure the link between the un-incarnate Divine and the incarnate Logos.

Essentially, we have here a Johannine and Pauline use of the creative power of the Divine as it applies to the human being.

Both principles 1 and 2 are directly tied to the creation narrative as interpreted by the Johannine tradition. The language here clearly mirrors the opening lines of John's Gospel,

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made. In him was life, and the life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. He came as a witness to the light, that all might believe through him. He was not the light, but came to bear witness about the light.

The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world. He was in the world, and the world was made through him, yet the world did not know him. He came to his own, and his own people did not receive him. But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, who were born, not of the blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.

And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth. (John bore witness about him, and cried out, "This was he of whom I said, 'He who comes after me ranks before me, because he was before me.'") And from his fullness we have all received grace upon grace. For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. No one has ever seen God; the only God, who is at the Father's side, he has made him known.¹⁹⁹

¹⁹⁹ John 1:1-18., *ESV*. Ἐν ἀρχῇ ἦν ὁ λόγος, καὶ ὁ λόγος ἦν πρὸς τὸν θεόν, καὶ θεὸς ἦν ὁ λόγος. ² Οὗτος ἦν ἐν ἀρχῇ πρὸς τὸν θεόν. ³ πάντα δι' αὐτοῦ ἐγένετο, καὶ χωρὶς αὐτοῦ ἐγένετο οὐδὲ ἓν ὃ γέγονεν. ⁴ ἐν αὐτῷ ζωὴ ἦν, καὶ ἡ ζωὴ ἦν τὸ φῶς τῶν ἀνθρώπων. ⁵ καὶ τὸ φῶς ἐν τῇ σκοτίᾳ φαίνει, καὶ ἡ σκοτία αὐτὸ οὐ κατέλαβεν. ⁶ Ἐγένετο ἄνθρωπος, ἀπεσταλμένος παρὰ θεοῦ, ὄνομα αὐτῷ Ἰωάννης. ⁷ οὗτος ἦλθεν εἰς μαρτυρίαν, ἵνα μαρτυρήσῃ περὶ τοῦ φωτός, ἵνα πάντες πιστεύσωσιν δι' αὐτοῦ. ⁸ οὐκ ἦν ἐκεῖνος τὸ φῶς, ἀλλ' ἵνα μαρτυρήσῃ περὶ τοῦ φωτός. ⁹ ἦν τὸ φῶς τὸ ἀληθινόν ὃ φωτίζει πάντα ἄνθρωπον ἐρχόμενον εἰς τὸν κόσμον. ¹⁰ ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ ἦν, καὶ ὁ κόσμος δι' αὐτοῦ ἐγένετο, καὶ ὁ κόσμος αὐτὸν οὐκ ἔγνω. ¹¹ εἰς τὰ ἴδια ἦλθεν, καὶ οἱ ἴδιοι αὐτὸν οὐ παρέλαβον. ¹² ὅσοι δὲ ἔλαβον αὐτόν, ἔδωκεν αὐτοῖς ἐξουσίαν τέκνα θεοῦ γενέσθαι, τοῖς πιστεύουσιν εἰς τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ, ¹³ οἳ οὐκ ἐξ αἱμάτων οὐδὲ ἐκ θελήματος σαρκὸς οὐδὲ ἐκ θελήματος ἀνδρὸς ἀλλ' ἐκ θεοῦ ἐγεννήθησαν. ¹⁴ Καὶ ὁ λόγος σὰρξ ἐγένετο καὶ ἐσκήνωσεν ἐν ἡμῖν, καὶ ἐθεασάμεθα τὴν δόξαν αὐτοῦ, δόξαν ὡς μονογενοῦς παρὰ πατρός, πλήρης χάριτος καὶ ἀληθείας. ¹⁵ Ἰωάννης μαρτυρεῖ περὶ αὐτοῦ καὶ κέκραγεν λέγων· Οὗτος ἦν ὃν εἶπον, Ὁ ὀπίσω μου ἐρχόμενος ἔμπροσθέν μου γέγονεν, ὅτι πρῶτός μου ἦν. ¹⁶ ὅτι ἐκ τοῦ πληρώματος αὐτοῦ ἡμεῖς πάντες

It is in this Logos, by which and through which creation is accomplished. The nature of the capacity of the Logos to both be the creative power behind the entirety of the cosmos as well as be the generative force behind human life, as well as the light of their existence, fits exactly with the way Justin uses the spermatic logos. All human beings have some level of access to the spermatic logos because they were created through and for the Logos itself. It leaves its imprint on them in ways that cannot be fully corrupted or destroyed. This use of the spermatic logos allows for the maintenance of humans beings capacity to bear the image of God. It also serves to explain how the Logos could take on human form and not be irrational: the human form was created to bear just such an image through Divine providence and the mystery of the Covenant.

The mystery in question is also referenced in the book of Acts, predictably, when Paul addresses the Greeks in the Areopagus. We have already seen Justin reference this passage in the chapter 10 of the *First Apology*, but some notes about the oddity of the mystery he attempts to solve are significant here. The nature of the mystery that Paul is interested in is found in a few different places, but to understand how Justin could use the spermatic logos to explain the incarnation we must follow the thread of the mystery of divine motivation. It is in understanding divine motivation that we see Justin's use of the idea of Covenant Constancy despite apparent absurdities, both to the eyes of the Jews and the Gentiles of his day. The passage is as follows,

So Paul, standing in the midst of the Areopagus, said: "Men of Athens, I perceive that in every way you are very religious. For as I passed along and observed the objects of your worship, I found also an altar with this inscription: 'To the unknown god.' What therefore you worship as unknown I proclaim to you. The God who made the world and everything in it, being Lord of heaven and earth, does not live in temples made by man, nor is he served by human hands, as though he needed anything, since he himself gives to all mankind life and breath and everything. And he made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined allotted periods and the boundaries of their

ἐλάβομεν, καὶ χάριν ἀντὶ χάριτος· ¹⁷ ὅτι ὁ νόμος διὰ Μωυσέως ἐδόθη, ἡ χάρις καὶ ἡ ἀλήθεια διὰ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ ἐγένετο. ¹⁸ θεὸν οὐδεὶς ἑώρακεν πώποτε· μονογενὴς θεὸς ὁ ὢν εἰς τὸν κόλπον τοῦ πατρὸς ἐκεῖνος ἐξηγήσατο.

dwelling place, that they should seek God and perhaps feel their way toward him and find him. Yet he is actually not far from each one of us, for

"In him we live and move and have our being",
as even some of your own poets have said,

"For we are indeed his offspring."

Being then God's offspring, we ought not to think that the divine being is like gold or silver or stone, an image formed by the art and imagination of man. The times of ignorance God overlooked, but now he commands all peoples everywhere to repent, because he has fixed a day on which he will judge the world in righteousness by a man whom he has appointed; and of this he has given assurance to all by raising him from the dead.²⁰⁰

The reference by Justin is clearly intended to tie together the two parts of what he sees as his conceptual heritage. He exists within a Hellenized tradition of interpretation that would find it most salutary to tie together the works of the philosophers and the prophets wherever they are in accord. This address itself is interesting, because it seems to hold the contradictory claims that God is invincible, possesses aseity, and asserts that God has no lacks while also claiming that God acted one way at one point in history, and now acts in another. This way of thinking might be thought to be an explicit acknowledgement of change in the Divine Nature, but we should be careful here. Justin's use of scripture holds a quarry at bay, though it is subtle and hides itself in the underbrush. We can follow the trail, however, if we only keep the scent through the various Pauline passages that concern the mysterious nature of God's will and plan of salvation.

²⁰⁰ Acts 17:22-31. *ESV*. ²² Σταθεῖς δὲ Παῦλος ἐν μέσῳ τοῦ Ἀρείου πάγου ἔφη, Ἄνδρες Ἀθηναῖοι, κατὰ πάντα ὡς δεισιδαιμονεστεροὺς ὑμᾶς θεωρῶ. ²³ διερχόμενος γὰρ καὶ ἀναθεωρῶν τὰ σεβάσματα ὑμῶν εὔρον καὶ βωμὸν ἐν ᾧ ἐπεγέγραπτο, ἀγνώστῳ θεῷ. ὃ οὖν ἀγνοοῦντες εὐσεβεῖτε, τοῦτο ἐγὼ καταγγέλλω ὑμῖν. ²⁴ ὁ θεὸς ὁ ποιήσας τὸν κόσμον καὶ πάντα τὰ ἐν αὐτῷ, οὗτος οὐρανοῦ καὶ γῆς ὑπάρχων κύριος οὐκ ἐν χειροποιήτοις ναοῖς κατοικεῖ, ²⁵ οὐδὲ ὑπὸ χειρῶν ἀνθρωπίνων θεραπεύεται προσδεόμενός τις, αὐτὸς διδοὺς πᾶσιν ζωὴν καὶ πνοὴν καὶ τὰ πάντα· ²⁶ ἐποίησέν τε ἐξ ἐνὸς ἕνους ἅπαν ἔθνος ἀνθρώπων κατοικεῖν ἐπὶ παντὸς προσώπου τῆς γῆς, ὅρισας προστεταγμένους καιροὺς καὶ τὰς ὁροθεσίας τῆς κατοικίας αὐτῶν, ²⁷ ζητεῖν τὸν θεόν, εἰ ἄρα γε ψηλαφήσειαν αὐτὸν καὶ εὔροιεν, καὶ γε οὐ μακρὰν ἀπὸ ἐνὸς ἐκάστου ἡμῶν ὑπάρχοντα. ²⁸ ἐν αὐτῷ γὰρ ζῶμεν καὶ κινούμεθα καὶ ἐσμέν, ὡς καὶ τινες τῶν καθ' ὑμᾶς ποιητῶν εἰρήκασιν, Τοῦ γὰρ καὶ γένος ἐσμέν. ²⁹ γένος οὖν ὑπάρχοντες τοῦ θεοῦ οὐκ ὀφείλομεν νομίζειν, χρυσοῦ ἢ ἀργύρου ἢ λίθου, χαράγματι τέχνης καὶ ἐνθυμήσεως ἀνθρώπου, τὸ θεῖον εἶναι ὅμοιον. ³⁰ τοὺς μὲν οὖν χρόνους τῆς ἀγνοίας ὑπεριδὼν ὁ θεὸς τὰ νῦν παραγγέλλει τοῖς ἀνθρώποις πάντας πανταχοῦ μετανοεῖν, ³¹ καθότι ἔστησεν ἡμέραν ἐν ἣ ἕκαστος κρίνειν τὴν οἰκουμένην ἐν δικαιοσύνῃ, ἐν ἀνδρὶ ᾧ ὥρισεν, πίστιν παρασχὼν πᾶσιν ἀναστήσας αὐτὸν ἐκ νεκρῶν.²⁰⁰

Paul often acknowledges that our temporal experience of God's actions is different from the Knowledge that God has of Godself. We see this clearly in one of his benedictions to the Romans,

Now to him who is able to strengthen you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery that was kept secret for long ages but has now been disclosed and through the prophetic writings has been made known to all nations, according to the command of the eternal God, to bring about the obedience of faith-- to the only wise God be glory forevermore through Jesus Christ! Amen.²⁰¹

Paul's use of mystery here clearly indicates that God's way of establishing the standards of the time can be temporally located without causing a change in God or God's plans. We see the same theme of God's mysterious will in Paul's epistle to the Ephesians. Chapter 3 is particularly salient here.

For this reason I, Paul, a prisoner for Christ Jesus on behalf of you Gentiles--assuming that you have heard of the stewardship of God's grace that was given to me for you, how the mystery was made known to me by revelation, as I have written briefly. When you read this, you can perceive my insight into the mystery of Christ, which was not made known to the sons of men in other generations as it has now been revealed to his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit. This mystery is that the Gentiles are fellow heirs, members of the same body, and partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the Gospel.

Of this Gospel I was made a minister according to the gift of God's grace, which was given me by the working of his power. To me, though I am the very least of all the saints, this grace was given, to preach to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ, and to bring to light for everyone what is the plan of the mystery hidden for ages in God who created all things, so that through the church the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places. This was according to the eternal purpose that he has realized in Christ Jesus our Lord, in whom we have boldness and access with confidence in our faith in him.²⁰²

²⁰¹ Romans 16:25-27. *ESV*. ²⁵ Τῷ δὲ δυναμένῳ ὑμᾶς στηριξάει κατὰ τὸ εὐαγγέλιόν μου καὶ τὸ κήρυγμα Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, κατὰ ἀποκάλυψιν μυστηρίου χρόνοις αἰωνίοις σεσιγημένου ²⁶ φανερωθέντος δὲ νῦν διὰ τε γραφῶν προφητικῶν κατ' ἐπιταγὴν τοῦ αἰωνίου θεοῦ εἰς ὑπακοὴν πίστεως εἰς πάντα τὰ ἔθνη γνωρισθέντος, ²⁷ μόνῳ σοφῷ θεῷ διὰ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ [ᾧ] ἡ δόξα εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας· ἀμήν.

²⁰² Ephesians 3:1-13, *ESV*. ¹ Τοῦτου χάριν ἐγὼ Παῦλος ὁ δέσμιος τοῦ χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν τῶν ἐθνῶν, —² εἴ γε ἠκούσατε τὴν οἰκονομίαν τῆς χάριτος τοῦ θεοῦ τῆς δοθείσης μοι εἰς ὑμᾶς, ³ [ὅτι] κατὰ ἀποκάλυψιν ἐγνωρίσθη μοι τὸ μυστήριον, καθὼς προέγραψα ἐν ὀλίγῳ, ⁴ πρὸς ὃ δύνασθε ἀναγινώσκοντες νοῆσαι τὴν σύνεσίν μου ἐν τῷ μυστηρίῳ τοῦ χριστοῦ, ⁵ ὃ ἐτέραις γενεαῖς οὐκ ἐγνωρίσθη τοῖς υἱοῖς τῶν ἀνθρώπων ὡς νῦν ἀπεκαλύφθη τοῖς ἁγίοις ἀποστόλοις αὐτοῦ καὶ προφήταις ἐν πνεύματι, ⁶ εἶναι τὰ ἔθνη συνκληρονόμα καὶ σύνσωμα καὶ συνμέτοχα τῆς ἐπαγγελίας ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ διὰ τοῦ εὐαγγελίου, ⁷ οὗ ἐγενήθη διάκονος κατὰ τὴν δωρεὰν τῆς χάριτος τοῦ θεοῦ τῆς δοθείσης μοι κατὰ τὴν ἐνέργειαν τῆς δυνάμεως αὐτοῦ—⁸ ἐμοὶ τῷ ἐλαχιστοτέρῳ πάντων ἁγίων ἐδόθη ἡ χάρις αὕτη— τοῖς ἔθνεσιν εὐαγγελίσασθαι τὸ ἀνεξιχνίαστον πλοῦτος τοῦ χριστοῦ, ⁹ καὶ φωτίσαι τίς ἡ οἰκονομία τοῦ μυστηρίου

Here the epistolary literature very plainly explains that God's plan for the salvation of sinful human beings always included the Gentiles, but that the divine will and plan remained hidden from human beings. It is not that the plan ever underwent some sort of Dispensationalist alteration, but rather that human beings simply were not privy to the details until God revealed them through Prophecy. The theme continues even more strongly as we follow it into Colossians, where Paul identifies the nature of God the Father as well as the nature of Christ as both co-equally Divine by explaining that the mystery of the incarnation has been revealed.

He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities--all things were created through him and for him. And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together. And he is the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything he might be preeminent. For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross.

And you, who were once alienated and hostile in mind, doing evil deeds, he has now reconciled in his body of flesh by his death, in order to present you holy and blameless and above reproach before him, if indeed you continue in the faith, stable and steadfast, not shifting from the hope of the gospel that you heard, which has been proclaimed in all creation under heaven, and of which I, Paul, became a minister.

Now I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake, and in my flesh I am filling up what is lacking in Christ's afflictions for the sake of his body, that is, the church, of which I became a minister according to the stewardship from God that was given to me for you, to make the word of God fully known, the mystery hidden for ages and generations but now revealed to his saints. To them God chose to make known how great among the Gentiles are the riches of the glory of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory. Him we proclaim, warning everyone and teaching everyone with all wisdom, that we may present everyone mature in Christ. For this I toil, struggling with all his energy that he powerfully works within me.²⁰³

τοῦ ἀποκεκρυμμένου ἀπὸ τῶν αἰώνων ἐν τῷ θεῷ τῷ τὰ πάντα κτίσαντι,¹⁰ ἵνα γνωρισθῇ νῦν ταῖς ἀρχαῖς καὶ ταῖς ἐξουσίαις ἐν τοῖς ἐπουρανίοις διὰ τῆς ἐκκλησίας ἡ πολυποίκιλος σοφία τοῦ θεοῦ,¹¹ κατὰ πρόθεσιν τῶν αἰώνων ἣν ἐποίησεν ἐν τῷ χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ τῷ κυρίῳ ἡμῶν,¹² ἐν ᾧ ἔχομεν τὴν παρρησίαν καὶ προσαγωγὴν ἐν πεποιθήσει διὰ τῆς πίστεως αὐτοῦ.¹³ Διὸ αἰτοῦμαι μὴ ἐνκακεῖν ἐν ταῖς θλίψεσίν μου ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν, ἧτις ἐστὶν δόξα ὑμῶν.

²⁰³ Colossians 1:15-29. *ESV*. ὅς ἐστιν εἰκὼν τοῦ θεοῦ τοῦ ἀοράτου, πρωτότοκος πάσης κτίσεως,¹⁶ ὅτι ἐν αὐτῷ ἐκτίσθη τὰ πάντα ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς καὶ ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς, τὰ ὀρατὰ καὶ τὰ ἀόρατα, εἴτε θρόνοι εἴτε κυριότητες εἴτε ἀρχαὶ εἴτε ἐξουσίαι· τὰ πάντα δι' αὐτοῦ καὶ εἰς αὐτὸν ἔκτισται·¹⁷ καὶ αὐτὸς ἐστὶν πρὸ πάντων καὶ τὰ πάντα ἐν αὐτῷ συνέστηκεν,¹⁸ καὶ αὐτὸς ἐστὶν ἡ κεφαλὴ τοῦ σώματος, τῆς ἐκκλησίας· ὅς ἐστιν [ἡ] ἀρχή, πρωτότοκος ἐκ τῶν νεκρῶν, ἵνα γένηται ἐν πάσιν αὐτὸς πρωτεύων,¹⁹ ὅτι ἐν αὐτῷ εὐδόκησεν πᾶν τὸ πλήρωμα κατοικῆσαι²⁰ καὶ δι' αὐτοῦ ἀποκαταλλάξαι τὰ πάντα εἰς αὐτόν, εἰρηνοποιήσας διὰ τοῦ αἵματος τοῦ σταυροῦ αὐτοῦ, [δι' αὐτοῦ] εἴτε τὰ ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς εἴτε τὰ ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς·²¹ καὶ ὑμᾶς ποτὲ ὄντας ἀπηλλοτριωμένους καὶ ἐχθροὺς τῇ διανοίᾳ ἐν τοῖς ἔργοις

Once again the mystery is the same. Despite the appearance of contradiction and absurdity, God can both incarnate and remain perfectly constant and immutable even through the incarnation process. It is through this mystery that Christ is held to be the Lamb slain from before the foundation of the world.²⁰⁴ Justin lacks any sort of interaction with a theory of time and eternity because he feels no particular need to explain the mechanisms behind the incarnation. For him it is not a matter of explaining the nuts and bolts of metaphysics, rather it is a matter of watering the germinating seed of the spermatic logos that was quickened by exposure to the Logos. Such mysteries are dissolved not by logical permutation but by exposure to the Divine itself—exactly what he claims is the business of philosophy.²⁰⁵

It must, of course, be noted at this point that some may claim that Justin’s version of the DDI depends not on the above argument, but on Subordinationism. While it is simpler and easier to claim that Justin was a Subordinationist and therefore only bothers to attribute immutability only to the Father and not the Logos, this attribution is too quick. It is not obvious to what extent that Justin’s theology is robustly Trinitarian by post-Nicaean or even post-Cappadocian standards. There is not an explicit discussion of the nature of hypostasis in the extant works of Justin. Arguments about the sophistication of his Trinitarianism proceed from a rather considerable silence, and therefore claims to his Subordinationism are significantly

τοῖς πονηροῖς, —νυνὶ δὲ ἀποκατήλλαξεν* ²² ἐν τῷ σώματι τῆς σαρκὸς αὐτοῦ διὰ τοῦ θανάτου, —παραστήσαι ὑμᾶς ἁγίους καὶ ἀμώμους καὶ ἀνεγκλήτους κατενώπιον αὐτοῦ, ²³ εἴ γε ἐπιμένετε τῇ πίστει τεθεμελιωμένοι καὶ ἐδραῖοι καὶ μὴ μετακινούμενοι ἀπὸ τῆς ἐλπίδος τοῦ εὐαγγελίου οὗ ἠκούσατε, τοῦ κηρυχθέντος ἐν πάσῃ κτίσει τῇ ὑπὸ τὸν οὐρανόν, οὗ ἐγενόμην ἐγὼ Παῦλος διάκονος.

²⁴ Νῦν χαίρω ἐν τοῖς παθήμασιν ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν, καὶ ἀνταναπληρῶ τὰ ὑστερήματα τῶν θλίψεων τοῦ χριστοῦ ἐν τῇ σαρκί μου ὑπὲρ τοῦ σώματος αὐτοῦ, ὃ ἐστὶν ἡ ἐκκλησία, ²⁵ ἧς ἐγενόμην ἐγὼ διάκονος κατὰ τὴν οἰκονομίαν τοῦ θεοῦ τὴν δοθεῖσάν μοι εἰς ὑμᾶς πληρῶσαι τὸν λόγον τοῦ θεοῦ, ²⁶ τὸ μυστήριον τὸ ἀποκεκρυμμένον ἀπὸ τῶν αἰώνων καὶ ἀπὸ τῶν γενεῶν, —νῦν δὲ ἐφανερώθη τοῖς ἁγίοις αὐτοῦ, ²⁷ οἷς ἠθέλησεν ὁ θεὸς γνωρίσαι τί τὸ πλοῦτος τῆς δόξης τοῦ μυστηρίου τούτου ἐν τοῖς ἔθνεσιν, ὃ ἐστὶν Χριστὸς ἐν ὑμῖν, ἡ ἐλπίς τῆς δόξης. ²⁸ ὃν ἡμεῖς καταγγέλλομεν νουθετοῦντες πάντα ἄνθρωπον καὶ διδάσκοντες πάντα ἄνθρωπον ἐν πάσῃ σοφίᾳ, ἵνα παραστήσωμεν πάντα ἄνθρωπον τέλειον ἐν Χριστῷ. ²⁹ εἰς ὃ καὶ κοπιῶ ἀγωνιζόμενος κατὰ τὴν ἐνέργειαν αὐτοῦ τὴν ἐνεργουμένην ἐν ἐμοὶ ἐν δυνάμει.

²⁰⁴ Revelation 13:8. *ESV*.

²⁰⁵ *Dialogue with Trypho the Jew*, ch. 3.

underdetermined. What is clear is that he appeals to the Trinitarian formula in baptism and that he clearly believes in both the divinity of Jesus of Nazareth and the Spirit of Prophecy. Without simple recourse to the precise nature of concept of the Trinity we must consider the method Justin uses in his argumentation. As I have set out above, the use of spermatic logos as a mechanism to explicate the Divine mystery disclosed in scripture is perfectly in accordance with Justin's technique. Those who would claim Justin's Subordinationism must recall that he appeals to the mystery of the incarnation not in the *Dialogue with Trypho* but in the *First Apology*, and the doctrine of the spermatic logos in the *Second Apology*. In these two works Justin is trying to argue for the rational and salutary nature of the incarnation to a pagan audience, and so he must defend the idea that not only could a God be born, but also that that God could suffer and die a painful and shameful death, all while maintaining the power and dignity worthy of the Divine. He is not making a particular claim against the idea of the one-ness of God as he would be doing in the *Dialogue*, so asserting that he is insisting on finding Subordinationism in his letters to the emperors is unnecessary as these pagan rulers would have no horse in the race.

Thus we see that Justin's use of the concept of spermatic logos and Johannine Logos serve to affirm both premises 1 and 2 in a manner consistent with what he deems the proper work of philosophy. More than that, however, it also gives us the reason why he would not find premise 3 to be significant or correct. Though Justin lacks a formal emanation doctrine like that found in Neo-Platonism, nevertheless he has significant reasons both from his philosophical training and from his scriptures to deny that there can be existence outside of the person and activity of the Divine. Moreover, his constant reference to the Spirit of Prophecy serves as the means by which the Logos can be related to the individual seeds of the spermatic logos in human beings. In this regard his lack of the sort of tight articulation of the doctrines of the Trinity and the Incarnation

actually serve to make his account more palatable to his own mind, and he believes to his audience. Both Justin's technique of writing and arguing and his devotional and contemplative standards drive him to the conclusion that it is the very immutability of God that allows for Creation to exist and to change. It is God's immutability that makes the intellect of human beings rational and capable of moral action. It is also God's mysterious Immutability that causes the Incarnation and death of the Logos to be sensible and necessary to keep the Covenant in a perfectly self-consistent manner.

We can easily see, then, how Justin's use of the spermatic logos gives him the tools he needs to argue for his Theological convictions to the Roman rulers, but also to the Hellenic Jews of his day. Justin's techniques are steeped in just the sort of Middle Platonism that would find itself at home in the agora, the synagogue, the church, and the seashore. Thus we have an argument in favor of his use of DDI as tied to the spermatic logos and the Incarnation. Justin's articulation of the DDI may not satisfy the more exacting logical desires of the 21st century thinker, but it functions perfectly well to do the work he believes it needs to do. It ties together his doctrines and keeps the dignity and invincibility of the Divine intact. He is perfectly within the traditions begun by Xenophanes and Parmenides and even innovates how the DDI can be used to illuminate a particularly opaque Divine mystery. Additionally, he believes that it makes his doctrine both sensible and desirable both to the Jew and to the Greek. Justin has done the apologetic work of a second century Christian philosopher, and he has done it with distinction. His arguments are conversant with his times. Later thinkers will, of course, find fault with his lack of precision but we must remember that Justin lives and writes in a time where philosophical and theological doctrines are actively being ratified and codified. We must also do him the decency to recall that we have only a very limited amount of his thought preserved for us

and not judge his philosophical subtlety too harshly based upon a small and extremely directed sample of his thought. Justin has thus shown himself to be a master philosophical apologist and advanced the uses of the DDI dramatically.

CONCLUSION AND FURTHER WORK

The Doctrine of Divine Immutability is a philosophical and theological postulate that is well entrenched in the world of monotheisms and has been since the Medieval period. While it has undergone some specific challenges in recent decades by Whitehead and other process theorists, it remains a widely held dogma for many religious believers as well as holding significance for various philosophical and theological postulates—such as a standard theodicy in the face of the problem of evil. Another way that the problem is engaged is as a matter of modal logic, and an attempt to understand how language can be applied to divine entities in “God-talk” language games. While the analytic usefulness of these techniques is unquestionably useful in articulating the minutia of various distinct attributes of the divine, these distinctions are not hard and fast in the world in which the DDI is generated. The uses to which the DDI is put by Medieval and later philosophers and theologians is as varied as these scholars themselves. It is foundationally important, however, that we not read the DDI of later periods anachronistically into the periods in which it is generated and first formed.

The DDI in later periods functions as a fully formed doctrine that does very specific explanatory work *qua* the systematic understandings of the Divine and its place in specific religious systems. This particular attribute of the Divine is then an explanatory factor of other things that are understood as either desirable or true about divine existence. The fullness of these theological doctrines and systems, as well as their individual doctrinal elements, are not mere curiosities or speculations about the nature of reality. Rather they are holistic metanarratives that

ground doxastic praxis. Rather than an attempt to understand the metaphysical underpinnings of reality, or to relate the Divine and the profane through contemplation or system building, the fully formed religious systems are cultic. Such cultic systems do not attempt to bring knowledge through intellection, but rather prize knowledge *via* association with the Divine entity.

Accordingly comprehension is not the goal of such systems, but conditioning the individual soul for the condescension of the Divine. In systems like these the doctrines are explanatory of the personal experience and the data set that is taken as correct. It is exactly at this point that revelatory systems like Judaism and early Christianity have some direct overlap with the philosophy of Middle Platonism and Stoicism. As previously argued this time period is particularly bibliophilic. While our two religious systems known to care deeply about revelatory texts, the philosophic traditions have no less of a tradition of received wisdom that functions as a given data set from which they work. The greatest distinction between these two types of tradition is the level of speculation that those who practice them are comfortable with. For each of these received systems, however, we see the same sort of desire to properly and fully articulate the truth of the Divine.

When we consider its genesis and early development, however, we find that it does something rather different. It is not a doctrine that is articulated or assumed as a means of making the system function. It is, rather, the culmination of a series of speculative moves at the beginnings of systematic philosophical theology. The doctrine is not one that originates as a means of explaining other attributes or doctrines, nor is it an anchor for a series of systematic propositions that exist in a logical web with one another. It is only later that such robust systems are fully formed enough to require such metaphysical hangers and anchors. As I have shown here the DDI is an answer to a fundamental question of the distinct nature of Divine Ontology.

Parmenides's F3P provides the necessary explanatory factor for how this fact should be understood. The DDI is generated as a means of properly articulating the way in which human beings can understand the mysterious nature of the Divine and how it can be reconciled with the profane order. This is a very different means of attacking the problems of ontology and truth. It also functions to help solve the mysterious relationship between the One and the Many by giving a lever from which the distinction by which such mysteries can be understood.

While understanding how the DDI functioned in its nascent period does not give a mechanism to evaluate its internal logical consistency it does give us a more accurate idea of the philosophical work that this doctrine does for the thinkers who first articulate it. A correct understanding of how it was used, and the way in which it developed will deliver a fuller understanding of the historical relationship between ancient Philosophy and religions contemporary with it. Accordingly we will be able to use this account in order to provide a better model for how such religions understood themselves. Understanding the way that this doctrine answers particular mysteries will enable us to more accurately interpret the internal consistency and philosophical work that such systems do in contributing to the development of the world's major religions. Of particular interest in regards to further work in this area would be to see how such an overall view on the development of doctrines like this one can help more accurately identify the nature of local parochial terms. We can also use this account to evaluate how these doctrines should be understood so as to avoid mistaking the doctrines of the religion and philosophical schools. In addition to all of these topics, we are also in a better position to understand the way in which various philosophical schools and religious organizations in the Middle Platonic period interact with and influence one another across geography (Cicero and Philo for example, or the relationship between the Pauline literature and contemporary Stoicism).

Furthermore we are in a better position to understand the development of both philosophy and religious dogma in the Medieval period.

REFERENCES

- Allen, T.W. *Homeri Ilias*, vols. 2-3, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1931.
- Aristotle. "De Anima" Translated by J. A. Smith in in *The Basic Works of Aristotle*. Edited by Richard McKeon. New York: Random House, Inc., 2001.
- Aristotle. "Metaphysics." Translated by W. D. Ross in *The Basic Works of Aristotle*. Edited by Richard McKeon. New York: Random House, Inc., 2001.
- Aristotle. "Nicomachean Ethics." Translated by W. D. Ross in *The Basic Works of Aristotle*. Edited by Richard McKeon. New York: Random House, Inc., 2001.
- Aristotle. "Physics." Translated by R. P. Hardie and R. K. Gaye in *The Basic Works of Aristotle*. Edited by Richard McKeon. New York: Random House, Inc., 2001.
- Betegh, Gábor. "The Transmission of Ancient Wisdom." In *The Cambridge History of Philosophy in Late Antiquity*, Lloyd P. Gerson, 25-38. Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press, 2010
- Brown, Robert. *Semitic Influence in Hellenic Mythology*. New York: Arno Press, a New York Times Company, 1977.
- Burkert, Walter. *The Orientalizing Revolution: Near Eastern Influence on Greek Culture in the Early Archaic Age*. Translated by Margaret E. Pinder and Walter Burkert. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1992.
- [Cambridge Greek Testament: Greek Text](#). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012.
- Cicero. *On the Nature of the Gods. Academics*. Translated by H. Rackham. Leob Classical Library 268. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1933.
- Cochrane, Charles Norris. *Christianity and Classical Culture: A Study of Thought and Action from Augustus to Augustine*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1957.
- Cornford, Francis. *From Religion to Philosophy: A Study in the Origins of Western Speculation*. New York: Lognmans, Green and Co, 1912.
- Dillon, John. *The Middle Platonists: 80 B.C. to A.D. 220*. Revised Edition. Ithica, NY: Cornell University Press, 1996

- Goodrich, Richard J., Lukaszewski, Albert L. Editors. *A Reader's Greek New Testament*. Second Edition. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2007.
- Grant, Robert M. *Second-Century Christianity: A Collection of Fragments*. Second Edition. Louisville, 2003
- Holmes, Michael W., J. B. Lightfoot, and j. R. Harmer, Editors and Translators. *The Apostolic Fathers*. 3rd ed. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2007.
- Marcel Detienne. "The Masters of Truth in Archaic Greece." Translated by Janet Lloyd. New York: Urzone, Inc., 1996.
- Duhem, Pierre. *Medieval Cosmology: Theories of Infinity, Place, Time, Void, and the Plurality of Worlds*. Edited and translated by Roger Ariew. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1985.
- Edwards, M.J. "On the Platonic Schooling of Justin Martyr." *The Journal of Theological Studies* 42, no. 1 (April 1991): 17-34. www.jstor.org. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/23965141>.
- Farquharson, A.S.L. *The meditations of the emperor Marcus Aurelius*, vol. 1, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1944
- Goodspeed, E.J. *Die ältesten Apologeten*, Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1915.
- Hack, Roy K. *God in Greek Philosophy*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969.
- Hadot, Pierre. *What is Ancient Philosophy?*. Translated by Michael Chase. Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1995.
- Havelock, Eric. *Preface to Plato*. Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1963
- Heraclitus, *Heraclitus: Fragments*. Translated by T M. Robinson. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991.
- "Theogony." In *Hesiod: Works & Days; Theogony*, 61-62. Translated by Stanley Lombardo. Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, Inc., 1993.
- Hippocrates, *Aphorismi* 4.69
<http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus:abo:tlg,0627,012:4:69&lang=original>
- Homer. *The Iliad with an English Translation* Translated by A.T. Murray, Ph.D. in two volumes. Cambridge, MA., Harvard University Press; London, William Heinemann, Ltd. 1924.

- Jaeger, Werner. *The Theology of the Early Greek Philosophers*. Eugene, OR.: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2003.
- Jaspers, Karl. *The Origin and Goal of History*. Translated by Michael Bullock. London: Yale University Press, 1953.
- Justin Martyr. *The First Apology, The Second Apology, Dialogue with Trypho, Exhortation to the Greeks, Discourse to the Greeks, The Monarchy or The Rule of God*. Translated by Thomas B. Falls. Vol. 6. Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, Inc., 1948. <https://muse.jhu.edu/book/21466>.
- Kelly, J. N. D. *Early Christian Creeds*. Second Edition. London: Longmans, Green and Co Ltd., 1960.
- Loew, Cornelius. *Myth, Sacred History, and Philosophy; The Pre-Christian Religious Heritage of the West*. New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc., 1967.
- Maccormack, Sabine. "Cicero in late antiquity." In *The Cambridge Companion to Cicero*, ed. Catherine Steel, 251-305. Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press, 2013.
- Marcus Aurelius. *Meditations*. Translated by Martin Hammond. London: Penguin Books, 2006.
- Minns, D. and P. Parvis, *Justin, Philosopher and Martyr, Apologies* [*Oxford Early Christian Texts* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009]
- Murray, Gilbert. *Five Stages of Greek Religion*. Garden City, New York. Doubleday Anchor Books of Doubleday & Company, 1951
- Nilsson, Martin P. *Greek Folk Religion*. Philadelphia: University of Philadelphia Press, 1940.
- Parmenides. *Parmenides of Elea: Fragments A Text and Translation*. Translated by David Gallop. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1984.
- Philo. *On the Creation. Allegorical Interpretation of Genesis 2 and 3*. Translated by F. H. Colson, G. H. Whitaker. Loeb Classical Library 226. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1929.
- Philo. *On The Unchangeableness of God. On Husbandry. Concerning Noah's Work As a Planter. On Drunkenness. On Sobriety*. Translated by F. H. Colson, G. H. Whitaker. Loeb Classical Library 247. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1930.
- Plato. *Plato's Timaeus*. Translated by Peter Kalkavage. Newburyport, MA: Focus Publishing / R. Pullins Co., 2001.

- Plato. *Republic*. Translated by G.M.A. Grube and C.D.C. Reeve. Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, INC., 1992.
- Plato. *The Theatetus of Plato*. trans. M J. Levett. Revised by Myles Burnyeat. Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, Inc., 1990.
- Price, R. M. "Hellenization" and Logos Doctrine in Justin Martyr." *Vigiliae Christianae* 42, no. 1 (March 1988): 18-23. www.jstor.org. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1584467>.
- Ross, W.D. *Aristotle. De anima*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1961.
- Stead, Christopher. *Philosophy in Christian Antiquity*. Cambridge, MA. Cambridge University Press, 1994.
- West, M.L. *Hesiod. Theogony*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1966.
- Xenophanes. *Xenophanes of Colophon: Fragments A Text and Translation With a Commentary*. Translated by J.H. Leshner. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992.
- Yoffee, Norman. *Myths of the Archaic State. Evolution of the Earliest Cities, States, and Civilizations*. Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press, 2005.