

Philosophy in Hellenistic and Roman Times

INTRODUCTORY

1. In this study we shall examine the philosophical trends that appear after 320 BC like the Epicureans, Stoics and others, and end with the Neo-Platonists c 300 CE. Definitions are almost always difficult to accomplish. For in the natural world and in human affairs, rarely anything is seen to begin exactly and neatly at point A and finish similarly at point Z. Moreover, once a definition is complete, many terms in the definition itself may demand further definitions. So we must bear in mind these two difficulties and realize that we do not have the luxury of stretching descriptions ad infinitum. Here, at the start of our study, although we take a certain date as our *terminus a quo* (i.e. the death of Alexander 323 and of Aristotle 322) which marks the end of the Greek “classical” era and the onset of the Hellenistic Age, nonetheless we shall need to go back 2 to 3 generations to glance at some movements, generated by close associates of Socrates (d 399), since they helped shape the trends we shall be examining.

Conventionally, the Hellenistic Age ends with Mark Anthony’s defeat by Octavian at Actium, 31 BC. The Romans had already in 228 conquered the western coasts of Illyria (north of the Greek peninsula, in today’s Albania), in 197 had captured almost all Greece except Macedonia, in 188 took over the Aegean islands and western Anatolia; in 168 Macedonia also had come under Rome and by 63 all areas that had once been under Alexander became Roman possessions, all except the Ptolemaic kingdom of Egypt which also passed into Roman hands at 30 BC. The Greek language in the form of “koinē” (κοινή = common vernacular) remained the commonest means of communication throughout eastern Mediterranean; even (educated) Romans knew Greek well. Here again, we find that long before 30 BC certain movements had begun and were now developing into the religiophilosophical trends that would come to be known as (different aspects of) Gnosticism and Hermeticism. At the same time there was a revival of Platonic and Pythagorean thought, fertilized by elements in the new movements, and a new interest in the technical treatises of Aristotle. Historically, the most significant event is the Christian teaching which, despite millions of volumes of explanations and analyses, still eschews a precise definition: since Christ left no writings, is the *New Testament* (the 4 Gospels, the *Acts of the Apostles* etc) a true formulation of his philosophy or must we turn also to texts rejected by the prevalent Christianity as “heretical”?...

In the three centuries BC there was a fall in population and the standard of living and much insecurity as Alexander’s successors vied and fought for supremacy (Walbank 1992; Tarn 1952). Ethics or the moral life fared no better: it could no longer draw strength from the old faith in the Olympian pantheon or political action that had high ideals – like Alexander’s world-unification. People hunted quick pleasure and/or profit or else struggled for the necessities of daily life. Thus arose the widespread belief that Philosophy’s value lay in providing for people a secure asylum against the hardships and vicissitudes of life. Thus, too, the post Aristotelian philosophical movements (in the main Epicureanism and Stoicism) put heavy emphasis on ethics and social life and, for their Metaphysics, turned to Herakleitos (=Heraclitus) and Demokritos. At the same time, while up to and including Aristotle, philosophy, religion and science were not different, hereafter philosophy became or came close to religion, whereas sciences began to separate (historians, philologists, physicians et al). At about 300 BC Epicurus (Gk, *Epikouros*) wrote in this respect: “Knowledge of celestial matters, whether in isolation or in conjunction with other things, has no other end in view than imperturbability and firm conviction” (DL X 85¹). For the Stoics philosophy was “the practice of an art the aim of which is the proper governing of one’s life” (Marias 1967:88). Some centuries later Sextus Empiricus defined philosophy as “an activity which by words and arguments secures the happy life (*eudaimonia* ευδαιμονία)”. The idea of self-knowledge and divinization of oneself which was so prominent in many pre-Socratics and in Plato (see GPA) seems to have receded considerably only to re-emerge in the first centuries CE.

A final point. Most scholars complain tacitly or volubly that only the teachings of the Athenian schools (of Plato and Aristotle, to be exact) were preserved while those of the Pre-

Socratics and post-Aristotelians were by and large lost and that our picture of Greek philosophy would have been quite different. This is true, of course, but we must also wonder why this happened. For the preservation of a teaching three conditions need to be satisfied: a) The Master must give a systematic account and must make proper arrangements for the future transmission of the teaching, including well-prepared successors. b) The successors or immediate followers ensure that the teaching/system is transmitted (either orally or in writing) by a new generation of well-prepared disciples. c) Subsequent generations of followers and wider circles of people interested in these matters (e.g. anthologists or patrons of culture) value the teaching sufficiently and ensure its preservation. Here, therefore, we must assume that the third condition at least was not satisfied and subsequent generations retained only what they thought – rightly or wrongly – was valuable.

Most ancient texts (Epicurean, Stoic and Sceptic) quoted herein are found in good translation in LS (=Long & Sedley 2004).

SOME SOCRATIC FOLLOWERS

2. Apart from Plato, Socrates left several other disciples or associates. Some of these set up their own schools. **Xenophon** did not attempt to establish a school but left some writings in which he expressed his great love for his friend and teacher (e.g. *Memorabilia*, *Apology* and *Banquet*); he was exiled to Sparta and eventually retired to Corinth. It cannot be said that he understood the subtler aspects of Socrates' teaching. **Aischines** was another follower who set up no school but wrote several Dialogues (e.g. *Alkibiades*) of which only fragments survive.

3. **Eukleides** (c 450-380) was one of the oldest followers of Socrates. It was to his house at Megara that most of the others turned for refuge after the death of their teacher. He established a school at Megara teaching the Unity of Being: there is no duality; Being is one; the Good is one (without opposite); virtue is one. Later Stilpon (380-300) became head of this school having for a time studied with Diogenes, the cynic. He is important because, apart from anything else, he promoted the idea that the subject cannot or should not have a predicate different from itself and the principle of 'self-sufficiency' (*autárkeia* αὐτάρκεια) as *apatheia* ἀπάθεια 'detachment, indifference, non-involvement': both ideas were taken up by Zeno, who was his student for a period, and made basic tenets of Stoicism.

4. **Phaidon** set up a school in his birth-place Elis. He had been a slave who was freed through Socrates' mediation and became one of the Master's most beloved students. Faithful to his teacher, Phaidon taught that philosophy provided the means for curing the soul of its disease of ignorance and through self-knowledge one reached true freedom. Only very few fragments of his Dialogues survive. He was succeeded by Pleistanos and he by Menedēmos who later transferred the school to Eretria, his own birth-place. Menedēmos wrote nothing and the school withered away after his death, 278 BC.

5. **The Cynic School** was founded by **Antisthenes** (c 445-365) who regarded himself as the true inheritor of the Socratic spirit. He had been initiated into the Orphic mysteries. Having studied for a time with the sophist-orator Gorgias, he himself taught rhetoric and philosophy before he met Socrates, to whom he became devoted. He gave his talks at the gymnasium of Kunosarges (=white dog: 'cynosarges'), whence came the name *kunikós* 'cynic' i.e. belonging to the school of the dog². He did not care at all for Plato's philosophy. He admired the independence, hardihood and passionlessness of Socrates. "Virtue (*aretē*) was sufficient (*autarkes*: cf §3) for happiness (*eudaimonia*) since it needed nothing other than Socrates' strength. Virtue is a practical matter of deeds and needs not a multitude of words and learning" (DL VI, 11). He is said to be the first to define assertion/statement as "that which expresses what a thing was or is"³. He too thought (cf §3) that the subject should not have a predicate different from itself and for this doctrine of tautology Aristotle called him "simple-minded" and "uneducated" (*Metaphysics* 1024b32 & 1043b23). According to Xenophon he held that wealth and poverty are not to be found in real estate but in the heart, in being content with what one has (*Banquet* IV, 34-44). But, it seems, he lost the Socratic temperate measure and went to extremes turning ordinary values upside down. "I would rather go mad than feel pleasure" he used to say (DL IV, 3).

Much more extreme in his negation of all social values and the traditional education was his successor Diogenes. He made his abode on and off in a large tub and reduced his belongings to a cloak and some bare necessities; one day seeing a child drinking out of his hands, he cast away his own cup exclaiming 'a child has beaten me in plain living' (DL VI, 37). He wandered about with a lit lamp saying "I seek a [true] man" (DL VI, 41). The anecdotal incident with Alexander sums up his condition. Alexander stood before him and said 'I am Alexander, the great king'; and he said 'I am Diogenes, the dog'. Then Alexander told him to ask any boon and he replied 'Move out of my sunlight'. 'Are you not afraid of me?' asked Alexander again and he asked back 'Why, are you a good or a bad thing?' 'A good thing' replied Alexander whereupon Diogenes said 'Who then is afraid of a good thing?' (DL 32, 38, 60, 68.)

Cynic doctrine, if it exists at all, is very scanty. The principle exhibited by the Cynics' daily life was hardihood, plainness and contempt and rejection of all social and religious conventions; they were indifferent to family and even health and personal life. Diogenes suggested communal wives and children. They also rejected temples, sacrifices, prayers, divinations, initiations and the like and life after death. Their main doctrine was 'living according to nature' (see Moles 1995) but this became a slogan for having no responsibilities, no job, no property and begging for one's living. The example of the life of beggary attracted many and Greece was filled with such cynic beggars. At the same time, having rejected country as well as family, the Cynic began to regard himself as a cosmopolitan κοσμοπολίτης. When asked whence he came, Diogenes said 'I am a 'kosmopolites (= citizen of the world)'. According to him the only true city-state is the cosmos (DL VI, 62, 72)⁴. This idea will play an important part in Hellenistic and Roman (and even early Christian) times.

6. Different and perhaps more sympathetic was Diogenes' student **Krates** who flourished c 325. he was also a student of Bruson (DL VI, 85) who is thought to have been a Pythagorean. He donated away his very considerable property and embarked on the cynics' customary life of beggary together with his wife Hipparchia, sister of his pupil and successor, Metrokles. It is said that when Alexander asked him if he would like to see his native city Thebes rebuilt, he replied 'What for? Another Alexander perhaps will again destroy it' (DL VI, 93). He wrote some *Epistles* (not extant) with excellent philosophy "resembling somewhat the style of Plato" (DL VI, 98).

A student of Krates and Metrokles was **Bion** from Borusthenes (or Olbia, on the Black Sea). Bion got acquainted with all philosophical schools in Athens, in early 3rd century. Even as a young student of Krates he deprecated the doctrines at the Academy (DL IV, 51). He thought prudence or practical wisdom (*phronēsis* φρόνησις) excelled other virtues as sight excels other senses; yet he abused Socrates saying that if he desired young Alkibiades and abstained he was a fool (*mataios* μάταιος) but if he did not, his restraint was not remarkable (DL IV, 49, 51). He was skillful in parody. He started as a Cynic but later joined Theodorus of the Cyrenaic school (see §7) and later still the Peripatetics.

Another student, younger than Bion, was **Menippos**, a Phoenician by descent. He flourished c 260-250. He went further than Bion and abandoning altogether the systematic aspect of philosophy he wrote parodies and satires only. According to Laertius, who gives a very short but ugly account of him, he did not understand the Cynic way of life, was swindled out of his property and hanged himself (DL VI, 100). However, some later Roman writers imitated his satirical style – Varro in his *Saturae Menippeae* and Seneca and Lucian in several writings.

Eventually the Cynics gave way to the Stoics⁵.

7. The Cyrenaic School was founded by **Aristippos** (c435-350). He came from Cyrene (Libya, North Africa), was attracted to Socrates, after learning something of Protagoras' sophist doctrines. He became a sophist himself teaching for money and after a period at the court of Dionusios in Surakousai (=Syracuse; Sicily) he returned to his native city. His school has many similarities with the Cynics but also many differences. Like the Cynics Aristippos scorned all theoretical knowledge and mathematics since they do not deal with what is useful and what harmful. Unlike the Cynics, he lived in luxury and extravagance. Once he asked of Dionusios money whereas Plato a rare book – and this sums up the difference between the two (DL II, 81). But he did hold philosophy in high regard saying 'Should all laws be repealed we [philosophers] shall go on living in the same way' (DL

II, 68). The doctrines of Aristippos and his Cyrenaic successors (Hegesias, Annikeris and Theodoros) are summed up in DL II 86-103.

For Aristippos the highest good is pleasure. There are two states or sensations (*pathos* πάθος): pleasure (*hēdonē* ἡδονή) which is a smooth motion and pain (*ponos* πόνος) which is a rough motion. The first is agreeable and the second repellent to all creatures. Pleasure differs from happiness (*eudaimonia*) in that the latter is the sum-total of all particular pleasures. Bodily pleasures are far better than mental ones. The removal of pain is no pleasure any more than the absence of pleasure is pain. For there is a third condition without motion which is like that of sleep. Wealth is desirable but only in so far as it can procure pleasures. On the other hand, one must not be a slave to pleasure and give vent to one's passions, since pleasure becomes disgust when it is dominant⁶. Therefore *phronēsis* 'practical wisdom' is good in that it provides some measure in these things while the senses are not always reliable.

8. Hegesias and his followers stressed the last point saying that the senses do not provide accurate knowledge and one should do what appears rational. He taught also that *eudaimonia* is impossible because the body suffers too much and the soul shares in this suffering. The wise man has the advantage over other people in that he knows how to live avoiding the suffering of body and mind. However, he went to the extreme of pessimism and his discourses in Alexandria caused many suicides among his audience; consequently he was named *peisithanatos* πεισιθάνατος 'one who persuades for death' and king Ptolemy 2nd stopped them.

Annikeris taught much the same but also admitted the reality of friendship, gratitude, respect for parents, and patriotism. The wise man will forgo pleasure or happiness so as not to avoid any of these things. His follower **Theodoros** agreed with some of these tenets and disagreed with others. He considered *chara* χαρά 'joy' (=pleasure) and *lupē* λύπη 'grief' (=pain) to be the supreme goods, the first produced by wisdom the second by folly. He thought pleasure and pain were intermediate to good, which was wisdom and justice, and evil, which was folly and injustice. Friendship and patriotism he rejected because the wise man is self-sufficient *autarkēs* and should not throw away wisdom for the sake of the unwise. He rejected utterly and openly the prevalent belief in gods. It is said that Epicurus borrowed most of what he wrote on the gods from a book by Theodoros, *Of the Gods*. Finally, he would say like the Cynics (§5 and n 4, above) that his country is the Cosmos (DL II,99).

Just as the Cynic movement lost strength with the development of Stoicism so the Cyrenaics shrank with the spread of Epicureanism.

EPICUREANISM

9. This school was founded by **Epicurus** (341-270) an Athenian born on Samos island where his father had emigrated. It is said that his interest in philosophy was roused when he was very young and his schoolteacher was unable to explain where Chaos came from in the famous first line of Hesiod's *Theogony* "First of all chaos came to be" (DL X, 2;). He may have studied on Samos with Pamphilos the Platonist (DL X, 14; Cic ND I, 72) but soon after attended Nausiphanes, who was a follower of Demokritos, the atomist (DL, I, 15; Cic ND I, 73). It was rumoured that later he disparaged Nausiphanes (and Plato and Aristotle and others: DL X, 7-8) but it has been shown that these ill reports had their genesis in the hostility of a member of his school who had quarrelled and left (Sedley 1976). In any event, Epicurus shows in his doctrines very little affinity to Plato but much to Demokritos. He liked to pass as "self-taught" perhaps because he spent some 12 years studying by himself in Kolophon, where his family had moved (DL X, 1, 4). In 310 he founded a school on Lesbos island then transferred it to Lampsakos (near Troia) and finally to Athens in 307/6. He bought a house with a large garden and this became the seat of his school. His students, who included women and slaves, were named "those of the Gardens" *hoi apo tōn kēpōn*.

10. Two misconceptions need to be cleared up at the start.

First, the term *epicurean* came to denote a hedonist (=one who wholly pursued gross pleasures). This kind of hedonism is not at all the pleasure and happiness aimed at by the followers

of Epicurus. The essence of the Epicurean doctrine was *eudaīmonia* ‘happiness’ through *ataraxia* ἀταραξία ‘imperturbability, serenity, tranquility’ – which cut out sumptuous banquets, drinking bouts, sexual indulgence and the like.

Second, it is generally thought by modern professional philosophers that the Epicurean Garden-school is vastly different from those of Aristotle and Plato. It is difficult to see why, since the only substantial difference is in the doctrines taught – which is true of all different schools. Thus one reads, “In Epicureanism...the Greeks no longer understand philosophy as knowledge, but as a special way of life” (Marias 1967:94). A. Long, again, who wrote a definitive study of Hellenistic Philosophy says that the Garden community founded by Epicurus is not like the Academy or the Peripatetic Lukeion nor a modern College or Research Institute, but a society of friends who lived according to common principles, withdrawn from public life (Long 1986: 39). The only true point in such statements is that, except for negligible exceptions, the Epicureans had scant interest in the traditional educational methods and in research. It is true, of course, that the Garden associates were devoted to a particular way of life seeking ultimately *eudaimonia* through *ataraxia* and regarded Epicurus himself as Master or religious leader, “saviour” and “illuminator” (ibid 37) to the extent that Seneca, the great Roman Stoic of Nero’s court, said “Always act as if Epicurus is watching” (*Epistulae Morales* 25, 5). But Pythagoras was similarly venerated by his followers; so was Socrates, Plato and Aristotle.

Nor was the Epicurean way of life with its pleasure through serenity startlingly new. From very ancient times people in special circles practised incubation (see *GPA* §12 and n 9); the Pythagoreans and Eleatics in South Italy sought *hēsuchia* ἡσυχία ‘peace, serenity’ while Socrates and Plato had some form of meditation (*GPA* §16-17; 26, 29). Moreover, the Academy had gardens and students were often residents (men and women, like the Pythagoreans). Aristotle’s Lukeion also had extensive gardens and tradition has it that the Master taught his students even as they all walked about: hence the term *peripatetic* ‘who-walks-about’.⁷ In Epicurus’ Garden no teaching took place on Homer, on music and other subjects (as was usual in formal schools) and no research, but there was study and discussion of the Master’s doctrines.

11. Sources. Cicero, the Roman orator and philosopher (1st cent BC), was usually very critical of Epicureanism, but once defended its founder against a fellow Roman: “You are pleased to think him uneducated. The reason is that *he refused to consider any education worth the name that did not help to school us in happiness...* No! Epicurus was not uneducated. The real philistines are those who ask us to go on studying till old age the subjects we ought to be ashamed not to have learnt in boyhood” (*Fin* 1.21, 71-2)⁸. The subjects taught by Epicurus will be examined soon.

Our chief source is Diogenes Laertius (flourished c200 CE) who reports 41 titles of Epicurus’ best books (DL X 26). But very few of these survived. Thus we have three letters to followers/friends and the ‘Main Doctrines’ *Kuriai Doxai* Κύρια Δόξαι in Laertius (all in Bk X) whence all modern translations have been made. The *Kuriai Doxai* are 40 maxims encapsulating the Master’s main teaching (DL X, 193-54). One letter is to Herodotus (not the historian, who is very much earlier) and in this we find ideas about Physics expressed in a summary of atomist principles and also some ethical notions. The second letter (probably not by Epicurus but a close follower) is to Puthokles and treats of celestial and meteorological phenomena. The third one is to Menoecus and presents a clear if simplified exposition of Epicurean Ethics. There is a Vatican manuscript with several more maxims – the *Sententiae Vaticanae*. Of Epicurus’ main treatise *On Nature* in 37 Books only some fragments have been preserved in the papyrus cylinders of Herculaneum, which was buried under the liquid mud of the Vesuvius eruption (79 CE), which destroyed Pompeia also. These cylinders contain works by other Epicureans too (notably Philodemus). A reliable (secondary) source is the famous Roman poet Lucretius’ work *De Rerum Natura* ‘On the Nature of Things’ (1st cent BC). There is also the portico of Diogenes of Oenoanda (in South Turkey): this was reconstructed over a long period and on it were inscribed the main Epicurean tenets in Diogenes’ own words and several quotation from Epicurus’ works themselves (Smith 1993)⁹.

Epicurean philosophy is an amalgam of uncompromising empiricism and metaphysical theory and regulations (canons) for the attainment of a tranquil life here and now. In large part it

derives from the atomist physics of Demokritos: everything is thus material, formed by aggregations of atoms. The universe is wholly mechanical without teleological end or the intervention of deities. We shall examine this philosophy under 5 headings: ontology, epistemology, physics, ethics, society.

12. *Ontology: what or who am I?* All Greek philosophy is marked by the dualism body-soul (mind and spirit being aspects of soul). For the Greeks *psuchē* ψυχή 'soul' denoted that force/power of the human embodiment which gave it, apart from thought, sensation and volition, also life and motion of its own thus distinguishing it from all inanimate things. In Homer, on the collapse of the body, the soul was immobilized in gloomy Hades, a place of "shadows" where joy and other feelings are extinct, night is unending, shrouded in mist (*Odyssey*, Bk 11). Later Plato emphasizes the immortality of the soul which, at death, "released from the bonds of the body" passes into "the region of purity, eternity and immutability... which are her kindred"; here, free from follies and fears, she dwells in bliss with the gods (*Phaidon* 79D - 81A).

13. Epicurus accepts the ***dualism of soul-body*** but regards both as material, made up of two different kinds of atoms. The physical body need not concern us. Since we have sensations and passions we must recognize that we have a soul, writes Epicurus (*Hdt* 63). The soul is corporeal because it moves and causes movement and, it is an Epicurean axiom, only empty space can be incorporeal allowing bodies to move through it; otherwise only material structures can act or be acted upon (*Hdt* 67; also 32). "The soul is corporeal, composed of fine particles, dispersed through and over the whole body-structure, well resembling wind/breath with an admixture of heat" (*ibid*). Elsewhere in extant fragments, Epicurus mentions a third element, one of air *aerōdes* τι αερῶδες τι (*Us* 314, 315) and this is confirmed by Lucretius (III 161 - 257). But there is a fourth part, much finer than the other two: this remains nameless, *akatonomaston* ακατονόμαστον in Epicurus (*Us* 315) and *nominis expers* in Lucretius (III 242). Although the soul is the greatest cause of sensation, it is not alone; housing the soul, the body too contributes to sensation with the soul's help. But it does not have the soul's qualities and on the departure of the soul, it loses sentience (*Hdt* 64). However, when the whole body-frame breaks up the soul disperses (as atoms that are no longer held in one unit) and loses its power of motion and sentience (*Hdt* 65; *Lucr* II 944-62)¹⁰. This total annihilation is a great consolation since it removes the fear of the horrors of Hades. So "death is nothing to us" (*DL* X 125; *KD* 2; cf *Lucr* III 828).

14. While embodied, the ***atomist-soul appears in two parts***. One is the soul as a whole pervading the body and being irrational – *alogon* ἀλογον (*Hdt* 66) or *anima* (*Lucr* III, 141). The other is rational *logikon* λογικόν and resides in the chest where we experience fears, joys etc (*DL* *ibid*); Lucretius calls this *animus* 'spirit' and also *mens* 'mind' (III 144). Thus we can say that the rational *animus* governs the whole while the irrational *anima* could correspond to the nervous system¹¹. But there is further differentiation and specialization in the soul atoms. According to Aetios, "[the element] of breath gives the power to move, that of air tranquility, that of heat the perceptible warmth of the body and the nameless one implants the capacity for sensation" (IV, 3, 11: *LS* 14C). Lucretius agrees that the nameless one spreads the ripples of sensation through the limbs since it is more mobile, fine and small and moves first (III 333); he also correlates air with placidity, but has heat with anger and wind with fear (III 294).

Here, in this *animus* 'spirit/mind', composed of the fourth type of atoms (far finer than the others), is the seat of sensation, thought, emotion, consciousness and will. This is what (we normally believe/think) we are and we have 'free will' *libera voluntas* which is not the same as desire but rather the power through which desires are sought to be satisfied, according to Lucretius (II 258-265). Epicurus himself repudiated the "destiny" of the natural philosophers and its "inevitable necessity" (*Men* 134).¹² This *libera voluntas* is attribute by Lucretius to the swerve of the atoms as they descent in the void. Nothing of Epicurus on this subject has survived. We shall examine this and the related problems in §20 below.

15. *Epistemology: how do we know?* Parmenides and Melissos had argued that true knowledge is attained by reasoning rather than the senses. Later Plato taught the same adding that knowledge is recollection, since the soul has existed long before its present embodiment; he also showed concern

for distinguishing true knowledge from opinion. Aristotle rejected all this arguing that knowledge of first principles comes with repeated sense-inputs and from them are demonstrated by argument other truths. The Epicureans side with Aristotle holding that knowledge is based on sense-experiences. The mind is blank at birth¹³ and receives its notions, correct or not, only from sense-impressions.

16. In *The Canon*, now lost, Epicurus affirms that all sensations as such are true or “criteria/standards of truth” (DL X 31-2).¹⁴ Error arises not in any one sensation but with the intrusion of opinion (*Hdt* 49), i.e. in assuming that the image that reaches our mind is indeed the object. A sense like vision involves ‘images’ *eidōla* εἰδῶλα which are films of atoms constantly emitted by objects and travel towards the eyes. These impinge on (the soul-atoms of) the eyes and thence go to the mind. But sometimes the image gets distorted as it collides with the atoms, say, of the intervening air (Lucretius IV 353ff): e.g. a square tower may at a distance and in haze appear round. Even the visions of madmen and dreams are real/true since they produce effects (DL X 32). One must distinguish, therefore, between the impression and the judgment. The senses provide reliable evidence only if they receive clear and coherent images; then they inform us rightly about the form and properties of the object (*Hdt* 49-52; *KD* 24).¹⁵ Other doubtful or unclear impressions will need to be verified by the clear and certain ones. Clear images are only a first step to knowledge; for they have to be defined, categorized and distinguished. This happens with repetition and the homogeneous (similar or identical) impressions are now termed *prolēpsis* πρόληψις ‘concept, notion’¹⁶; these *prolēpseis* (plural) are recorded in memory and provide the names for things (DL X 33). But no explanations were given why the *prolēpseis* are similar in different people and therefore are defined and indicated by the same words. An additional but very weak mode of verification is “the absence of opposite evidence” whereby if clear sense-impressions do not contradict or contest a judgment about a non apparent phenomenon, the judgment is true.

However, even “clear images” are not really reliable since the term begs several questions: what is meant by this? In what conditions is this possible? How can one be absolutely certain?... Epicurus himself made a gross error in respect of clarity when he stated that the size of the sun is as great as it appears or a little larger/smaller (*Puth* 91)!

17. An additional difficulty comes with the **subtler atomist images** that bypass the sensory organs and go directly into the mind. These are invoked to explain our knowledge of the gods, who do exist but do not intervene at all, and visions in dreams of people who have died or strange creatures like centaurs etc, called by Lucretius *tenuia simulacra* ‘subtle similitudes’ (IV 722ff). There are numberless such subtle images hovering about everywhere all the time and the mind can grab whichever it wants, say a horse, and so actually see it (Lucretius IV 779ff). This is one way memory works and, presumably, these images can pass through solid walls, whereas ordinary visual ones cannot.

Apart from sense-experience, the feeling of pleasure and pain and *prolēpsis* or preconception, another criterion of truth is ‘impressions-applications of the intellect’ *phantastikai epibolai tēs dianoias*. These refer to the subtle images affecting the mind directly. The *epibolē tes dianoias* itself means generally ‘concentration, focusing’ (Long 1986; ch 2, §3).

For the existence of gods and their nature (see §19) Epicurean philosophy depends on these subtle images. The only explanation given is that there is world-wide belief in the deities and various reports, but all this hardly supports the subtle images emitted by the gods. This sounds rather like another kind of religious faith, set on the same level as empiricism.

18. Physics: what is real? For the structure and the material(s) of the world we consult the *Letter to Herodotus* and mainly the first 2 books of Lucretius.

Following the Presocratics, Epicurus held that “nothing comes into being from non-being” (οὐδὲν γίνεται ἐκ τοῦ μὴ ὄντος; cf the Latin *ex nihilo nihil* ‘out of nothing, nothing’). Also, no thing will on its destruction end in nothingness. A third rule for the changing objects of experience is that “the sum total of things always was and will remain such as it is now”.¹⁷ The material from which all observable bodies arise is uncuttable corporeal entities - atoms (*Hdt* 41). For we do observe bodies, simple or complex, and the space within which they exist and move. The composite

bodies dissolve and perish but there is a limit with the most simple ones, uncuttable atoms that remain stable, immutable. Both atoms and the void in which they move are eternal (*Hdt* 44). The atoms vary in shape (and size and weight: their only properties) and are infinite in number but not in variety; infinite is the void too. In this void the atoms move constantly, oscillate, collide and rebound, or stick together and form various composite bodies that will dissolve again (*Hdt* 42-4). Although these atoms are the smallest bodies yet they can be divided theoretically into smaller units of extent (*Hdt* 56-9; *Lucr* I 599-634).

Although in an infinite universe or space/void one can't speak of a centre and up or down, yet the atoms move "downwards" due to their weight but when they collide they move upward or in other directions when they meet no obstruction, they all move with the same speed, "fast as thought" irrespective of their size and weight. But "downward" in relation to what? This question remains unanswerable.¹⁸

19. The atoms form compound bodies. "Moreover, there are *numberless worlds* some like this one [of ours], others unlike it" (*Hdt* 45). If all the atoms fall downward at uniform speed, how come that they ever collide and form composite bodies?

Nothing of Epicurus himself on this subject has survived – and considering the importance of the issue, we must wonder at this. However, Lucretius tries to give an explanation: "When the atoms are travelling straight down through empty space by their own weight, at quite indeterminate times and places they swerve ever so little from their course" (II 216-7). Without this swerve or deviation¹⁹ the atoms would fall like raindrops, no collision and composition would occur and Nature would not have created anything. This swerve, which gives a certain indeterminacy to the Epicurean system, is said to be responsible for man's free will, as we saw in §15, above.

Now the fact is that this is not really an explanation. Lucretius argues that while the senses show that bodies, if uninfluenced, fall *sua sponte* 'of themselves' in well-nigh straight lines, they don't show that no deviation at all occurs (II, 249). True, the sensory experience does not contest what the mind conjecturally postulates, but neither does it confirm or suggest it. There could be other causes. After all, Epicurus advises that since (e.g. in the case of celestial phenomena) there are several possible explanations (for the rise and setting of sun and moon, for thunder and lightning, etc), we should not dwell on only one explanation (*Puth* 95).

Here, why assume only this *declinatio*?... There could be a very fine intelligence outside all bodies, or inherent in the atoms, directing all movements and formations. Since *ex nihilo nihil*, then some intelligence must exist latent in the basic material if intelligence is to manifest in various beings. Then again, why assume that gods do exist, but do not intervene in the affairs of the atoms and the universe?

20. The gods exist in the *intermundia*, i.e. the spaces in between the worlds. There is an infinite number of world-systems and by the principle of *isonomia* ἰσονομία 'balance of law, equilibrium', what is rare in one part of the universe is plentiful elsewhere (*Lucr* II, 532). In the Epicurean picture of our planetary system, the earth occupies the central position, as with most ancient Greeks. All worlds and all beings and objects, emit constantly atoms which form the *eidōla*, that strike our senses and which get replaced by other atoms flying around. All natural phenomena, all movements of celestial bodies and the like, have material causes and not some supernatural being which regulates them (*Hdt* 76-7). Lucretius praises Epicurus who freed mankind from the burden of religion - the popular religion with its superstitions and the fears of divine wrath in thunder and lightning (I, 62ff)

For Epicurus the gods do exist and they are blissful and immortal (*makarios μακάριος* and *athanatos αθάνατος*, *Men* 123). Consequently they do not intervene in our affairs: "What is blessed and imperishable has no trouble itself nor causes trouble on others, hence it is not affected by anger or favour; for such feelings are in a weak creature" (*KD1*). It is possible that the Epicurean gods, do not have solid bodies as Cicero indicates: "not body, but like body, not blood but like blood... apprehended not by senses but by mind... a succession of similar images" (*De Natura Deorum* I 48). Philodemos says (in *Of Gods* in the Herculaneum papyrus fragments) that the god's own mental powers and perception protect them from the destructive forces in the environment and,

moreover, the gods speak Greek (! in Long 1986: ch 2, §6).

Here again no explanation is given why the gods exist and how they have come to be so different than the rest of the universe.

21. Ethics: what is the good (for me)? On his deathbed Epicurus wrote to Idomeneus: “I write this to you passing this blissful but also last day of my life. The suffering from strangury (=impeded urination) and dysentery is so intense that it could not get worse. But against all this is set the joy of soul at the memory of our past discussions” (DL X 22). This shows that he not only lead a frugal life, free of pleasures of flesh, but also could find joy even during acute physical suffering. He had, it seems, attained the highest good in life which was *eudaimonia* through *ataraxia* (§10).

This concern with happiness which is the aim in life or highest good is discussed by Epicurus mainly in the *Letter to Menoekus* (DL, 121 ff). It should be stressed that the word used is not *eudaimonia* but *hēdonē* ἡδονή ‘pleasure’, although he uses on occasion *eudaimonia*, as in DL 121: “Happiness can be conceived in two ways: the highest which gods enjoy and cannot be enhanced and that which admits addition and subtraction of pleasures”. But with Epicurus it amounts to the same thing when he writes: “When we say that pleasure is the *telos* (=aim, end) we do not mean the pleasures of the prodigal and those of the sensual... but not to ache in the body nor suffer in the soul... Indeed a pleasant life is produced... by sober reasoning... which expels notions causing tumult in the soul (*Men* 131). He disagreed with the Cyrenaics who held that pains of the body are worse than mental ones saying that mental pains are worse and pleasures of the soul are greater than physical ones (DL X 137). He disagreed with them also in that he admitted as pleasure not only that which consists in motion (i.e. the Cyrenaic view) but also that which is a state of rest (DL X 136): “Pleasure is our first and innate good” (*Men* 129).²⁰ While pain or suffering is the disturbance of this innate, natural state of healthy body and unperturbed happy mind, pleasure is the return to this primary state, and Lucretius connects this with the dislocation of atoms and their return to their natural place in the organism (II 963-8). This disturbance/dislocation has various causes and a major one is desire: “We must not violate nature but obey her; we obey her when we fulfill the necessary desires and the harmless physical ones, but sternly reject the harmful ones” (S V 21). Self-sufficiency is essential for this (*Men*, 130) Otherwise pleasure comes with the absence of pain. Philosophy should aim at the total expulsion of pain and *phronēsis* ‘prudence, wisdom’ is more valuable than philosophy, since from this spring all other virtues and this most efficiently directs us to the highest *hēdonē*” (*Men* 123).²¹ Elsewhere Epicurus said that wisdom *sophia* σοφία employs many means for *makariotēs* μακαριότης ‘blessedness, bliss, happiness’ (KD, 27).²²

22. All this teaching about pleasure or *eudaimonia* cannot be said to be original. Demokritos is reported to hold that “the end of action is *euthumia* (εὐθυμία) ‘emotional well-being’”, which is not pleasure, as some accepted it through misinterpretation, but a state in which “the soul continues calm and steady, unperturbed by fear or superstition or any other passion” (DL, IX 45). We recognize here the similarities with Cyrenaic doctrines - the emotional well-being, the freedom from fear and superstition and the serenity of mind. Pleasure itself was extensively discussed by Plato in the *Philēbos*: *eudaimonia* does not come with different pleasures, some of which may be good and conducive to *eudaimonia* but some are definitely harmful; it comes with *aretē*, the virtue or excellence in the soul; the idea that pleasure is a return to the primary natural state which had been disturbed and thence arose pain is found there also (31E-32B). Plato added that pleasure arises while the restoration of the natural state takes place; but there is also a condition other than the motion of pain or pleasure (42C-44A). Aristotle, who here agrees largely with Plato, provided the distinction of pleasure in movement and in rest (*Ethics* 1154b 28)²³. He also reported that his contemporary Eudoxos held that the pleasure is the “good” since in common experience all beings seek it (ibid 1172b 9).

23. Society “There never was an absolute justice (τι καθ’ ἑαυτὸ δικαιοσύνη) but only an agreement in reciprocal intercourse ... not to harm or be harmed (KD 33). Man’s nature has been forced to learn many things by events themselves, some tribes quickly, others slowly (*Hdt* 75), and some learnt to make such agreement or covenant but others not (KD 32). In this respect “injustice is not an evil itself, but in the fear ... that one will not escape the notice of those appointed to punish such

offences. The man who secretly violates this social contract of not harming cannot be confident that he will escape discovery, even if he has done so myriad times in the past” (KD 34-5). Justice is instituted to serve general expediency (KD 36-7). Thus, it is concluded, the prudent man will not violate justice so as not to have anxiety and fear: the unjust man is full of anxiety the just most serene (KD 17). However, real security comes most surely “from quietude and withdrawal from the multitude” (KD 14).

It is agreed by almost all commentators, ancient and modern, that these Epicurean notions refer to social relations with a self-centred basis for personal security and pleasure. There was of course the community of the Garden where all kinds of people lived “in friendship” under the guidance first of Epicurus and then his successors; but it was still a closed ego-centred community. Social and political affairs were full competition constituting a prison which the prudent man shuns (S V 57). Epicurus himself was well known for his philanthropy (D L X, 10) and his love for his students. The bonding element of the community was friendship, which was regarded as “the greatest blessing given by wisdom” (KD). And Diogenes of Oenoanda wrote on his portico about the Epicurean future “golden age” not without considerable wishful thinking: “Then in very truth the life of the gods will be transferred to human beings. All will be filled with justice and reciprocal friendship; there will be no need for walls or laws and for all the things we contrive against one another” (LS 22S).

24. Affinities with Buddhism have often been adduced by modern scholars, e.g. McEvilley 2002, Hibler 1984, Panichas 1967, et al. No doubt some affinities do exist but they are very superficial. Certainly impermanence and some materialist aspects (composition and dissolution of bodies made of atoms/elements) are common to both but only just as they are common to so many other teachings. In the *Sabba Sutta* Buddha explains that everything *sabba* (<Sanskrit *sarva*) means the 6 senses (eye, ear, tongue, nose, skin, mind) and their corresponding objects (S 4.15); positing other things as real would lead “to vexation and worry because such a thing would be beyond the sphere of experience” (Kalupahana 1975: 12). This too has similarity with the Epicurean dogmas of perception and reality (§17 above) but the materialist eternal atoms of Epicurean reality have no place whatever in any Buddhist school and in the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā-Prajñāpāramitā* Subhūti informs the gods that “all beings are illusion” and even “Nirvāṇa is one with illusion” (Schumann 1973: 126-7).

Particularly misleading are McEvilley’s alleged parallels and comments. Two examples should suffice. Following another scholar he writes that “the essence of the Buddha’s enlightenment ... consist[ed] of the realisation of ... causal Uniformity”; then for Epicurus “to know the causes of things [and] that they are wholly natural is to banish groundless fears ... and hence is an essential ingredient of the good life”: yes, but the “good life” of the Epicureans consisting of the pursuit of *hēdonē* has little to do with Buddha’s enlightenment. Finally there is in Epicureanism neither reincarnation nor Karma in the sense of results of action that have to be met as they fructify²⁴. It is therefore difficult to see sound reasons for the instance on similarities between the two systems.

STOICISM

25. This movement is intrinsically related to the early ethical philosophies of the Socratic tradition, especially the Cynics but it had men of higher intellectual attainments and presented a better worked out theoretic system. While Epicureanism remained a sect apart from intellectual and philosophical debate, the stoics engaged in controversy, mainly with the Sceptics of the (Platonic) Academy and their philosophy, displacing eventually that of the Cynics and became a major influence on the ethical and political thought of the Roman Empire. In fact, its third (and final ancient) stage consisted of Roman thinkers.

The school derives its name from the Stoa Poikilē, the Painted Porch in the main square of Athens where the first Stoic discourses were given by Zeno (335-263), the founder of the movement. Zēnōn Ζήνων had come from Kition (usqually, Citium), Cyprus. He studied with Polemo, the head of the Academy, and the Cynic Krates (§ 6). He was succeeded by Kleanthes (331-232) who came from Assos, West Anatolia; he was a former pugilist whose mind was anything but bright and theoretic. Next came Chrusippus (= Chrysippus: 280-207), also from Cyprus, who developed and formulated

the early teachings. These three, Diogenes of Babylon (240-152) and Antipater of Tarsus (2nd century) formed the Early Stoa or the first stage of the movement. Only fragments remain of their writings and many reports in later writers, some of whom are obviously hostile. The second stage, the Middle Stoa, had two brilliant leaders, Panaitios of Rhodes (185-110) and Poseidonios (=Posidonius), the Syrian (135-c50). Panaitios was influenced by the Academy and made Stoic teaching more immediately relevant to people's lives. He was a friend of Scipio Hemilianus, conqueror of Carthage, and through him and Laelius, introduced Stoicism to Rome. His writings were a major source for Cicero – especially the latter's *De Officiis* 'On Duties'. Poseidonios after studying with Panaitios in Athens made his home in Rhodes and eventually turned his attention to geography and ethnography. The Late Stoics are almost exclusively Romans. Cicero was not a Stoic but was greatly influenced and his writings contain many Stoic doctrines. The leading writers in the Empire were the outstanding thinker Seneca (48C-65CE), Nero's tutor; then Epictetus (55-130CE) a slave who was freed and wrote his *Discourses* and *Manual* in Greek; finally, Marcus Aurelius (121-180), himself an Emperor, laid emphasis on the Stoic ethical teaching in his justly famous book *To Oneself* (*Eis Heauton*), also in Greek.

The Stoics divided philosophy into three parts – physics, ethics and logic: so says Laertius (VII 34) who recorded most of the doctrines in a general way (DL VII 39-160). We shall examine the Stoic teaching under four headings making the few distinctions we can between the different thinkers: ontology, epistemology, physics and ethics, which includes social concerns.

26. Ontology: who am I ? Early Stoics, like Chrusippos, and late ones like Epictetus stress that our soul is part of God, or Zeus, who is embodied in the whole universe²⁵. The soul is corporeal but it is *pneuma* πνεῦμα 'spirit', which here denotes a fiery, animating, intelligent breath of air pervading the material body of individuals and of the world (DL VII, 156-7). While *pneuma* is in all bodies and is characterized by "tenour" or "tension" *tonos*, τόνος, which accounts for different types of being, only animals and humans have the appropriate tenour for the attributes of life, movement and intelligence, which constitute "soul" (SVF 2, 214-6); in plants *pneuma* is termed *phusis* (=nature) and in inanimate objects like rock or wood *hexis* ἕξις 'constitution' (which like 'nature' is also in animals and humans)²⁶. The soul has eight parts or junctions: five senses, reproduction, speech and intellect (*dianoia* διάνοια). Elsewhere and more precisely *dianoia* is called the *hēgemonikon* ἡγεμονικόν 'ruling, superior' (*principale* in Latin) which is "what has the greatest power" (DL VII, 157, 159). As with Epicurus, Aristotle and many others (but not Plato: see n 11, above) this *hēgemonikon* has its seat in the chest/heart. Passions which are "turnings" of *pneuma* are felt here; here also arise 'presentation' of the mind (*phantasia* φαντασία: §28), 'impulses' (*hormē* ὁρμή) and 'speech' (*logos* λόγος, with an obvious pun with 'reason' and link with 'rational' *logiko*:- DL VII, 158-9). The other soul-faculties extend through the body from here like the tentacles of an octopus²⁷. According to some the individual soul at death dissolves back into the universal *pneuma* which animates the substance of the starry heaven, as Cicero describes it (*De Re Publica* 6.16-9). Marcus Aurelius thought that the soul broke up just like the body. Kleanthes ascribed to it immortality until the end of the world in the universal conflagration (see §34) while Chrusippos reserved this only for wise men (DL VII, 157). There was no clear and uniform doctrine, perhaps because life after death did not concern them.

27. Apart from soul and body we find another distinction in Cicero: "We are, as it were, endowed by nature with two *personae* [=character, personality]. One is common because we all share in reason *ratio* and the superiority it gives over hearts: from this we have all that is right and fitting and we start enquiring rationally about our duty *officium*. The second is what is assigned to individuals as proper to them ... A third is added imposed by some chance or circumstance [*casus* and *tempus*] and then a fourth which we adopt by our own decision" (*Off* 1:107, 115).

The soul is wholly rational *logikē* and has no 'spirited' and appetitive parts as in Plato (and Aristotle). Chrusippos stated that the *hēgemonikon* is wholly rational (SVF 3,115) but Poseidonios rejected this view holding that one should take into account the "irrational" *aloga* ἄλογα elements in human experience (Long 1986: 278). However, Chrusippos has some explanation saying that sensations, presentations *phantasiai* and passions or emotions involve an exercise of judgment: very

simply, if we fear or desire something, it is because we had an impression that it was bad or good and we chose to assent to the impression. Wrong judgments turn into passions like fear or anger and gather a force of their own, excessive and out of control²⁸.

Seneca gives a good description: “Know how passions begin, grow and are carried away: there is a first impulse (*motus*) which is involuntary – a sort of threatening and preparation for passion. The second is a wish, not stubborn but like – it is right for me to avenge myself since I have been harmed, or it is right that this one be punished since he has done wrong. The third is an impulse, out of control now and subduing reason, which wants vengeance in any case” (*On Anger* II.4.1). This is the ordinary run, but the wise man behaves differently: “The wise man’s mind too is necessarily moved ... through certain swift and unconsidered changes ... but does not assent” (LS 65Y). This is the sage’s *apatheia* ἀπάθεια ‘indifference, state of not being affected’, but this does not exclude all emotion; he has ‘good feelings’ *eu-patheia* εὐπάθεια. So instead, e.g., of desire and fear and pleasure, the sage has wish, caution and joy (DL VII, 116). Unlike the common man who is burdened by his responsibilities and actions, to be an *apathēs* ‘unaffected’ sage is to be free (ibid 121).

How does one win wisdom and become a sage ?... One must want it. Here is Seneca: “Whatever can make you good is in your possession. What do you need in order to be good? To want to be (*velle*)” (*EM*, 80. 3-4)²⁹. Chrusippos explains the Stoic avoidance of iron determinism by bringing the Stoic concept of “(free) will”: the necessity of fate sets different kinds and beginnings of causes in motion, but “the impulses of our minds and deliberations, and our actions themselves, are governed by each person's own will and by the natures of our minds” (LS 62D). Again Epictetus says of wise philosophers that “they fit their wishes [=will] to what happens, so that neither what happens nor what does not happen goes against their will and thus they neither fail in their desire nor encounter what they are trying to avoid and... spend their lives without distress, fear of anxiety” (*Discourses* II.14. 7-8). But we must continue this in the section on Ethics § 35.

28. Epistemology: how do I know? In this area the Stoics differ but slightly from the Epicureans. their vision is explained not as a stream of images emitted by an object but as a tension of *pneuma* 'spirit' in the form of a cone whose vertex is at the eye and base at the object. (DL VII.157) Apart from this difference in the mechanism of sensation (*aisthēsis* αἴσθησις), the rest of the theory is a very similar empiricism. The mind is blank at birth (LS 39E) and concepts are stored in it by repeated sensations. Conceptions of perceptible things come from encounter, of similarity from something present (from the statue of a man, concept of the man himself), concepts of incomplete forms by privation (a creature without legs) and so on; but conceptions of what is just and good arise naturally³⁰. The term *prolēpsis* 'preconception' (§ 16 above) was used for the natural ones but *ennoia* ἐννοία for every concept – developed in the mind. Emphasis was put on *koinai ennoiai* 'common conception/opinions', shared by all people. The natural concept of what is just and good is not an innate notion of justice and goodness but (so some attempt to explain) such a conception develops naturally. Thus Seneca states explicitly (*EM* 120-3 ff) that Nature gives us not knowledge itself but seeds of it which develop. (But here we have a contradiction regarding the blank tablet [of the mind] *tabula rasa*; or else *all ennoiai* must develop with the repeated entry of impressions.³¹)

Impressions are called also 'presentation(s)' *phantasia* φαντασία (§ 26). Our category is called 'cognitive' *katalēptikai kataleptikai* (=apprehending) and these *phantasiai* present the objects themselves, not anything else; and because they contain also the cause(s) thereof they are true. Others are non-cognitive, wrong or untrue. Presentations come first through sensation, then come thoughts formulating propositions from presentations and then assent or not (LD VII-49).³² Here the *hēgemonikon* 'the ruling part of psychē' which is *logos* Reason gives the assent. The unwise will assent to a non-cognitive *phantasia*, presentation and so form ill-founded concepts or opinions (LS 416). The sage will assent only to cognitive presentations and so have *epistēmē* επιστήμη 'knowledge (*scientia*, 'science'), otherwise he will withhold judgment.

29. Thought and talk are aspects of one process, termed 'articulated mentation' *dianoia eklalētikē* διάνοια εκλαλητική – and is first met in Plato's *Sophistēs* 263E. This is due to the *hēgemonikon* which is *logos*, both 'reason' and 'speech', internal action and external. Between the two is a third aspect,

termed *lekton* λεκτόν denoting 'meaning' or 'that which is said/spoken'. Seneca uses the example *Cato ambulat* 'Cato is walking': if there is indeed the man Cato walking and someone tells us *Cato ambulat* but we don't know Latin we would not connect the pronouncement with the man walking because we don't know the *lekton* (EM 117-13). Some *lekta* 'articulated meanings' (plural) are complete and some deficient. The latter are found in mere predicates like 'writers' whereas the former are axioms, syllogisms, questions and the like (DL VII 63). All this may derive in large part from Herakleitos (=Heraclitus) who held that *Logos* regulated both man's mentation and the structure of the Cosmos.³³

30. Grammar. Agreeing with Plato rather than Aristotle (who thought all words conventional signs), Stoicism held that "primary sounds imitate objects" (SVF 2-146), in other words, letters/sounds and syllables have properties in common with the objects they describe/name (cf also Plato's *Kratulos* 435D-439B). Beyond this, the Stoics laid the foundations for grammatical studies. Thus they defined the parts of speech: nouns (including proper nouns like Zeno and adjectives), verbs, conjunctions and the article; later was added the adverb. They defined also the five cases in the noun-declension (nominative, accusative etc) and analyzed the verb-tenses (present, aorist, future). All these linguistic categories are still being used in the analysis and study of inflected languages.

31. While Aristotle has 10 *categories*,³⁴ Stoicism is content with only 4, more general and abstract.

The first is the substratum or the underlying substance *hypokeimenon* ὑποκείμενον, and usually 'matter' *hulē* ὕλη. But since 'spirit' *pneuma* of God pervades *hulē* through and through the latter always has some quality. Thus every individual thing is a combination of *hulē* and *pneuma* with its own distinguishing characteristic(s). This is the 2nd category – the 'qualitative' or 'qualifiable' *poion* ποιόν: 'persons, animals, trees' and similar common names denote common qualities, while proper names denote an individualized entity and quality. The 3rd indicates that the entity is in a certain state or 'disposition' *pōs echon* πῶς ἔχον: these are secondary features as with Cato sitting, walking or shouting. These qualities are in no way separable from the body which they qualify. The 4th is the 'relative disposition' *pros ti pōs echon* πρὸς τι πῶς ἔχον.³⁵ These features are always related to other entities: e.g. one is a father only in so far as he has child(ren) i.e. other bodies.³⁶ This last category has a metaphysical aspect linked with the cosmic sympathy which holds in unity all beings.

32. Stoic logic is concerned primarily with the interrelations or propositions (DL VII, 71ff) and not with the Peripatetic interrelations of terms in the syllogism (all humans are mortal; all Greeks are humans; all Greeks are mortal). Propositions are of many kinds – simple and complex, affirmative or negative, interrogative or hypothetical, etc (ibid 63-70). A good example : " If it is day, it is light: but it is day: so it is light". These propositions function with conjunctions "if, since, because, either, or" and the like (ibid 72-4) Chrusippus recognised five basic forms which may be set down with the convenient modern symbols **p** and **q**:

1. If *p*, *q*. But *p*. : *q*.
2. If *p*, *q*. But not *q*. : Not *p*.
3. Not both *p* and *q*. But *p*. : Not *q*.
4. Either *p* or *q*. But *p*. : Not *q*.
5. Either *p* or *q*. But not *p*. : *q*.

And, just for fun, consider these (the second of which anticipates the medieval *consequentia mirabilis*):³⁷

- If a sign exists, a sign exists.
- If a sign does not exist, a sign exists.
- But a sign either does not exist or exists.
- Therefore a sign exists.

33. Physics: what is real? “[The Stoics] hold that there are two principles in the universe, the active and the passive. The passive is a quality-less substance, i.e. matter; the active is the reason in it, i.e. God. He is eternal and through all this matter creates each and all things... God, Mind [=nous]. Fate and Zeus, are one – called by many other names too”. (DL VIII. 134-5). For Stoics as for the Epicureans, all reality is corporeal/material; but for Stoics that quality-less matter is suffused with God, the active principle: so arose pantheism³⁸. God is present in the universe and is the universe. As the soul is to the body, so God is to the world – the ruling part. Chrusippos placed this ruling part in the ether of heaven (as the soul’s seat is in the chest); Kleanthes placed it in the sun (ibid 139).

For the Stoics matter is continuous, unlike that of the Epicureans and atomists who thought it divided into uncuttable particles. There is also empty space outside the world or cosmos. Thus the world is finite but the universe (= world + empty space) is infinite (ibid 143). But since the cosmos has its ruling part, it is like “ a living being with soul and reason” according to Chrusippos, Poseidonios and Antipater (ibid)³⁹. At the same time the force of “sympathy” *sumphnoia* σύμφνοια and ‘coherence’ *suntonia* συντονία holds together earth and heaven (ibid 140). Being finite, like every living organism, the world has a beginning and an end (ibid 141).

For Zenon and Kleanthes , God is fire: not the gross destructive fire that burns up things, but the “creative/crafting fire” (*pur technikon*) which is the ether in heaven (ibid 139). For Chrusippos, God’s presence is *pneuma*, breath or spirit which is a fiery form of air. This the universal or cosmic nature of everything but appears as *hexis* ‘constitution’ in lifeless things, *phusis* ‘growth/natural’ in plants and soul in animals and people. (For the human constitution, see § 26-7, above). Fire is also the higher of finer of the elements which constitute material things, the other three being air, water and earth (ibid 136-7).

34. The idea of fire as a creative principle goes back to the Herakleitos⁴⁰. Fire, heat or warmth, was a fundamental idea in Presocratic thought and Aristotle held that it was the cause of development in every germ, seed or sperm. The Stoics simply made it divine and extended the idea to explain movement and change in the Cosmos encapsulating it in the phrase “God is the seminal Reason/Cause of the Cosmos (εἶναι θεόν... και τοῦτον σπερματικόν λόγον ὄντα τοῦ κόσμου: ibid 136). Ultimately this is the real substratum.

Periodically the world turns into fire in a conflagration *ekpurōsis* εκπύρωσις: this is a destruction but also an apotheosis since the world becomes the substance of God/Zeus (LS 46EF). Seneca regards this as Zeus’ withdrawal and rest like that of a sage turning inward (*EM* 9.16).⁴¹ The fire then goes out, having burnt up all its fuel, and becomes water. But Zeus remains behind as a spark in the water⁴² containing in himself ‘the seminal rational principles’ *spermatikoi logoi* of all things for the next cosmos. This develops as previously in endlessly recurring cycles (LS 52C). This then is the ‘biological’ cycle of the cosmos⁴³.

Cosmos has three meanings in Stoic doctrine. a) God himself imperishable and ungenerated, the creator of this orderly arrangement who at definite times absorbs into himself the whole substance of the world and then manifests it again;⁴⁴ b) the orderly world of celestial luminaries; c) the Whole constituted of these two. Some stars are fixed and others move with their special motions. The sun draws nutriment from the great ocean and the moon from fresh waters (DL 144-5).

There is a chain of causation inherent in all this (ibid 148-9), with God/Zeus as the First Cause which generates all worlds and creatures in the inexorable unfolding of the “seminal logos” within Zeus at the start of the manifestation of creation. Poseidonios placed Nature after Zeus and Fate third (Sharples, 50). There are *daimons* ‘guardian spirits’⁴⁵ (which guide people so as to keep them in line with God’s will in the universe (DL VII 88) As a consequence of this (part-) determinism regarding the affairs of the universe divination is possible through augurs, hepatoscopy and the like. But here rises a question that seems important to most: If creation comes from Divine Providence, why is there ‘evil’ in it?... The answer: Evil comes from human wickedness only – whether in small or big measure⁴⁶. Moreover, apparent evils may not be such, but have, in actuality, good consequences – like a war effecting population-control, wild beasts forcing man to exercise

courage and so on.⁴⁷

Nature as a force moving of itself makes all things to grow according to seminal principles (DL VII 148) and through *sumpatheia* 'sympathy' (or *sumpnoia*) holds all things together. Human individual nature partakes of the universal Nature and of God and so human actions must be in harmony with that.

35. Ethics and Society. Following Plato (e.g. *Republic* 361ff) the Stoics held that virtue alone is good and wickedness alone evil (DL VII 102); then, virtue (or wisdom, which is equated) is sufficient for happiness/well-being (ibid 127-8).⁴⁸ What, then, is virtuous behaviour? Here the teaching is – "living in agreement with nature, which is the same as virtuous living, virtue being that towards which nature guides us" (ibid 87). This is the goal.⁴⁹ But since humans have reason unlike plants and animals, then for them life according to nature (which is also a Cynic doctrine: §5) is life according to reason *logos* since reason becomes the craftsman (*technitēs* τεχνίτης) who directs the course of natural or instinctive impulses (*hormē* ὁρμή; DL VII 86). What then is life according to reason?⁵⁰

It is the doctrine on Nature that distinguishes Stoic ethics from Plato's and Aristotle's very similar teachings. First of all it should be understood that human nature is part of universal Nature: "Our individual natures are parts of the Nature of the whole universe" (DL VII 87). For the Stoics the first impulse/instinct *hormē* of the new-born is self-preservation (*to terein heauton*) being by nature familiarized with itself and thereafter repelling what is harmful and accepting what is akin (ibid 85; *EM* 121 18-21). Here the Stoics use the term *oikeion* οικεῖον 'familiar, dear' and *oikeiōsis* οικειώσις 'affinity, endearment, familiarity' or (so Schofield p 196) 'identifying with'.

"The first thing familiar *oikeion* to every animal *zōon* is its own constitution and its consciousness thereof" (DL VII 85; cf *Fin* 3.16 and *EM* 121 passim).⁵¹ This is common to all living forms – plants, animals, humans. Plants vegetate. Animals have impulse over and above their vegetative functions: for them impulse is natural. Humans have reason so for them the exercise of reason is natural. *Oikeiōsis* proceeds in one naturally to recognize what one's own constitution involves and requires but also to realize the connections with ever expanding circles of family, clan or society, nation and finally humanity.⁵² This is possible through reason and also through the force of coherence in the Cosmos (*sumpnoia* and *suntonia* in §33 above).

36. As the human being grows up and reason manifests at 14, one can exercise virtue in making reasonable selections from among the vast variety of 'goods' in life. Wealth is preferred as a means to ends while health is preferred for this reason and also for itself since it is natural. Virtue alone is absolutely good. Other things are 'indifferent goods'; but while health and wealth are preferred 'indifferents', poverty and illness are unpreferred, to be avoided, provided virtue is not compromised. (DL 106-9). Plutarch confirms this: for the Stoics «the end is to act reasonably in the selection of things... They do not have or think of any other essential good or happiness than this much-honoured reasonableness in the selection of valuable things» (*Common Notions against the Stoics* 1072 EF). This is acting virtuously or according to nature (§ 35).

But here a fine distinction needs to be made. The goal is not exactly to aim at something or to obtain the 'preferred indifferents'. The actual aim of the sage is to do his best in that direction: the final result is not of his making. Here Cicero uses as example the aim of the soldier/archer: «We speak of the ultimate good as if someone's purpose was to aim a spear or arrow at something;... [he] would have to do everything he could to aim straight. That he should do everything to achieve this would be, as it were, his ultimate good, just like the ultimate good in life. (*Fin* 3:22). Epictetus makes a slightly different analysis dividing things into those which are under one's control and those which are not. We can only organize things that are in our control (e.g. the logical power, the use of impressions and the like). We have no control over things external, even our bodies. When will the wind blow? When it wants. If we don't do all we can in respect of things that are in our control but seek our good and goal in things external, out of our control, we are bound to meet impediments. (*Discourses* A1; D7, 6-10).

However Epictetus stresses that in all his endeavours a man should be detached and act like

an actor in a play, the author of which is a higher entity (*Manual* 17, 37). Moreover, within man is the power which can observe and this is man's highest function, to be a witness in all circumstances. (*Discourses* A 29. 46ff; C 24. 114 : this readily recalls the seer *draṣṭṛ* of the Upaniṣads).

37. Acting or behaving as nature prompts through reason, not blind impulse, is duty *kathēkon* καθήκον (Cicero's *officium*), a fitting action that generates harmony in life (DL VII 107) Duties are divided into unconditional (caring properly for one's organism) and circumstantial (sacrificing one's property); another division is constant (done always) and intermittent⁵³: living virtuously is constant whereas a walking-exercise is intermittent (DL VII 109). But living virtuously or according to nature and reason presupposes a knowledge that is within the soul but at the same time is gained through experience.

Cicero describes this in terms of the four cardinal virtues. "Everything morally right (*honestum*) rises from one of four sources [within our nature] being concerned with either (1) the full perception and development of the true [=wisdom]; or (2) the preservation of human society, rendering to each person their due and the faithful discharge of undertakings [=justice]; or (3) the greatness and strength of a lofty and invincible spirit [=bravery]; or (4) order and moderation in all things, said and done, which is modesty (*modestia*) and self-control (*temperantia*: *Off* 1.15).

Seneca looks at it from another angle. One kind of experience is instruction or study of precepts: "The soul carries within itself the seeds (*semina*) of all things honourable and these seeds are stirred to growth by advice (*admonitio*)... Virtue is roused by a touch or a shock of energy" (*EM* 94 29). He gives a more detailed analysis: "Conduct (*actio*) will not be right (*recta*) unless will (*voluntas*), the source of conduct, is right. The will will not be right unless the mental attitude (*habitus animi*), the source of will, is right. Such a mental attitude will not be found even in the best man unless he has learnt the laws of life as a whole (*totius vitae leges*), has worked out the proper judgment about things and has reduced them to truth... Other people continually ebb and flow in their decisions alternately ejecting and seeking things" (*EM* 95. 57).

The virtues are within our human nature, seeds within our soul. These we must exercise and develop in harmony with the laws of the larger Nature of humanity and the Cosmos. Cicero puts it thus: "Everyone must hold fully to his own talents... what is proper to himself... We must so act as not to oppose universal nature (*universam naturam*) but, while observing this, follow our very own (*propriam sequamur*) nature. Even if other things are weightier (*graviora*) and better (*meliora*), nonetheless we should regulate (*metiamur*) our pursuits by the rule (*regula*) of our own nature. For it is no use fighting against Nature or pursuing what we can't achieve" (*Off* 1.110).⁵⁴

Seneca translates some lines from Kleantes' hymn to Zeus (found in Greek in Epictetus' *Manual* 53) writing: "Lead me, Zeus, and you too Fate, to the place which I am assigned by you. I shall follow without hesitation. And if, becoming wicked, I would not, nonetheless I shall follow." Then adds a line of his own: *Ducunt volentem fata, nolentem trahunt*: 'the Fates lead the willing but drag the unwilling' (*EM* 107.11).

38. Unlike the Epicureans who theoretically believed and taught that the sage will not engage in politics (although in practice eminent Epicureans did so), Zeno said that the wise man "will engage in politics unless something stops him" (Seneca: *On Leisure* 3.2). Indeed, in Roman times Stoicism was seen as a philosophy very much of practical involvement – especially of republican views having reason as authority against the emperor's will.

Zenon wrote a *Republic* having several features in common with Plato's *Politeia* (DL VII.22) but consisting only of wise people; this later was given also a cosmopolitan outlook: all people in the world should be regarded as fellow-citizens under a common law (Plutarch, *The Fortune of Alexander the Great*, 329 A-B). Chrusippos also gave his *Politeia* this universal feature of a world-wide city and allowed cannibalism (Sextos *PH* 3.247-8): the implication being that this was 'natural' while its general prohibition was due to cultural 'acquired' beliefs⁵⁵. The cosmopolitan citizenship was extended from the sages to all, especially in Cicero's writings, and was allied to the Roman doctrine of the "law of nations". Stoic notions of law human and divine being one were fused in "natural law" transcending national divisions (Cicero, *Republica* 3.33). These ideas entered into Christian concepts of natural law (especially Augustine) and Renaissance legal thought.

As we saw (§35) *oikeiōsis* is a central Stoic doctrine. As the human beings grow up and this inherent power develops, it is natural that they should be concerned with others (Cicero *Fin* 3.62ff). Within this social context, the sage's behaviour is concerned with one's own virtue. The sage will help others, of course, but in every case his conduct will have to be in accordance with nature and reason, as understood by the Stoic teaching: in other words, it will have to be the right and just thing in the circumstances. In connexion with this, the Stoics accept slavery on two counts: first it is a fact due to Divine Providence and second the inner self is more important. Only the wise man is truly free.

The Stoics came under much criticism on this issue both by ancient and modern commentators⁵⁶. Suppose that they condemned slavery (and other apparent injustices), would that change the conditions? Not at all⁵⁷. In any case, Seneca did condemn slavery and gladiatorial games (§47, below). Clearly, here the critics fail to comprehend a most important tenet in Stoic philosophy. Human beings have as their essence the very Nature of the Cosmos: they are united through that and are free in that. This was not escapism for the Stoics: it was a simple and ineluctable fact. Thus Seneca: "A holy spirit (*sacer spiritus*) dwells within us, the observer (*observator*) and guardian (*custos*) of our good and bad deeds... No human is good without God" (*EM* 41.1-2). So also Epictetus: "You are of foremost importance, a fragment of God: you have a part of him in yourself. Why then are you ignorant of your kinship?... You bear God round with you, o wretch, and do not know it" (*Discourses* B 8.11ff).

This is of foremost importance in every situation. We should be accompanied by philosophy, writes Marcus Aurilius, "Keeping our inner self (*daimon*) free from outrage and harm and pleasures and pains...accepting what happens and is allotted as coming from the same place that one, oneself came" (2.17). Aurelius was an emperor, but Epictetus had been a slave⁵⁸.

SCEPTICS

39. Although scholars like to write and talk of '*the tradition of Scepticism*', there was in fact no such school or tradition in the strict sense of these terms. Again, although a certain doctrine, that suspension of judgment led to tranquility *ataraxia* and happiness *eudaimonia*, was propounded by Purrhon (=Pyrrho) of Elis (c363-273), as general belief has it, there had been several sceptics much earlier among the sophists and the Presocratics. Purrhon wrote nothing; his teachings were recorded by Timon of Phlius but the latter's works survive only in fragmentary quotations. Arkesilaos (316-242), head of Plato's Academy, took over the sceptic views and, contrary to Plato's teaching that knowledge is possible, taught that there was nothing we could know for certain, not even that, like Socrates, we know nothing (Cicero: *Academica* I.45). 50 years later Karneades (214-129), also head of the Academy, gave fresh impetus to Scepticism saying that while there may be true impressions, and often we have true impressions, we cannot possibly know that they are true. Other prominent sceptics were Philon of Larissa, another head of the Academy (who influenced Cicero)⁵⁹, Ainisidemos, who left the Academy to found a Neo-Purrhonean school in 1st cent BC and finally Sextos Empeirikos (flourished c 200 CE) whose extant writings present most clearly and fully the sceptic tenets.

The basic notion of scepticism that we can never really know since we cannot be sure that what we know is true (since arguments against are just as plausible as arguments for) is found much earlier in the well-known sophist Protagoras (*GPA* §25) who maintained that truth is relative: what is cold for me need not be cold for you and does not necessarily indicate the true condition of, say, the air, water or whatever. Other Presocratics also entertained the unreliability of the whole sensory mechanism and expressed similar sceptic notions. Perhaps the first to formulate sceptic views was Xenophanes (*GPA* §15) writing that no man has ever known what is absolutely clear and no man has full knowledge about the gods and the subjects he mentions and, even if one should be speaking the truth, one, oneself does not know it (DL IX.71-3). We should bear in mind these early and repeated expressions of scepticism and not believe those scholars who claim that, because Purrhon accompanied Anaxarchos on his travels and contacts with the Gymnosophists in India (DL IX.61,63), he brought scepticism to Greece from there.

40. According to Aristokles (2nd cent CE)⁶⁰, who cites Purrhon's student, Timon, Purrhon taught that things "are not possible to be distinguished, measured and judged exactly. For this reason the data of our senses and our judgments are neither true nor false; we must not therefore stand upon them but must avoid making categorical judgments...All those who adopt this position will first refuse to make claims (*aphasia* ἀφασία 'no pronouncement, neutrality') and then reach *ataraxia*".

The sceptics constantly overthrew the dogmas of other schools but expressed none of their own using the formulas "We determine nothing" *ouden horizomen* οὐδέν ὀρίζομεν and "Not more [this rather than that]" *ouden mallon* οὐδέν μᾶλλον or "not more existent than not" (DL IX.74-6); other ancient commentators attribute these sayings to other philosophers. Though things appear to be such and such, they are not really such but only appear such (ibid 77). Sceptics admit that they see something and that they think this or that, but they know not how they see or think. Thus they do see that fire burns but whether it is its nature to burn they suspend judgment: the phenomenon φαινόμενον (or the object as it appears, object as we apprehend it) prevails over all other considerations wherever it shows up (DL IX.103-5).

The same applies to ethical considerations. "There is nothing naturally/really⁶¹ good or bad; for if there is good and bad by nature/reality, it needs must be good or bad for all, just as snow is cold for all. But there is nothing good or bad which is such commonly to all ...Epicurus thought pleasure is good but Antisthenes thought it bad...thus the same thing is both good and bad...The opposing arguments have equal validity. Thus the naturally/really good remains unknown" (ibid 101).

41. It is possible, as some say⁶², that Purrhon believed things in the external world to be unknowable due to their very nature, since they "are not possible to be distinguished, measured and judged exactly"; and this differs from subsequent sceptics or 'Purrhonists' who stressed the difficulty in man's senses and mind of achieving certainty and the lack of an agreed criterion of truth. Indeed, as Sextos shows, there are several different concepts of *kritēron*: that of agent (*huph' hou* ὑφ' οὗ), of instrument (*di' hou* δι' οὗ), of application (*kath' ho* καθ' ὃ), of life, of existence, of technical measure or of reason for things unmanifest (*adēlon* ἀδηλον), and so on⁶³.

42. The Academic Arkesilaos held that truth was unattainable and that 'what is reasonable' (*eulogon* εὐλογον) as criterion should govern a man's conduct refusing to dogmatize and 'suspending judgment' on everything (*peri pantōn epechōn*: Sextos *M* 7.158). Thus he consistently held that *epochē* ἐποχή 'suspension of judgment' is the only suitable course for a wise man.

About a century later Karneades, following Arkesilaos, argued against Epicureans and Stoics that no pronouncement could be established with certainty as true or false. For him a statement would be indubitably true only if it was based on impressions precisely representing events and if the validity of such impressions is correctly recognized by the cognizer (Sextos *M* 7.161, 402ff). His distinctive contribution was the term *pithano*-πιθανό which Cicero translated as *probabile* 'persuasive, plausible, probable': this is "the sensory impression used by the sage so long as nothing appears contrary to this possibility" (*Academica* 2.99). His criterion in important matters was an impression "persuasive, uncontroverted and thoroughly examined" (LS 69 D, E).

It is unclear whether it was Philo of Larissa or Antiochos of Ascalon who restored the old Platonic doctrines to the Academy doing away with Scepticism. The view of Antiochos that things can be apprehended with the Stoic criterion of the cognitive sense-impressions (§28) is not very Platonic. On the other hand, though many scholars think Philo was a sceptic, Philo's claim that things can be apprehended in themselves, even if we cannot be sure in some cases, sounds like an aspect of Plato's Theory of Ideas.⁶⁴

Later Scepticism, known best through Sextos' writings, took a more extreme form: now judgment is suspended fully regarding the external world. Nothing can really be grasped of itself (*ex heautou* ἐξ ἑαυτοῦ) and nothing can be said about the external world except 'by conjecturing' (verb *stochazomai* στοχάζομαι 'aim at, guess') by inference from 'signs' (*sēmeiōsis* and verb *sēmeioumai*: *M* 7.365). What a dogmatist calls *enarges* 'clear' grasping it 'by some criterion or other' (*dia kritēriou tinos*) is in fact what the sceptic calls *adēlon* 'non-manifest'.

43. Ainesidēmos formulated 10 modes of perplexity regarding judgments each leading to *epochē/epechein* ‘suspension of judgment’ (DL IX 79ff)

1. Different creatures find different things pleasurable or painful, useful or harmful. They do not all receive the same impressions from one and the same thing.

2. Different men have different idiosyncrasies. Thus in identical conditions one will feel cold and another hot.

3. The different senses give apparently unrelated impressions about the self-same object: thus sight says that an apple is yellow, taste finds it sweet and smell fragrant.

4. There are different conditions and changes - such as health-illness, courage-fear, sleep-walking, youth-senility, etc.

5. There are differences in customs, laws, beliefs in myths, agreements between nations and dogmatic assumptions. Here are found standards of good-bad, just-unjust, beliefs in gods, and the like. In disposing of the dead, Egyptians embalm them, Romans burn them and Paeonians throw the corpses into lakes.

6. Different mixtures and degrees of participation do not allow things to appear in their pure natural state but only in combinations with air, light, heat, cold and the like.

7. Different places, positions and distances make things appear smaller than they are, round rather than square, straight instead of bent and so on.

8. Different quantities and qualities can produce opposite results as when a moderate measure of wine invigorates the body but too much weakens it.

9) Rarity, strangeness and frequent repetition produce different impressions and habits. The sun causes no surprise since it is viewed every day, but a comet does.

10) Inter-relations like light-heavy, up-down, and so on, have meaning always in respect of some third entity. What is on the right is ‘on the right’ in virtue of something else; day and night are relative to the sun and all things relative to one’s mind.⁶⁵

(Later on Agrippa sought to replace these ten by more general modes of his own: disagreement, extension ad infinitum, relativity, hypothesis and reciprocation.)

44. The sceptic is a thinker who constantly inquires taking nothing for granted and accepting no dogma. Since they would not hold the view that illness, loss of property and the like, are great evils, or that health and gain are great blessings, they would not be perturbed by the presence of the former or be elated by the latter. Thus Sextos describes the event as something which simply happens. “Scepticism is a power that sets appearances and thoughts against one another in whatever way it may be; from it, because of the equal strength in the opposed facts and arguments, we come first of all to suspension of judgment and then to freedom from anxiety” (PH 1.8).

This is not a final dogmatic statement about a true ‘good *agathon*’. For sceptics nothing, obviously, can be stated as a ‘good’. This condition comes by experience itself in the process of living. This according to Sextos has four parts: “one consisting in the guidance from nature; another in the compulsion of the affections; yet another in the traditional laws and customs; finally, in instruction in skills. The guidance from nature makes us naturally capable of sensation and thought; the compulsion of the affections leads us through hunger to food and through thirst to drink⁶⁶; by traditional laws and customs we regard piety in life good and impiety base; instruction in skills makes us capable of skillful activities we take up. But we say all these things undogmatically” (PH 1 23-4).

45. That there was scepticism of one kind or another in ancient India is undoubted and B. Barua may be right in calling Sañjaya Belaṭṭhiputta (contemporary of the Buddha and Mahāvīra?) “the Pyrrho of India” (1981:326) – even though Purrhon, as we saw (§41), may not be the sceptic exemplar. But actual texts do not appear before the 7th cent CE with *Tattvopaplavasimha*, attributed to Jayarāsi Bhaṭṭa; the *Sarvadarśanasāṅgraha* comes much later. It has also been stressed (§39, 40) that in Greece Scepticism found expression in thinkers as early as 6th cent BC, when no contacts with India can be attested. However, while Sedlar (1980) is very cautious about any Greek loans

from India or vice-versa, McEvilley thinks that while Purrhon follows or establishes trends of long standing (back to Demokritos, Xenophones not being mentioned: p495), nonetheless he may have “brought back from India some bits or pieces of thought” (ibid). While again McEvilley knows that there is sceptic thought in India at the time of the Buddha and before (his ch 15) and, moreover, outlines (chs 16-17) this thought together with Indian Dialectic in Nyāya and Buddhism right up to Nāgārjuna (late 2nd cent CE), he proposes, without adducing any evidence other than his own conjectures and contrary to a host of other specialists in this field (Sprung 1979; Kalupahana 1986; Huntington 1989; Reat 1991), that Nāgārjuna’s thought received an input of Greek dialectic and scepticism (pp 503-4).⁶⁷ Where there is a strong antecedent line of development of similar views for a long period in two distant countries that had no early contacts, it is unnecessary, unless firm, detailed attestation is available, to assume anything other than independent development.

SOME SINGULAR FIGURES

46. Eclecticism is the term used to describe the thought of various figures in the period roughly covering the 1st cent BCE and the first 200 years CE; the thinkers themselves are called *eclectic*. “They include such well-known amateurs as the Romans Cicero and Seneca, but also such professional Greek philosophers as the Stoics Panaetius and Posidonius, the Platonists Antiochus, Plutarch and Albinus and doctors and scientists such as Galen and Ptolemy” (Dillon & Long 1988:1).⁶⁸ To these should be added the hellenized Jew, Philon of Alexandria. Both terms derive from the Greek verb *eklegein* ἐκλέγειν ‘choose, select’. They are used sometimes in the laudatory sense of ‘choosing the best’ or pejoratively as ‘choosing now this now that’ and therefore having no constant, systematic thought.⁶⁹ Personally I find the terms meaningless since even Plato, Aristotle and Zenon (and many other important thinkers) were eclectic in that they selected what they thought was best from contemporaries and predecessors and, of course, their own teachers; in doing so they naturally changed their views over the years. The difference between these thinkers and others like Antiochus, Panaitios, Plutarch, Ptolemy, etc, lies in the originality, broad vision, insight into human nature and systematic formulation of their teaching which aimed at and succeeded in bettering people’s thinking, feeling and living. The others may have had some of these qualities but not all and so remain secondary.

47. Neither space nor common sense allow even a partial treatment of all these figures and so eclecticism will be applied. The poet Lucretius who penned *De Rerum Natura* ‘The Nature of Things’ was an Epicurean. (His poem certainly deserves reading.) Seneca was a Stoic whose writings ought to be better known for their penetration and humanism, the *Epistulae Morales* ‘Moral Epistles’ being the last and best: in *EM* 47 and 70 he protests against the dehumanizing effects of slavery and gladiatorial combats; in 15 he rebukes the craze for athletics and in 83 the degeneracy of drunkenness; in 94 he exhorts conjugal fidelity and pleads for equality of the sexes; and so on. Antiochus and Albinus are Platonists who add nothing to the Master’s thought; if anything they water it down, like all Middle Platonists⁷⁰. Panaitios was a Stoic with Platonist affinities; he stressed the four virtues (wisdom, justice, bravery/courage and ‘moderation’ *sōphrosune*) but thought that virtue was not enough for *eudemonia* needing also health, income and strength; he also reduced the parts of the soul from 8 to 6, assigning speech to bodily movements and sexual activity to one’s *phusis* itself. Poseidonios also was a renowned Stoic, successor of Panaitios, who stressed that life-force and intelligence were in a degree present not only in humans and animals but also plants and minerals; he travelled considerably as far as Spain and France among the Celts in Gaul becoming a geographer and naturalist. Galen is the famous physician of the 2nd cent CE; he followed Aristotle but had a non-dogmatic and non-sectarian spirit; he attacked openly Scepticism (in *De Optima Doctrina*) and held that man has a “natural criterion” for truth and reality (= *enargeia* ‘clarity, self-evidence’) which is the source for such artificial “criteria” as the compass and scales and by which they can distinguish illusions in dreams or madness.⁷¹ Ptolemy is, of course, the well-known astronomer of the 2nd cent CE who finalized the Aristotelian geocentric theory of our solar system that held until c1600.

48. M. Tullius Cicero (106-43 BC) is the most important Roman thinker – orator, lawyer and philosopher. His writings are not original but are valuable in preserving many details of Greek philosophy and in presenting it to Romans – where philosophers and teachers of rhetoric had been excluded by law since 161 BC. He studied with Philo (Larisseus), Antiochos and Panaitios thus absorbing Platonic, Sceptic and Stoic doctrines. J. Gucker has argued that an initial affiliation to Philo’s Scepticism (even though Philo is no longer taken as a pure sceptic) was followed by strong Platonism from c79-46 and then a return to Scepticism in Cicero’s last years. This may be true. Certainly Cicero’s middle period is characterized by positive platonist ideas clearly expressed in his *De Republica* and *De Legibus* which are imitative of Plato’s *Republic* and *Laws*, while later works like *De Oratore* (46-5 BC) contain sure indications of Scepticism⁷². However even Gucker admits that, although even the *De Officiis* ‘On Moral Duties/Functions’ has some sceptical passages (2. 7-8; 3. 20), in this, his last work, Cicero follows Panaitios (Gucker, p68) and cites Plato repeatedly (I. 15, 22, 28 etc, etc).

As Cicero was an excellent orator, exceptionally gifted in philology, he coined for Greek expressions a terminology in Latin that had considerable influence on the unfolding of European philosophy since Latin became the language used even as late as the 18th cent in some countries. His translations of Plato’s *Protagoras* and *Timaeos* alone would have formed a great contribution. Equally helpful are such terms as *affirmatio* for Gk *apophasis* ἀπόφασις ‘affirmation’; *assentior* for *sugkakatithemai* συγκατατίθεμαι ‘assent’; *finis* for *telos* τέλος ‘end, goal’; *gubernō* for *kubernō* κυβερνώ ‘govern, steer’; *iustitia* for *dikaio sunē* δικαιοσύνη ‘justice’; *officium* for *kathēkon* καθήκον ‘what is fitting, office, duty’; *probabil-e/is* for *pithano-* πιθανό ‘plausible, probable’; *ratio* for *logos* λόγος ‘reason, speech, doctrine’; *sapientia* for *sophia* σοφία ‘wisdom’; *scientia* for *epistēmē* επιστήμη ‘knowledge, science’; etc, etc.

49. Philon Alexandreus (c 25 BCE - c 40 CE) tried to find biblical correspondences in Greek philosophy and especially Plato (Tobin 1983, Runia 1986). But in fact, writing in Greek, he sought to show, not without method, that most if not all of Greek philosophy derives from Judaic scriptures, particularly Moses: thus Plato’s account of creation in *Timaios* had been anticipated in a superior way in early *Genesis* (Runia 1986); later Stoics like Boethos of Sidon and Panaitios are said by Philon (*Aet* 76)⁷³ to have given up the theory of the periodical conflagration and regeneration of the world because they were “inspired-by-god” (= *theolēptoi* θεόληπτοι, plural); Herakleitos’ views that the soul is as dead while embodied and that contraries are actually “one” come from Moses (*QG*⁷⁴ 3 5; 4 152)! But despite his descent and deep religious adherence, Philon cannot entirely escape his hellenic education and his writings are full of Greek philosophical ideas blended, often unwittingly, with the Jewish ones: thus in *De Vita Moysis* ‘The life of Moses’ the Prophet is presented (in 21-24) as a super pupil who surpasses the abilities of his teachers by means of “recollection” (*anamnēsis* ανάμνησις) rather than learning; “The well-endowed soul [*euphuēs psuchē*] moves faster in taking the lessons given by itself instead of those of the teacher”: this is, of course, a non-Judaic, clearly Platonist idea of the soul recalling what it had known before being embodied. Elsewhere he links the Judaic notion of “going to one’s father/people” with the birth of a worthy man’s soul “to life eternal”⁷⁵: here is “the imperishability [*aphtharsia* αφθαρσία] of the soul” which “returns to the mother-city [*mētropolis* μητρόπολις]” from which it had descended into a body (*QG*⁷⁴ 1 16; 3 11). However, his deep religious feeling and his insistence on “knowing oneself”, Philon does not evince any true mystical experience, as some claim (e.g. Zeller & Nestle §77). In fact his concepts of knowledge of the Self and of God is of the intellectual kind as is evident in *The Migration of Abraham* 195 and in *Allegory of the Laws* 1.44. (See further §51, d and note 82.)

50. Plutarch (45-125 CE) wrote his *Parallel Lives* (of famous Greeks and Romans) and a large collection of ἠθικά ‘Ethical Essays’ (*Moralia* in Latin; *EE* hereafter). Some of these are attacks against the Stoics (e.g. *On the Contradictions of the Stoics*) and, moreso, as we noted above (see n 22), against Epicureans. In these polemics he follows inevitably Karneades (and Cicero against the Epicureans) among others. Because he adopted some arguments of the Sceptics, some views of the Stoics even though he criticized them and some from Aristotle (Sandbach 1982) mixing them with his extensive substratum of Platonism, he was regarded by some as an ‘eclectic’, pejoratively. The scholarly mainstream view changed a long time ago (Jones 1913; Armstrong & Marlan 1967) and Plutarch has

taken his deserved position among the Middle Platonists (Dillon 1977).

Middle Platonists like Plutarch (Albinus and Numenius et al) are also New-Pythagoreans in a sense. In many cases it is difficult to separate the two currents which showed clear affinities as the ideas of the soul's immortality and reincarnation mingled from the very time of Plato (GPA §12, 24). But Plutarch (like Attikos) stressed the beginning of the world in time (following Plato's *Timaios*) against the Aristotelian notion of the world's eternality and the Stoics' notion of conflagration and resurgence. Yet the Stoic *ataraxia* appears intensely in Plutarch's own *Ataraxia of the Soul* (EE 30). Following Plato again in *Erotiko* 'On Love' (EE 47) he praises the power of love as guide to higher levels of being but strongly restricts homosexuality. In *Platonic Problems* he discusses various passages in isolation, with *Timaios* in the forefront. Most important is his essay *On Isis and Osiris* (23): it is in fact our only source for the complete story which appears in many old Egyptian texts (*Pyramid/Coffin Texts, Book of the Dead*) but only in mystifying snippets; Osiris is the personification of the eternal Word and Existence in the world of mutability while Typhon (=Egyptian Seth) is deceit and corruption and Isis embodies Wisdom leading the soul to the highest knowledge⁷⁶.

Equally interesting from a different point of view is EE 60, *On the Face Appearing on the Moon*. Here Plutarch relies not only on Platonism but also draws from the Peripatetics and the Stoics; more important seems to be the view that the sun and the moon are the soul's origin and destination⁷⁷. The evil souls are terrified by the (non-existent) grim face in the darkness of the moon (944 B-C); but the good soul dissolves and its immortal part, Intelligence or *Nous voũç*, aims at the Good which shines forth in the sun (944 E). And there are two channels - one towards the earth and one towards heaven (Elysian fields). Here we have a parallel to the Upaniṣadic *devayāna* and *pitryāna*, the paths the soul may follow to the sun or the moon⁷⁸. The parallel is not exact but clear enough and it should be noted that Plutarch's statement is without precedent in Greek and Roman writings. By Plutarch's *floruit*, of course, trade with India had opened up considerably and Indians began to make their appearance in the Roman Empire, particularly in the lands of the Eastern Mediterranean. Many Greeks had already travelled to India, ever since Alexander's penetration into N-W India and had contacts with Indian wise men⁷⁹. It should cause no surprise, therefore, that Plutarch had somehow got this idea. Other thinkers also drew from Egyptian, Iranian and even Indian religiophilosophical traditions. Thus an extract which survived from *On the Good* by Numenius (flourished c160CE) advises that, having studied well Plato "we should go back further....[to] the teachings of Pythagoras" and other renowned traditions "in conformity with Plato's precepts, such as are ordained by **the Brahmans**, the Jews, the Magi and the Egyptians" (Donini, p 124: emphasis added).

However, of far greater significance is the idea of the Unity of Being (i.e. the self of man is the same as the self of the universe) which also appears in the Near East at about the time of Plutarch.

HERMETIC, GNOSTIC, CHRISTIAN

51. The Unity of Being is, apart from Plutarch's notion that after death the soul reaches the moon and thence the sun, another idea appearing c 100 CE without precedent in Greek and Roman thought. By "Unity of Being" I mean that man issues directly from the Godhead, being the godhead in his true Self, and can, through Self-knowledge, return to the original unity in the Godhead. The aspect of Self-knowledge has a long history going back to the Delphic maxim "know thyself" (*gnōthi s' heauton* see Betz 1970), but the idea as stated here cannot be traced in any culture in the Eastern Mediterranean - Roman, Greek, Egyptian, Judaic, Babylonian, Persian. The idea is, of course, fundamental to Indic Vedānta and the Vedic tradition stretching back to the *Rgveda* (Kazanas 2006)).

This idea appears in some Hermetic writings (philosophical not 'magical', which are earlier) and some Gnostic 'gospels': All these begin to appear in early 2nd cent CE though actual manuscripts are from the 4th century. Many scholars have written studies on Hermeticism and many more on Gnosticism but, to the best of my knowledge, no scholar has spotted the exact aspect

we shall be discussing hereafter – except Hans Jonas whose work no longer appears in academic and other bibliographies⁸⁰. Jonas (1963) came very close to the Vedāntic (Advaita) concept. He thought that the new spirit underlying many of the disparate trends of the early Christian Era was what he termed "the gnostic principle" (p 26). The ultimate 'object' of this *gnōsis* (knowledge) is God but in a distinctive way: "its event in the soul transforms the knower himself by making him a partaker in the divine existence (which means more than assimilating him to the divine essence)... [T]he relation of knowing is mutual, i.e. a being known and at the same time involving active self-indulgence... [it is] the union with a reality that in truth is itself the supreme subject in the situation and strictly speaking never an object" (p 35). In plainer words, knower, knowing and known are One.

Indeed, the gnostic *Gospel of Truth* describes this Oneness very clearly: "It is within Unity that each one will attain himself from multiplicity into Unity consuming matter within himself like fire, darkness by light and death by life" (25: 10-19: R 44)⁸¹.

51b. Some may think or claim that **this Unity** has been propounded by philosophers like Plato and others. This is not so. Nowhere before certain Hermetic and Gnostic texts do we find the idea that man issues from the Godhead and then, through purification and Self-knowledge, returns to his origin in the Godhead. I shall therefore examine the views of five thinkers on this subject and show that they do not have this idea.

a) Plato certainly promoted the idea of Self-knowledge (*Charmides* 169E; *Alkibiades I* 130E-133; *Phaidros* 299E) and advocates that we should strive to reach heaven "becoming like a god [*homoiōsis theōi*] as far as possible" (*Theaitētos* 176AB). But the gods are in heaven's star-zone – neither fully immortal nor indissoluble (*Timaios* 41B). In *Phaidros* the blessed souls reach highest heaven and see the knowledge of True Being but stay back, apart from True Being. In *Timaios* 41Dff, the Creator fashions human souls in the form of stars and equal in number to them out of the residue of the material used for the creation of the gods but now shaken and mixed to greater grossness, while the gods fashion the physical bodies in which the souls will be incarnated. The embodied souls, if they retain or regain their unity, will, on death, return to their stellar form in heaven (42D): they neither issue from nor return into the substance of the Demiurge himself.

b) Pythagoras may have taught the Unity of Being as described in § 51, but nothing has survived. Alexander Polyhistor was a later Pythagorean (1st cen BC) whose tenets were preserved: "The Principal of All (*archē apantōn*) is the Monad (=One)"; from that comes the "Dyad (=two) serving as material substratum to the Monad". But of man's origin and essential nature the account is less exalting: "The sun, the moon and the stars are gods; for in them preponderates heat... There is kinship (*suggeneia*) of men with gods in that man partakes of heat" (DL VIII.25, 27). Thus man's level is not with the Monad but, as in Plato, with the star-gods.

c) The Pantheism of the Stoics is in a sense spiritual as we saw in § 38, end, but everything is material and the souls are not immortal (§ 26). Nonetheless, Cicero gives a relevant description in *De Re Publica*: "The outermost [sphere] is that of heaven (*caelestis*) which contains all the rest and is itself the supreme god (*summus ipse deus*)... in it are fixed and revolve the eternal courses (*cursus sempiterni*) of the stars... Below the moon there is nothing but what is mortal (*mortale*)... save the souls given to mankind by the generosity (*munere*) of gods while above are all eternal... Educated (*docti*) men have obtained for themselves a return to this place" (VI.16-9). Here again the highest is the stars, not even the *summus deus* of Heaven!

d) Philon (Alex) sends, as we saw (§ 49), the soul back to its origin in the metropolis of heaven (=the garden of Eden) in the strict Judaic tradition - not to God himself. In fact he uses the Delphic maxim "know thyself" but in the sense, as he explains, that man (Moses, here) is a low and limited creature who should not aspire towards the unattainable: man is quite separate from and much lower than God and cannot know Him⁸².

e) The Middle Platonists did not go beyond the Master's mould of thought. J Mansfeld sums up their position when he describes the view of Albinus on soul's final abode: "The soul... approaches the Supreme, which however, forever remains exterior to it as its object of contemplation and desire (...) a higher ascent is impossible (...). For our turning towards the highest

god can only give us an equality, of a kind, with the second-highest god” (1989: 67, 78, 79).

By this time, of course, the middle of 2nd cent CE, the idea of the Unity of Being would have formed a basic tenet in the Hermetic and Gnostic groups and would have been spread wider. Thus Maximus of Tyre (flourished 160-180 CE) does go beyond the Platonic, Pythagorean and Stoic limits of the star-zone, saying, "the end of the way (*hodos*) is not heaven nor the celestial bodies... but one must reach beyond these and stretch over (*huperkupsai* literally 'bend-down over') heaven to the true region and the peace thereat".⁸³ So let us turn to the Hermetic texts which are supposed to come from Hermes Trismegistus (=thrice greatest) but otherwise are anonymous.

52. The Poimandres⁸⁴ is the best example for discussion since, although it has some special features, it is typical of similar texts and presents our theme very clearly. Generally the Hermetica promote man's liberation from ignorance (*agnoia/agnōsia* ἀγνοια/αγνωσία) and vice (*kakia* κακία) through piety (*eusebeia* ευσέβεια) and knowledge of God (*theou gnōsis*) within the wider frame of moral conduct common to Greek, Egyptian and Judaic ethics. The Hermetic groups flourished and produced their texts in Egypt (c 100-350 CE).⁸⁵ They believed in God the Father, both transcendent (*CH* IV 1; *CH* VIII 2) and immanent in creation (*CH* V 9; *CH* XII 22-3). They contain hymns and practices that can be termed 'esoteric': one is an exercise of gradually expanding one's awareness to include the whole world (*CH* XI 19-20; *CH* XIII 11); the other is sounding aloud certain vowel sequences and words (*RCH* 324-6)⁸⁶. They have also graded group-meetings and private tutorials (*CH* XIII is one such) for more advanced or select students. It was a kind of esoteric philosophical *paideia* leading to Self-realization.⁸⁷

In the *Poimandres* progress towards liberation is the 'supreme good' *periousion agathon* περιούσιον αγαθόν (*CH* I 19) and is fulfilled by the return to the Godhead which is true immortality (19-21). This is achieved through Self-knowledge. In other Hermetica (e.g. *korē kosmou* 'The Eye of the World', *SF* XIII) and other writings (*Genesis*, Plato's *Timaios* : §51) God himself creates/fashions (*dēmiourgein/poiēn* δημιουργεῖν/ποιεῖν) the world and its creatures. In *CHI*, God, «nous being life and light» (9, 21) engenders (=ἀποκueῖν αποκυεῖν 8, 9) a second Intelligence/Mind and this now creates – which is a significant difference⁸⁸. But God the Father engendered man directly out of Himself and equal to Himself (12); this man is in himself "life and light" (17). Then man falls from perfection because of desire (*erōs* ἔρωος) and of his own will, following the low-bound aspect of his nature, enters a material body and is identified with it (14). To escape from captivity to cosmic forces (*heimarmenē* εἰμαρμένη), sleep, desire and other weaknesses (15) and illusion (28), "the mindful man should re-cognize himself as being immortal", break his attachment to his embodiment (18-9) and "know himself to be from life and light" (21). Thereupon, in an act of divine grace, the supreme Nous itself intervenes and blocks off harmful/retarding influences (22). On death the weakness of the mortal form (connected with cosmic levels) are cast off and the soul, transcending all the worlds, returns to the initial perfection merging in the Godhead (*en theōi* 24-6).⁸⁹

In other Hermetica the worthy souls become daimons and enter troops of gods, some wandering (=planets), others fixed (=Stars) in "perfect glory" (*CHX* 7-8; also XII 12; etc). This is a marked difference and this alone resembles the Platonic, Pythagorean and Stoic view.⁹⁰

53. The full liberation, or even the attainment of the divine state among the celestials, does not come automatically at death. The man attached to his embodiment "remains wandering (erring) in darkness" and suffers repeatedly the pangs of death "missing the mark" (*CH* 1.19-20; etc); the bad and unjust people sink to low forms of animals (*CH* x. 7-8; etc).

Self realization must be completed before death, otherwise there is no liberation, however much morally good a man is. This involves 4 stages: a) acquiring information (*RCH* 6.6, p 323; *CH* XIII.1); b) following various practices under guidance, study and moral conduct (*CH* I. 22-23, IV.5 etc); c) contemplation of God, the Good and the Beautiful (*CH* V, passim; VI.5; XIV. 9-10); d) exercising the expansion of consciousness (*CH* XI. 20) and experience of Unity (*CH* I. 6-7; *CH* XIII. 11-13)⁹¹.

Another element, common to other movements (Christian, Pythagorean, etc), is the

appearance of a divine incarnation or self-realized man who will teach the people and lead the worthy disciples to salvation. The narrator in the *Poimandres* is himself such a figure; so is Jesus Christ, of course (§55ff), Apollonius of Tyana (§66, end) and others. In the Greek tradition this goes back to Empedocles (*GPA* §21) but it should be noted that it is a common theme in the Vedic Tradition and finds its finest expression in the *Bhagavad-Gītā* (4.7-8). “Whenever there is decay of *dharma* and rise of *adharma*, I [=the Supreme] incarnate myself” (Kazanas 2003).

54. Another point concerns the successive encumbrances which belong to the cosmic levels/spheres. Here (in *CH* I) is implicit the disinclination of cosmic entities /forces to allow the human spirit to ascend to the highest. In other tractates the force of heirmanenē or necessity is explicitly said to impede the ascent (*CH* XII. 14; XVI. 12). We shall see (§66 below) that in some Gnostic writings the Archons of cosmic spheres are definitely hostile. But in the Hermetica we find also the traditional idea of cosmic order created by God(s) where divine goodness is manifest and may be recognised by man’s mind (*CH* XI. 5-11). It is the prevalent classical view of the Cosmos as a coherent, harmonious and beautiful whole in which man plays an apt and significant role – described in Plato’s *Laws* 903B ff and Cicero’s *De Natura Deorum* Bk 2. The divine hostility is prominent in Homer as gods support one hero and turn against another (e.g. Athena against the Trojans and Poseidon against Odysseus) but at no period is it said that they impede people’s efforts for Self-realization. Even Plato merely states that the men are guarded by the gods and regarded as their possessions but in a good sense (*Phaidōn* 62B, *Laws* 906A)⁹².

The most distinctive and unique idea in *Poimandres* and some other Hermetica is man’s identity with the Godhead, his emanation out of the Godhead and his eventual liberation in returning to That. His final liberation at death must be prepared by Self-knowledge which is actual Self-realization: this is described by Tat: “I am in heaven, in earth, in water, in air. I am in animals and plants; in the womb, before the womb, everywhere...I see the universe and myself in Mind” (*CH* XIII. 11-13). And here naturally one thinks of *Īśā Up* “[A fully realized man] sees all creatures in himself and himself in all creatures”.

The idea of the Unity of Being came, I submit, from India⁹³.

55. Christ’s original teaching is very difficult to determine. Today’s Christianity no doubt contains elements from that teaching but also many distorted ideas and much extraneous material from various sources. We must distinguish between Christianity and ‘churchianity’. There is the Roman Catholic Church (fairly unified), the Eastern Orthodox (Greek, Russian, Coptic, Armenian, etc: not so unified) and various sects of Protestants – Anglican, Baptist, Episcopal, Evangelical, Mormon, Quaker, etc, etc. Catholic Christianity teaches, e.g., that the soul will pass after death from a purgatory where it will be cleansed; the Orthodox denomination has no such doctrine. Neither in the *New Testament* (the basic Scripture for all Churches) nor in any apocryphal or gnostic texts (heretical and unacceptable to all Churches) is this concept mentioned by Christ: it was added by theologians who never met Christ but lived many generations after him. An even more curious notion (one taught by all Churches) is that the soul of the inveterate sinner will go to hell and there be subjected to torments **for all eternity**. This too is a later addition by theologians who never met Christ, followed his saying about “the whole body being thrown into geena [=hellish pit]” (Mth V.30; Mk IX 43) and also the rich man in the torments of *hades* ‘underworld’: Lk 16.23), and distorted probably his saying that some “children of the kingdom will be cast out into outer darkness [where is] weeping and gnashing of teeth” (Mth 8.12)⁹⁴; but nowhere is it said that they will stay there for all eternity!

56. The division of Churches (and often hostility among them) that marks Christianity today was, it seems, evident very early on, soon after Christ’s death. Scholars in this field, despite not agreeing on most basic facts regarding Christ except that he was a Jew, realized a long time ago that even the canonical *NT* with its 27 Books (Gospels, Acts, Epistles, Revelation) contains clear evidence of division. The grossest split is that between Paul and Peter. Paul had never heard or met Christ. Peter, on the other hand, was one of the three closest disciples (with John and James) and the one on whom (Peter = rock) the Church would be founded (Mth 16.18). Yet in the *Epistle to Galatians*, Paul writes (2.11-14) that in Antioch, in front of many, he attacked Peter, who wanted to keep the old

Jewish law of circumcision – for non-Jews who would become Christians – since it was an eternal covenant with God (*Genesis* 17.9-14). Paul thought that one would be justified or exonerated only “by faith in Jesus Christ... not by the works of the law” (cf also *Ep Gal* 1.6-9 and 5.4). And yet Christ had said that he had not come to destroy the law but to fulfill it: “For truly I say to you, till heaven and earth pass, not one jot ... will pass away from the law till all be fulfilled. Whoever breaks the least of these commandments and teaches others to do the same, will be called least in the kingdom of heaven” (Mth 5.17ff)⁹⁵.

This then was one broad division: Paul on one side, Peter and James (leader of the Jerusalem Christians) on the other. But there were also the Ebionites, “the voluntary poor ones”, who saw themselves as the true followers, the true primitive Church (Johnson 1990: 42-3): they believed that to be a Christian, one had to be Jewish, keep the Sabbath etc (much like Paul’s opponents in Galatia); that Jesus was the eldest flesh-and-blood son of Joseph and Mary who kept God’s law and so was chosen by God as Messiah⁹⁶, that Paul was the archenemy and heretic; that their version of Matthew’s Gospel was alone true (Ehrman 2003: 99-103). Apart from them, there were other Nazarean groups consisting of Jewish Christians.

Another influential trend was that of Marcion (born c100) who was struck by Paul’s writings and then surpassed him by rejecting the whole of the *Old Testament* and all Gospels except Luke (minus parts of Jewish tradition) and accepting 10 Epistles of Paul (Harnack 1990). Marcionites held that there were two Gods, one of the *Old Testament* and one of Jesus. The first was not evil but too sternly just, a wrathful God who inflicted penalties, suffering and death⁹⁷. They worshipped Paul’s and Christ’s God of love – as is said in Luke: “Love your enemies, do good to them who hate you...” (6.27-29). Christ came to earth in a ‘phantom’ body: he was pure divine Spirit, who only seemed to have a human body⁹⁸. He came to redeem humans and lift them, since they did not originally have the spirit of the highest God in them (Aland 1973). Marcionite churches thrived for centuries and in Anatolia (=Turkey) they had perhaps the largest numbers – as late as the 5th century (Hoffman 1990).

Even the Marcionites were attacked as heretical by the Christian groups that eventually prevailed holding mainly Paul’s views. We know of them only because of the attacks and the quotations from the opponents’ books contained therein. There were also diverse gnostic groups but before we look at them we shall examine the ‘prevalent’ stream, as I shall call it hereafter⁹⁹.

57. The New Testament Canon was not finally fixed until the Council of Trent in the mid-sixteenth century (a Roman Catholic affair which, however, seemed to settle the issue for all). Its 27 books were first mentioned as a unit in 367 by Athanasius, bishop of Alexandria: these alone should constitute Scriptures. But many contemporary and subsequent teachers and churches adopted different documents omitting and/or adding to the collection¹⁰⁰. However, as Augustine of Hippo (North Africa) adopted the Athanasius list (Synod of Hippo 393), this gradually gained acceptance. Thus was established the *Old Testament* and the *New Testament* with its 4 Gospels, the Acts of the Apostles, 14 Epistles of Paul, two of Peter, 3 of John, 1 of James, 1 of Jude, and the Revelation.

To begin with, the Old Testament is only circumstantially related to Christ. It gives the ancient history and culture of the Jews and, as we saw, some Christians rejected it totally while others accepted it only in part.

Moreover there are grave textual problems beyond purity contaminated by inevitable scribal errors. That the *NT* and the theologies or catechisms of institutionalized Christianity do not represent the whole or actual teaching of Christ has been stated at different periods since Reimarus¹⁰¹ published in 1774-8 his rejection of prevalent Christianity (and of course the received gospel-picture of Christ). Others followed: W. Hone 1875; A. Schweitzer 1906; F.C. Baur 1934; A. von Harnack 1961; and so on.

The essential teaching of prevalent Christianity is simple enough. Jesus of Nazareth was born of Mary and Joseph but (in Mth and Lk) he was fathered by God’s holy Spirit (or Ghost); so he is called son of God – the God of the Jewish patriarchs, Abraham, Jacob, Moses etc: He is the creator of the universe and Father to all. At 30 Jesus began to preach and castigate the officials of Judaic

religion who on the whole did not observe God's commandments given through Moses and other prophets¹⁰². His teaching was full of love and humility stressing that the kingdom of God is within man. Love God, your neighbour and your enemies; give alms, but not for show; bless those that curse you; be merciful, do not criticize but forgive; do to others what you want others to do to you (which sums it all up: Lk ch 6); blessed are the poor in spirit, the meek, the pure in heart (Mth ch 5). He accused the lawyers of Israel that they had taken the key of knowledge but did not go into that realm and prevented others from going in (Lk 11.52). Eventually the Hebrew leaders had him arrested by the Roman officials and crucified. He rose on the third day, appeared to his disciples and finally ascended bodily into heaven. By his death and resurrection the world was saved.

The theological doctrines, as was said, are not Christ's teaching and do not concern us. What we shall probe next is the reliability of the prevalent NT documents and aspects of Christ's teaching not in the prevalent texts.

58. Until the Nag Hammadi finds, our knowledge of Christ and his teaching came mainly from the NT. Of the evangelists and epistle-writers little is really known¹⁰³. And when we examine with some care the NT texts we find many inconsistencies and contradictions.

First, there are textual differences between early manuscripts (from 2nd/3rd cent) and later ones or the codices (Sinaiticus and Vaticanus, both of the 4th cent). Many differences indicate deliberate interference: e.g. the earlier ms of John's 1st Epistle read simply "There are three that bear witness in earth, the spirit, the water and the blood and the three are in one"; the received text (from 4th cent) reads "these three are one in Jesus Christ" - which is quite a change¹⁰⁴.

Then, there are differences between the gospels themselves. Did Mary and Joseph flee to Egypt after Jesus' birth and the departure of the 3 wise men (Mth 2.13-23) or did they go to Jerusalem and then Nazareth (as in Lk 2.21-39)?¹⁰⁵ Was Jairus' daughter sick but not yet dead when this high official came to Jesus for help (Mk 5.23,35) or was she already dead (Mth 9.18)? Again, after Jesus' resurrection, did the disciples stay in Jerusalem until his ascension (Lk 2.1-52) or did they go to Galilee (Mth 28.1-20)? Then Mark says that, after the resurrection Jesus first appeared to Mary Magdalene and afterwards "in another form" to the disciples (16.9-14); but Luke says that some women, including Mary the mother of Jesus, Mary Magdalene and Joanna, found the sepulchre empty (24.1-10) and later Jesus appeared to Kleopas (=Peter) and an unnamed one on the road to Emmaus (24.15ff). Or consider the phrase spoken from heaven as Jesus was being baptized: "you are my beloved son in whom I am well pleased" (Mk 1.11); "this is my beloved..." etc (Mth 3.17); but in the oldest testimonies of Luke's account the voice says quoting Psalm 2.7 "You are my son, today I have begotten you" (cf Lk 3.23 in received version)¹⁰⁶.

59. Very revealing of a different sort of interference are several other passages.

a) In a curious passage in John, seeing a man blind "**from his birth**" the disciples asked Jesus "Master, who sinned - this man or his parents that he was born blind?" (11.12). As far as I know, this passage has not received much consideration by experts. Yet it has enormous implications. Since neither Jesus nor the disciples were imbeciles, they would know, surely, that the man could not have sinned as an embryo in the womb. So, how or when could he have sinned before birth?... The only rational reply is that he had sinned in a *previous embodiment* (as a human being). This incident does not stand alone.

b) Jesus asks the disciples "Whom do men say that I the son of Man am?"; they reply - John the Baptist, Elias, Jeremias or more of the prophets (Mth 16.13-16). Since the prophets had long been dead and reincarnation is not an element of the Judaic religion (until the later branch Kabbala)¹⁰⁷, how could they say that a dead prophet was reincarnated as Jesus?... Jesus himself does not repudiate such a blasphemous heresy but merely asks "Whom say you that I am?"... Clearly, reincarnation / transmigration was an idea known to Christ and his close circle.

c) Mth 9.11 says: "Many will come from east and west and will sit down with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven. But the children of the kingdom will be expelled into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth". Now what does this mean?... How could they be expelled from the kingdom since, just as hell, is said to be eternal so stay in paradise is

without end? What can we make of this?...I will hazard that this particular kingdom of heaven is a paradise where worthy souls stay for a time and then, when their merit is exhausted, are cast out into new embodiments in the material world which in comparison with their former condition, is like darkness¹⁰⁸. But this idea was excised from the Gospel(s) together with that of reincarnation.

d) We meet also the word *paliggenesia* (Mth 19-28: παλιγγενεσία) ‘rebirth, regeneration’. What, asks Peter, will the disciples gain having left everything to follow Christ? He says “Ye who have followed me in the *paliggenesia*, when the son of Man shall sit in the throne...ye also shall sit”. This is usually taken to refer to rebirth in heavenly glory and it may well mean this. But also the word is a compound *palin* + *genesia* meaning precisely ‘again-birth’, i.e. reembodiment (thus corresponding to the Sankrit *punar-jamma* (again birth). In this case, the disciples have followed Jesus from one embodiment to another to attain perfection.

60. e) In John, again, while Jesus is teaching (8.3) the woman caught in adultery was brought by the Pharisees who asked him if she should be stoned; But he “stooped down and with his finger wrote on the earth”. When they insisted, he said the famous words “He that is without sin...let him first cast a stone at her” (8.7) then wrote again on the ground. This story is not found in the early ms and almost all scholars acknowledge that it was inserted long afterwards (Ehrman 2003: 221).

But what was Jesus writing on the ground with such concentration?...Was he idly doodling or was he drawing perhaps a diagram illustrating some cosmogonic theme or some natural law?

61. f) **Knowledge.** Jesus unleashes a tirade against lawyers (after the Pharisees) ending with the accusation – “you have taken away the key of knowledge [=gnōsis]; you did not enter yourselves and impeded these trying to enter” (Lk 11.52). What was this knowledge and the key which the lawyers of Israel took away impeding others from entering?... Presumably it was some knowledge not readily apparent in the Judaic tradition which lawyers and pharisees ought to make available to those seeking it. Instead they burdened these people with heavy bonds of customs and regulations that helped them not (Lk 11.46). Presumably Jesus would remove these burdens giving the necessary knowledge to the seekers. Prophet Zacharias says of the young child John (the Baptist) that he will prepare the ways for giving “knowledge of salvation”(Lk 1.77). Indeed, John prepared the way for Christ’s teaching. Paul uses the word often in his Epistles as in 1st Corinthians 8.2 “if a man (=Christian) thinks he knows something he knows nothing yet as knowing should be” where he distinguishes between ordinary thinking and knowing and a different mode of knowing.

Jesus also makes this distinction. He tells the Sadducees, who had just made a display of knowing the law and the scriptures, “You are in delusion, you don’t know the scriptures nor the power of God” (Mth 22.29). He also tells his 12 disciples that they can “know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven” but not other people outside (Mk 4.11; also Mth 13.11; Lk 8.10). He also tells some Jews that they claim that God is theirs but they know Him not whereas Jesus does know Him and follows His word (John 8.55).

One of the most interesting passages is Paul’s exhortation to the Corinthians (2nd Epistle, 13.5) saying “You don’t know yourselves, you don’t know that Christ is within you”: this is so obvious, it needs no comment. It is perhaps this kind of knowledge, knowing that the kingdom of God and Jesus Christ is within one, that Paul terms “secret wisdom”, given to “perfected” Christians, which is not of this world and it is not known even by the rulers of the world (ibid 2.6-8)¹⁰⁹.

62. g) **Faith.** This word *pistis* πίστις and its verb *pistevein* ‘to believe, to have faith’ are usually totally misunderstood. ‘Faith’ and ‘belief’ are usually regarded as synonymous even though attempts – feeble and superficial – are made to distinguish between them¹¹⁰. It is often said and even more often assumed that once one “believes” *pistevei* in Christ or God (or the Unity of the Church or whatever) one will be saved. Undoubtedly the noun and verb are used in this sense in the NT. But clearly Jesus often gives a very different meaning. E.g. he repeatedly says to people he has healed “Your faith *pistis* has saved you” (Mth 9.22; Mk 5.34; Lk 7.50; etc). He also defines *pistis* saying “if you have faith [so much] as a mustard seed you shall say to the mountain ‘Move over here!’ and it will move; nothing will be impossible for you: however, this kind [of power] does not emanate except by prayer and fasting” (Mth 17.20-21)¹¹¹. Clearly then, *faith is a mighty power for accomplishing*

works out of the ordinary. It has little to do with all kinds of belief. In this respect it is like knowledge which gives understanding and power and has nothing to do with the ordinary notion and practice of thinking, talking, analysing, collecting information and toying around with it, as is the usual habit¹¹².

63. From the preceding paragraphs it is obvious that Christ taught much more and in a different way than is usually thought. Reincarnation and knowledge of Oneself (whether as Christ, God or the Kingdom, within one) are two major ideas that were removed from the texts of the *NT* but not so efficiently as not to be detectable. These and other related ideas, such as we found in the *Hermetica*, are clearly present in other proto-Christian texts that were not admitted into the groups of prevalent Christianity and were designated as ‘gnostic’ and heretical (see § 65).

Nobody would deny the unity between Jesus and God and, in fact, this forms a fundamental tenet in Christianity today (including the Holy Ghost/Spirit in the Trinity). There is an agonised effort on the part of the *NT* to present Jesus as the saviour of the world, effecting redemption through his death on the cross. There was also a strong belief among the groups of prevalent Christianity (continuing in many circles even today) that Christ would soon return to judge people even as the world would end. Neither of these two notions came about. The world is very much with us in much the same (im)moral state as it was in Jesus’ days and he has not reappeared – or if he did, we don’t know of it and the world certainly has not ended.

64. However, there are hints that this unity extended to the disciples and to all men as a latent possibility. In John 14.20 Jesus tells the disciples “You shall know that I [am] in my Father and you in me and I in you”. A little later he will pray so that the Father and he will give them another Comforter, “the Spirit of truth” whom they know “for he dwells with you and shall be in you” (16.18; 23.26). After the resurrection he told them “As the Father has sent me, even so I send you” (20.21) then “breathed into” them (*epmhusēse* ἐμφύσησε) saying “Receive the Holy Spirit” (20.22)¹¹³. This development, actualized by the disciples, is an open possibility for all who wish sincerely to follow Christ’s teaching. For it is said that the world was made by God through the Logos (= Word): “in that was life and the life was the light of men” (ibid 1.1-4). ‘Life’ and ‘light’ are the same terms found in *Poimandres* 9.21(§52). This was “the true light which lighteth every man coming into the world” (ibid 1.9). The divine Light, the Life in the God-Logos, is in every man born into the world, so it is possible to come to realize fully this. And it is clear when some Jews want to stone Jesus because “thou, being a man, makest thyself God” he replies “Is it not written in your law, I said, Ye are Gods’?” (ibid 10.31-4). Every man, he says, can approach him but only if “they have heard and learnt of the Father” (6.44) and no man can obtain truth unless “it were given to him by the Father” (6.65). Then, if the man follows Jesus’ teaching, he will go through the “rebirth” of Spirit, as is explained to old Nikodemus (3.1-15) and is illustrated by the transformation of the disciples.

Thus, without stretching at all the meaning, we see that even the *NT*, despite obvious excisions and modifications to give a definite doctrinal direction, contains the idea of the Unity of Being (as in § 52-4). However, this view will not be found in other scholars or theologians of any Church.

65. Gnostic Writings, at least the tractates found at Nag Hammadi 1945 and collected in translation in Robinson (1990/1996), present in themselves as great a variety of Christian doctrine as the Christianities we have examined so far¹¹⁴. Apart from these texts and the groups that used them, there are other groups using different texts which are known to us only because some bishops of the prevalent Church in attacking them as heretical preserved passages from these writings. The more active of such bishops were Irenaeus of Lyon, Hippolytus of Rome and Epiphanius of Cyprus¹¹⁵. The differences between the gnostic writings and the canonical texts are many, so I shall present only the more important ones.

A cosmogonic myth central to several but not to all gnostic texts speaks of a higher God (the One or the Father or Godhead) and a lower one, the Creator of the world. (The latter is often identified with the Old Testament God and in most versions does not know of the existence of the One.) From the One emerge divine emanations called *aeons* (<Gk αἰών ‘cosmos, world, eternity’), like First Thought, Eternity, Life etc. These produce fresh divine entities and this realm is called

Plērōma πλήρωμα 'fullness'. The aeon Wisdom (= Gk Sophia) falls away, down from the *Plērōma* in generating her own divine being. This now becomes an imperfect offspring (Yaldabaoth, in the *Apocryphon of John*¹¹⁶) and Sophia leaves him at a lower realm. This malformed being steals some divine energy from his mother and creates other lesser divinities (the evil cosmic forces) and with their help the material world. He thinks he is the only God. But he and his helpers called also *archons* are shown a vision of the One, the higher God, and so decide to create man in the image of that God. But this first man, Adam, is immobile and the Creator breathes into him the power of his mother. Thus now the human beings acquired not only life but also the power of Sophia which made them greater than the Creator's cosmic helpers. When these archons realized that man was superior to them they cast him into the lowest region of matter. Then the One sent his own Thought (= *Epinoia*, who is also Life: R 116) who eventually hid herself within man and helped him in all his efforts including the ascent back. Christ himself somehow appeared in paradise and persuaded Adam to eat of the Tree of good and evil while the serpent taught Adam sensuality and corruption. But it is Mother Foreknowledge that descends 3 times to redeem mankind¹¹⁷.

66. Some scholars think that the gnostic doctrines are Hellenized or Platonized Christianity. Thus R Roukema (following Harnack and others) sees major Platonic influences in (a) the presence of a High God and a Creator with lesser gods and (b) the realm of eternal Ideas (p 107-8). Such a view, however, seems to me quite erroneous. Not that Platonist ideas or Middle Platonism did not influence gnostic teachings and Christian doctrines. Of course, Platonist concepts like the incorporeal eternal Ideas and the material world, the exercise of virtues, reincarnation, Self-Knowledge, the gods watching over humans, and so on, probably entered into perhaps all these religiophilosophical teachings. Here, however, we have an assumption that Christianity of the prevalent type was the first to exist and the true one, and this was 'gnosticized' with Platonic notions. This is not so. If anything, *The Gospels of Thomas*, which is full of gnostic elements and, apart from some sayings of Jesus, does not resemble at all the NT, is dated by some experts before the canonical Gospels of the NT (R 124-5; Koester 86).

With Platonism Roukema uses sleight of hand. He admits that in *Timaios* there is only one God, the Creator/Demiurge; he fashions the younger gods who assist him in the creation of the world and man's material body (pp77-9). Then he brings in Mind *nous* from *Philebos* 28C, *Republic* 596CD and other Dialogues, which speak of the Good and the One (but no second Creator-god), and says that this is a Higher God (79-81)¹¹⁸. Now surely, Plato could have written in *Timaios* 28Cff that there were two gods if that was his doctrine instead of expecting his readers (and scholars of the 20th cent CE) to make a collation from different Dialogues. There is no hint anywhere in Plato of a Higher God and a lower Creator, as we find them in some gnostic tractates. When Middle Platonists write of higher and lower Gods (§52, e) the Hermetica and gnostic texts were already in circulation. It is quite possible that Platonists like Albinus and Numenius borrowed from gnostics and similar texts or they all took the idea from a different source.

The idea of the High God (= Godhead, Absolute) and the lower god who creates is found, of course, in the Vedic Tradition where we find the distinction between *Brahma* (neuter) as the Absolute and *Brahmā* (masculine) the Creatorgod. In the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*, BK 1, this distinction is quite clear and in 1.5.1 the Creator is called Prajāpati (as in the earlier *Brāhmaṇas*)¹¹⁹. This idea as well as that of the Unity of Being (§51-54) are not found in any culture in the Eastern Mediterranean and could only have come from Indic sources. Bear in mind too that many incidents in the early life of Jesus are very similar to the Buddha and that Sedlar lists over 15 such (1981: ch XV). If other doctrinal parallels with Indic systems are added (Sadler, ch XVI) then the total is formidable.

Now, there is no hard evidence showing that the writers of these texts (Hermetic, Gnostic, canonical Christian) borrowed from Indic sources. But Indians were living in communities in the Near East, particularly Alexandria (Kazanas 2003b; McEvelley 2002; etc). While claims for Buddhist monks in Egypt are not substantiated (Kazanas 2003b), Indic presence on the one hand and the numerous closely parallel ideas on the other suggest a very strong probability that Indic ideas circulated in Egypt at that period. There were also men like Apollonius of Tyana (Conybeare 1912) who had been to India and came back bringing Indic philosophical lore. So Indic influences are

almost certain.

67. The Gnostic doctrines found in the Nag Hammadi Library and in the writings of the heresiologists of the prevalent tradition do not form a unified teaching or system. They differ - often considerably - and most of them claim to be presentations of Christ's teaching no less than the NT. I shall not examine all these variations with their prolix expositions and complicated cosmogonies. I shall present only some seminal ideas like reincarnation, self-knowledge, etc.

First let us distinguish the two doctrines regarding the final destination of the soul/spirit (or man's essence). Some texts have the soul ascend to a higher sphere (the aeons of gods or stars); others have it ascend and merge with the Father (the One, Godhead). This is well illustrated by the *Apocryphon of John*: "The soul... through the intervention of the incorruptible one... is taken up to rest of the Aeons" (R 120: 26 26-31). This is "imperishable, eternal life" (R 119: 26-2), the traditional paradise, the ogdoad of the Hermetica (R 231) - a realm near but quite apart from the Godhead. In contrast *The Apocryphon of James* says "the soul is not saved without [the] spirit... I tell you this so you may know yourselves... blessed will they be whose ascend to the Father" (R35: 11-14).

The final unity is found also in other texts and in *Gospel of Philip* which has very fine ideas, including some remarkable analogies and homologies (R 139-160). Thus: "You saw the spirit, you became spirit. You saw Christ, you became Christ. You saw [the Father, you] shall become the Father... you see yourself" (R147 61 30-25). The Self-realization which is a kind of death (of the old illusory state of selves) and resurrection (to the higher true Self), should occur in life: "Those who say they will die first and then rise are in error. If they do not first receive the resurrection while they live, when they die they will receive nothing" (R153: 74 1-5). Only those "who know themselves will enjoy their possessions" (R155: 77-23). They shall know that they were not born and not die: "Blessed is he who is before he came into being; for he who is has been and will be" (R148: 65 11-12). If people do not attain this blessed Self-knowledge and liberation they remain in ignorance and darkness or even pass into lower forms: "you become horse or ass or bull... or another of the animals..." (R156: 80 6-7). Inner development proceeds with four qualities given in a lovely homology: "God's farming... has four elements - faith, hope, love and knowledge. Faith is earth, that in which we take root, hope is the water through which we are nourished; love is the wind through which we grow, knowledge then is the light through which we [ripen] (R156: 80 23-30). "Knowledge is freedom, if we know the truth, we shall find [its] fruit within us... It will bring our fulfillment" (R159: 85 11-14). Such perfected men, "it would be fitting for the gods to worship [them]" (R152: 73-4).

68. Even more interesting, perhaps, is *The Gospel of Thomas* which has 114 sayings of Jesus. Scholars had long suspected that there had been a collection of such sayings and the NT evangelists had drawn from that: it was termed *Quelle* and Q for short (see n 112). Although the Gospel is not thought by anyone to be the original Q (if there had been one), it came as a confirmation of the hypothesis. Many scholars have studied it in detail, but one wonders if they received the message(s).

In saying 12, Jesus advises: "Wherever you are, you are to go to James the righteous, for whose sake heaven and earth came into being". Thus, a Gospel purportedly written by the disciple Thomas, recommends another disciple and Jesus's brother, James, as the highest authority (once Jesus has gone). James was, of course, always one of the three Jesus had close by him, the other two being John and Peter.

Saying 1 is very striking: "Whoever finds the interpretation of these sayings will not experience death". Indeed, some of the sayings are obscure (51,60,74,81, etc) but even these can be given some 'interpretation' or other.

Ehrman examines and 'interpretes' some of these sayings (3,22,28,29,42,49,50, etc). Saying 114 states "every woman who will make herself male will enter the Kingdom of Heaven". Ehrman 'interpretes' this as indicating two levels of human kind: a lower one, represented by the weaker sex, woman, and a higher one, the male; the transformation is a rise in the level of being (Ehrman 2003: 63-4). We can, of course, indulge endlessly in intellectual 'interpretation' but this is really hardly different from doing crosswords. I think 'interpretation' here means real experience that

transforms one's being through various practices: prayer, fasting, restraint of desires, measure in activities, application of attention, generosity, exercise of the virtues and the like.

Thus 22, says "fashion eyes in place of an eye and hands in place of a hand... then you will enter the kingdom". This is obviously practical: one must practice so that these organs function without interference from the ego and to their fullest extent beyond mechanical habit, so that the eye does not choose or touch and go but actually rests on the objects and sees deeper than superficial forms. When one practices, then one can 'interpret'. Practice and experience hold for all sayings. (To the selected sayings below I append a brief comment in brackets.)

3) If you will not know yourselves you will dwell in poverty...

5) Recognize what is in thy sight and what is hidden from thee will become plain...

11) This heaven will pass away and the one above it... (Probably meaning that the visible sky and the invisible heaven (see §59,c, and the kingdom) are transient and man should aim at the Godhead above it all.)

50) We came from the light where the light came into being of its own accord... (John 1: the Logos and light (and life), the true light which lighteth every man coming into the world § 64.)

67) Jesus said: 'It is I who am the light above them all. It is I who am the all. From me did the all come forth and into me did the all extend. Split a piece of wood, and I am there. Lift up the stone and you will find me there'. (This is pantheism and more since "he" is above all as well as within all: it is both immanence and transcendence.)

106) When you make the two one, you will become the Sons of Man and when you say 'Mountain move away' it will move away. (Here we have inner unity as the defining feature of the Son of Man and the full power of faith (§ 62) which moves mountains.

111) The heavens and the earth will be rolled up in your presence and the one who lives from the Living One will not see death... Whoever finds himself is superior to the world (cf 12 above about James).

All this should be enough to show the variety of doctrines attributed to Christ. It can not be maintained that only the NT and the theologies based thereon convey Christ's teaching.

NEOPLATONISTS

69. Some think that Plotinos (203-270) was a Christian and that the three 'states' *hupostaseis* ὑποστάσεις (plural) of his One Monad (=Absolute) are the three persons of the Christian Trinity (Matsoukas 1993: 250). He was not a Christian¹²⁰. It would be truer to say that the Neoplatonism of Plotinos had an impact on Church Fathers like Basil of Caesaria and Gregory of Nyssa (both 4th cent), Augustine of Hippo (354-430), and others. Little is known of Plotinos' life, beyond what Porphyry says in the biography of his teacher, and nothing of his origins, except that he was born in Lycopolis, South Egypt. He was in Alexandria as a young adult, studied with Ammonius Sakkas for 11 years, then tried to reach India but was unsuccessful and eventually settled in Rome where he set up his school. His lectures there were open to a wider audience while his writings were confined to his closer disciples. His teaching was free of any Egyptian influence¹²¹ (unlike Plutarch and others) transcending all Platonist and Aristotelian philosophy and stressing that only actual experience of mystical union in contemplation /meditation (such as he had several times) would give true understanding – not dialectical discussions and rigid terms and formulas. His teaching was compiled/edited by his student Porphyry in 6 books of 9 chapters (hence *Enneads*) which make 54 units, each one dealing with a related but distinct issue.

Plotinos is as uncompromising a monist as Śaṅkara¹²². In this he transcended Plato abandoning several of the older Master's doctrines and giving new meaning to some others, although he followed him generally. He agrees with Plato that there is no undeserved suffering; it is punishment for sin(s) in a past life¹²³. A major difference is in the creation of the universe: in Plotinos there is not the purpose and planning of Plato's Creator in *Timaios* (even though Plotinos refers to it often: III 2.1.20-6; IV 3.9.12-20; etc.) but creation emanates and proceeds out of divine

aphthonia ἀφθονία ‘generosity, non-envy, ungrudgingness’ (IV 8.6.12-3, etc.) and almost through inaction, as it were (III 2.1.34-45). Everything emanates from the One ἐν ἡν, or the Good *agathon* (or Father) and is all the time within the One while it is pervaded by It¹²⁴.

In V 1.6 we find a description of the emanation of creation (here: *perilampusis* ‘radiance’ like sunlight) in three successive levels or waves not of time or space but of being, power and substance; However, this needs to be supplemented by details from other sections. Thus in the beginning there is only the supremely perfect One, the seminal power in all (III 8.10.1). Like the *tad-ekam* ‘that One’ in RV X. 129, the Plotinian One is beyond being and non-being, beyond all and everything: “If you think of That One as Intelligence/Mind or as God – It is greater” (VI. 9. 6. 13). From this arises the Intelligence *nous*¹²⁵ which contemplates the One. But in this contemplation, which is a kind of reversion of energy (*epistrophē* επιστροφή ‘return’), Intelligence is unable to see the full perfection of the One and so fragments it into reflections which are the various Forms/Ideas *eidos* εἶδος (VI 7.15.10-24) within itself. Then Soul is generated by a similar process: it is produced by the word and deed in Intelligence just as the latter arises by the word and deed in the One. But we must remember that it all happens through spontaneous *aphthonia*, not deliberate doing as it were. The word is now obscure in the Soul being further removed from the One. Nonetheless the Soul produces the ‘sensible world’ κόσμον αἰσθητόν within itself in imitation of the intelligible world above (III 7.11.20ff). Thus arise *hule* ‘matter’, the image of the Soul, the final stage without energy for further devolution, the non-being (but not absolutely so) which is illusion (II 5.5.22)¹²⁶; it is the ultimate state, itself having nothing of the Good and so being necessary evil *kakon* κακόν (I 8.7.17ff). The soul enters into all the material bodies which are its products (III 4.1 and V 2.2). These then are the *hupostaseis*, three primary and one secondary (=matter), though strictly speaking the One is not a *hupostasis* since it is ‘under’ *hupo* no other ‘state’ *stasis* but the primal cause of all in that all are generated from itself not from some other entity or from nothing, and all merge in it¹²⁷.

70. According to Porphyry, Plotinos died saying to his student doctor Eustochius “Try to raise the god in yourselves to the Divine in the universe” (*Life of Plotinus*, 2). This exhortation was from his own experience: “Many times rising from the body into myself – outside all and inside myself – I see a great and wonderful beauty... I live the finest life, united with the divine.(...) Then from pure Intelligence [*nous*] I descend to the thinking-mind [*logismos*] and wonder how and why I descend” (IV 8.1). The reason for the descent is that the soul is too involved with things of the sensible world and too impure with passions – all accretions (I 1.12.14); consequently it has little strength to remain permanently in that great beauty and open out to an even finer state, the union with the One.

The soul descends into the material world at least once as the Cosmos goes through recurrence, i.e. repeated cycles of generation and dissolution (IV 3.12; also V 7.3.13ff)¹²⁸. The idea of recurrence goes back long before the Stoics (§34) to Anaximander (*GPA* §10). Like Plato and others, Plotinos tries to answer the question “Why the fall from knowledge and bliss to imperfection and suffering (or, what is the cause of forgetfulness and evil)?”: he says that the soul remains with its higher aspect in the upper realm but must, with its lower part (IV 8.8), enter the corporal entity to govern it; there is also the suggestion that it “gets tired” of the lofty community of souls and seeks a separate existence, where (in the realm of embodiments) it loses strength and memory (IV 8.3-4). But in the next section 5, all this happens “by natural law”, or, as Plato says, because God sowed thus the souls¹²⁹; all rather implausible, but containing an element of truth, perhaps.

The ascent/return starts with the natural desire for the Good (I 1.5.27) and an impulse of memory (*mnēmē* μνήμη) of the intelligible realm, since the soul “becomes what it remembers” (IV 4.2-3). The goal is the Good and First Principle of all (I 3.1) and the means is, first, the exercise of virtue (I 2.1.5ff), then philosophy with dialectic as its main instrument (I 3.4-6): here wisdom enters and with the other virtues brings about perfection (I 3.6.17-24). The first stage is *katharsis* ‘purification’ so that the soul will be no longer identified with the body and its experiences (=‘temperance’ *sōphrosunē*) but will remain apart unafraid of death (=‘courage’ *andreia*) and be ruled by reason and intelligence (=‘justice’ *dikaiousunē*: I 2.3,6 and I 6.6). With this stage the accretion are shed (I 1.12; I 6.7.1-14), passions are calmed (I 2.2-5) and the soul embarks on dialectic and

philosophy with contemplation of the Intelligence or the One in quietude¹³⁰ (I 2.6-7; I 3.4-6). Thus it obtains wisdom *sophia* which is, in the end, the very substance of Intelligence (V 8.4.18-39); this is a powerful state and, presumably because he had reached it, Plotinos scorned the widespread preoccupation with spirits, deities and magic, saying “The gods should come to me, not I to them” (Porphyry *Life...*, 10). So the true philosopher contemplates the Ideas and Intelligence almost as “a sensible object” (*aisthēton*: VI 5.7, and 9.5) and abandoning separate identity and all duality merges into one Being and one Illumination (V 5.7; VI 5.7, 12). He thus knows and experiences the One as oneself being One (VI 9.10.15-22).

The final phrase of the *Enneads* is “the flight of the Alone to the Alone” *phugē monou pros monon*. From the word *mono-* come our terms ‘monism’ and ‘monist’.

71. Plotinos left two important disciples. Amelius Gentilianus and Porphyry. Amelius was the senior one but rather pedantic and inclined towards ritual. He had the same tendencies as Porphyry generally but postulated – most unusual for a Neoplatonist – a Form of Evil, regarded the ideal Forms as infinite in number and abandoned the recurrence of cosmic cycles. Other Neoplatonists ignored such notions. The most notable of them were Porphyry and Iamblichos. Both of them, incidentally, wrote a *Life of Pythagoras* thus showing that Pythagorean traditions were still popular and influential.

Porphyry (=Porphyrios: c232-c305) studied first with Longinos in Athens and later for only 6 years with Plotinos. He wrote the *Life of Plotinos*, edited his *Enneads* and was a populariser of his master’s teaching. Several of his works have survived. *On Abstention from living creatures* (addressed to a fellow student Castricius) condemns animal sacrifice and encourages vegetarianism. His letter *To Marcella* is addressed to his wife and advocates the moral life. In *On the Nymphs’ Cave in the Odyssey* he attempts to interpret this myth as an allegory for the world. Very influential (and fully extant) was his *Eisagōge* ‘Introduction’ to Aristotle’s *Categories*; it provided a focus for scholastic disputes between Nominalism and Realism. But he was interested also in metaphysics, as is shown by his *Philosophy from Oracles*, the letter to the Egyptian priest Anebo (to which Iamblichos wrote a reply) and *On the Soul’s Return*¹³¹: all this survives only in fragments. Another important work is the *Sentences towards the Intelligible World* wherein Plotinian statements are given rigid formulations: thus no 22 reaffirms the idea that Intelligence contains all Reality, no 32 systematizes the 4 classes of Plotinos’ virtues. He removed Plotinos’ absolute distinctions between the Hupostasis and in his *Misellaneous Inquiries* the Soul is presented as an ‘intelligible’ entity – not distinct hupostasis. He criticized Christianity in *Against Christians* but accepted that Jesus was a righteous man who went to heaven¹³². He was reserved about *theurgy* *θεουργία*, which, it was claimed, could bring a man’s union with gods through the performance of the appropriate ritual. He thought that such rituals could, at best, purify the soul’s coverings and so facilitate the seeker to pursue contemplation.

Theurgy had, however, primary importance for Iamblichos of Apamea (died c 326) who was Porphyry’s student for only a short period. Apart from his *Life of Pythagoras* his other substantial and influential work is *On the Mysteries* which was his reply to Porphyry’s *Letter to Abemo* (now both are printed together); no other writings have survived. He had a rigidly hierarchical cosmos in which no soul could leave the level to which it belonged thus rejecting the Plotinian and Platonist view that the soul could transmigrate from humans to animals and the reverse. In fact, later Neoplatonists did not believe that animals had souls and interpreted the Platonist doctrine of transmigration as meaning that humans acquired animal-like characteristics or that the souls entered animals but retained their ‘humanity’. As (Jews and) Christians had their Scriptures, the Neoplatonists turned to the *Chaldean Oracles*, turgid and obscure verses, put together in late 2nd cent CE¹³³. For Iamblichos and the later Athenian School these Oracles (and the *Orphic Rhapsodies*)¹³⁴ were supreme authorities (at times higher than Plato). Plotinos had held that theurgy could not reach the One nor the Intelligence and Porphyry followed him. Iamblichos reserved this on the basis that “everything is in everything but in each thing appropriately to its nature”¹³⁵. This created a ‘sympathy’ linking all things in the material world to the celestial sphere; thus minerals, plants and animals contained the powers of the Sungod, Moongod and other gods and the magician could put these forces to use. But *On the Mysteries* shows also a stress on the need for humility and divine grace.

CONCLUSION

72. Apart from the preceding developments in philosophy, there were significant developments also in the sciences and technology. The use of mathematics and empirical research had been known even before Aristotle. The Hellenistic age saw their further application in various fields, as GER Lloyd (1973) amply attests. Euclid flourished c 300 BC and left us his *Elements* of geometry. A little later Aristarchos of Samos (310-230) wrote a treatise on the size of the earth and the moon and put the earth in orbit round the sun¹³⁶. Then, at Syracuse (Sicily), Archimides (287-212) established the value of π and did much original work in engineering, optics, hydrostatics, etc. At about the same time Eratosthenes of Cyrene, librarian at Alexandria's Mouseion (=Library) calculated the length of the earth's circumference by measuring the angle cast by a stick ($1\frac{1}{3}^\circ$) on the day of the summer solstice. There was also progress in the technology of warfare as torsion catapults were improved immensely and the calibration of all machines advanced so as to obtain accuracy. The great progress in medicine and biology should also be mentioned as Herophilus of Calchedon extended the knowledge of the brain, the eye, the digestive and reproductive organs while Erasistratos of Ceos made fresh discoveries in the digestive and vascular systems. (The Physician Galen and the astronomer Ptolemy were mentioned in §47, above).

Philosophical developments did not much help scientific (and technological) research; in fact, often (pseudo-)science was yoked to promote the ends of astrology, magic and theurgy (as in §71)¹³⁷. On the other hand, as knowledge became specialized and the rich and powerful regarded technology inferior to theoretical investigations, the separation of these pursuits seemed inevitable. By the end of the third century CE the Epicurean and Stoic movements (who had absorbed the Cyrenaics and the Cynics respectively) gave way to Neoplatonism; even Neopythagoreanism was no longer distinct. All these movements will be rediscovered later (especially in the Italian Renaissance) but Neoplatonism gained strength and spread. Schools were set up in Rome, Athens, Pergamum, Apamea and Alexandria, differing in details but agreeing in their main direction of thought. Many are the figures that continued in this direction including the emperor Julian (332-363), who sought to reinstate paganism as the official religion of the Empire instead of Christianity, which Constantine had supported since 313¹³⁸. Proklos (=Proclus), the Head of the Athenian School (=old Academy) is the last significant figure: among other innovations, following Iamblichos, he introduced into the First Hypostasis of the One the Unities *henads* born of the One and forming a link with Intelligence and multiplicity so that thereafter the creation manifests in triads¹³⁹. In 529 Justinian closed the School (then under Damaskios) and seized its considerable property.

Christianity was triumphant. Naturally philosophical thought acquired a new perspective – that of the Creative Being and the created creature. *In principio creavit Deus caelum et terram* 'In the beginning God created heaven and earth' (*Genesis* 1.1): and this out of *nothing*. Hereafter, in the West, the language of philosophical discussion changes into Latin.

Note

¹ μη ἄλλο τι τέλος ἐκ τῆς περὶ μετεώρων γνώσεως εἶτε κατὰ συναφὴν λεγομένων εἶτε αυτοτελῶς νομίζειν εἶναι ἢπερ αταραξίαν και πίστιν βέβαιον.

I shall hereafter give as often as possible the names as in Greek. There is a kind of schizophrenia regarding this matter. That the Latin spelling might have been prevalent at one time is understandable but, surely, one can't write *skeptic* (as Americans do) but not Herakleitos. Where a word like 'cynic' (=kuniko-) has now such wide usage, it must be kept; so also names like Epicurus.

² The modern sense of cynic-al 'sarcastic, insensitive, uncaring' only partly reflects the ancient state which usually entailed abnegation, plain living, irreverence to social norms, generosity and wit.

³ λόγος εστὶν ὁ τὸ τί ἦν ἢ ἐστὶ δηλῶν DL VI,3.

⁴ μόνην τε ορθὴν πολιτείαν εἶναι τὴν ἐν κόσμῳ. With this one should compare the Indic *subhāṣita vasudhaiva kuṭumbakam* 'the whole world is my family'.

⁵ For more details on the Cynics see Branham and Goulet-Caze 1996 and Dudley 1937. Th. McEvilley thinks there was interaction and influence between Indic Paśupatas and Greek Cynics. Following Ingalls (1962) he finds a strong link in the "seeking of dishonour" (2002: 225-236).

Indeed, with the Paśupatas the devotee was to remove his ego by provoking contempt and even abuse from other people. "He who is despised lies happy", he quotes the *Paśupata Sūtra* III, 3. But in Greece it was the Cynics who despised normal social life and abused others biting with sarcasm like a snarling dog (DL VI passim). Mc Evilley cites various passages from Indic texts to establish parallels. Here is one from *Bhāgavata Purāna* IV, 2: "Like a madman he haunts horrid cemeteries, surrounded with ghosts and evil spirits. He is naked, his hair in disorder... and wears as his only ornament a necklace of skulls and human bones". How McEvilley can possibly apply this description to Antisthenes, Diogenes or Krates is a profound mystery. Moreover, the dates do not tally. If Alexander's meeting with Diogenes is factual (and it could be in a less anecdotal form), it happened before the King went off to his conquests. But by then Antisthenes and Diogenes had formed their way of life.

⁶ Aristippos enjoyed the favours of courtesan Laïs and to those who criticized him for this he said: "I have Laïs, not she me: it is mastery over pleasures that is best, not abstinence from them" (DL II, 75).

⁷ After M. Ficino's death in 1499, the Platonic Academy in Florence moved to B. Rucelai's villa and the members met in its gardens (*orti*): the Academy came to be known as *Orti Oricellarii*. The Epicureans were neither the first nor the last to meet in gardens

⁸ The underlined sentence is *-nullam eruditionem esse duxit nisi quae beatae vitae disciplinam iuaret*. It was Cicero also who saw that *De Rerum Natura* the poem of Titus Lucretius Carus (91-51 BC), got published after the poet's death and so preserved probably the fullest exposition of Epicureanism.

⁹ Other less important sources are found in Long 1986, ch2, §1, end.

¹⁰ It should be quite clear that there is no soul after death. The atoms may reform into a soul again but it will be a different one carrying no memories at all of any previous embodiment. Lucr argues extensively against the soul's survival, III 417-829.

¹¹ The discovery of the nervous system, with which the spread of the irrational *anima* may be said to correspond, was discovered by the physicians Herophilos and Erasistratos soon after the death of Epicurus (Annas 1992:20-6). Alkmaion, Plato and Galen placed intelligence in the head, not the chest; but they were a minority.

¹² The word for destiny is *heimarmenē* εἰμαρμένη and for necessity *anagkē* ἀνάγκη.

¹³ Aristotle had used the image of a clean writing tablet, *On the Soul* III, 4, 430a1.

¹⁴ Cf also Lucr IV 499, LS 16A.

¹⁵ For 'clear image' the term used is *enargeia* ἐνάργεια feminine, or *enargēma* ἐνάργημα neuter.

¹⁶ In *De Natura Deorum* I, 44, Cicero says that Epicurus was the first to use this term in this sense. Epicurus' language is difficult and in places obscure. He uses his terms consistently but gives new twists of meaning to many words and his syntax is complicated.

¹⁷ (Hdt 38-9; Lucr I 159-264, II 294-307). It is curious that Epicurus does not examine the possibility that some internal change could alter the world in some way.

¹⁸ We should not imagine, as some scholars (of the left) have done, that Epicurus was a great scientist who

had anticipated Galileo. a) He probably had other mathematical considerations related to his minimal subdivisions of atoms and time; b) the claim applies to atoms only, not composite bodies; c) uniform acceleration is not even hinted at, the atoms ever moving at the same speed.

Bear in mind also that Aristotle had criticized Demokritos for not explaining why the atoms moved and collided, except that it had always been so (*Physics* 8.1.252a 32). It is possible that Epicurus thought to circumvent this difficulty and, since the atoms had weight, he proposed the “downward” motion as something natural.

¹⁹ The Latin verb is *declinare* ‘deviate, swerve’ and the noun *declinatio*. In Gk the term is *paregklisis* παρέγκλισις.

²⁰ In this paragraph 129, two adjectives are used : *suggenikon* συγγενικόν ‘kindred, belonging to the family or species’ and *sumphuton* σύμφυτον ‘inherent, innate, belonging to our nature’.

²¹ φιλοσοφίας τιμιώτερον ὑπάρχει φρόνησις, ἐξ ἧς αἱ λοιπαὶ πᾶσαι πεφύκασιν ἀρεταί.

²² *makariotēs* ‘bliss’ is the closest to Vedāntic *ānanda*.

²³ Pleasure in rest, or static, is a curious concept. Experience shows that pleasure, after pain/suffering has gone, is intense but then gradually diminishes and one is left in a tranquil but rather neutral state until some new cycle starts. To me all this Epicurean talk about pleasure sounds rather theoretical.

Plutarch’s criticism in his Reply to Colotes and A pleasant life according to Epicureans is not possible is devastating. The second essay ends with this: “Not content with removing all hope of help from heaven and all bestowal with grace ... [Epicurus] kills the love of learning in our soul and the love of honour in our heart and thus constricts our nature and casts it down into a narrow unclean space ... where the soul joys only with the flesh”.

²⁴ McEvilly (or his printer) commits an enormous blunder when he cites two passages from Athenaeus (where Epicurus says he scorns beauty and virtue unless they provide pleasure) as though they come from the Sutta Nipāta. In any case Buddha nowhere promotes the pursuit of *hēdonē*.

²⁵ Man’s chief part, according to Chrysippos, is part of “right Reason which pervades all things and is identical with Zeus, ruler of all that is” (DL VII, 88). And Epictetus: “You are a portion of God; you have a part of him in yourself ... You can carry God round with you, wretch, and you don’t know it” (*Discourses* II, 8, 11).

²⁶ See also Sharples 1999: 20, 45, 67 and Sandbach 1975: 31-2, 82-4. It would be quite legitimate to see in Stoic *pneuma* and Indic *prāṇa* a parallel but illegitimate to see an influence from India to Greece (or vice versa). The words *āēr* and *pneuma* were in use in this sense even in Anaximander’s time (GPA §11) and frequently thereafter. So we must assume an independent native development in both cultures with an origin perhaps in Proto-Indoeuropean thought.

²⁷ Sharples, 67; Long 1986: 274: the image is attributed to Chrysippos.

²⁸ For a detailed discussion, Long 1986: 279-282; Sharples 68-71. For a more extensive discussion see Long 1996, ch 10.

²⁹ *Quiquid facere te potest bonum, tecum est. Quid tibi opus est ut sis bonus? Velle.* Brief and succinct.

³⁰ The Gk phrase: φυσικῶς νοεῖται δίκαιόν τι και αγαθόν *phusikōs noeitai dikaion ti kai agathon*.

³¹ See unsuccessful attempts at explication by, e.g. Long 1986, ch 4, v, 1, and Sharples, p21.

³² ‘Thought’ is *skepsis* σκέψις and ‘assent’ *sugkatathesis* συγκατάθεσις.

³³ The idea of ‘fire’ as a Cosmic principle is another probable loan from the Ephesian philosopher: see §34 below. (Cf GPA §12-14).

³⁴ See GPA 37 and notes thereat, where affinities with Nyāya are mentioned.

³⁵ All terms from SVF II. 369 from Simplicius. SVF II. 371 from Plotinus gives the same list.

³⁶ For further reading see Long 1986, ch 3, IV, 4 and references.

³⁷ For these arguments see Kneale 1962: 172-4; also Mates 1961: 75-85.

³⁸ This view influenced many thinkers and poets from antiquity to our days. See e.g. Virgil’s *Georgic* IV. 221ff: “Indeed God permeates all lands and the expanses of sea and lofty heaven; from him... everything, when born, derives its delicate life and to him all things return again when they are dissolved – and death has no place – but living still they fly up to increase the number of stars and still rise to the high heaven.” See also Wordsworth: *Lines Composed a Few Miles above Tintern Abbey*, 93ff.

³⁹ The idea is repeated in DL VII.143: here the words are *logikon* λογικόν ‘rational’, *empsuchon* ἐμψυχον,

‘animate’ and *noeron* νοερόν ‘intelligent’ *zōon* ζῶον ‘living being’.

⁴⁰ See note 31 above and detailed discussion in Long 1986, ch 2(p35ff) tracing the Herakleitan influence up to Marcus Aurelius.

⁴¹ But see also Plato *Phaidon* 79D, *Politikos* [=Statesman] 272 E. The process recalls also the Sphere of Empedocles (KRS 358)

⁴² A stunning parallel of Agni being in water in the Vedic Tradition (submarine fire etc.) See especially, Apām Napāt, the brilliant germ of fire, sporting in the waters in RV II.35. And Agni is ‘father of gods’ in I.69.I

⁴³ Full discussion in Hahm 1977, chs 5-6. Cf RV X.190.3 where the Creator formed *yathāpūrvam* ‘as previously’ heaven and earth etc, i.e. in repetition of the cycle.

⁴⁴ Cf various images for the same process in the Vedic Tradition: breathing in RV X.129.2; spider spreading and withdrawing its web in *Muṇḍaka Up* I.1.7; etc.

⁴⁵ δαίμων: hence *eudaimonia* ‘happiness’, more accurately ‘being in the protection/guidance of a good spirit’.

⁴⁶ For various citations see Sharples, 106.

⁴⁷ Mainly Cicero in Bk 2 of his *De Natura Deorum*.

⁴⁸ αὐτάρκης ἔσται καὶ ἡ ἀρετὴ πρὸς εὐδαιμονίαν. But according to DL, Chrusippos held that virtue *aretē* ἀρετή can be lost – a curious, exceptional view (VII.127) Note too that, later, Panaitios and Poseidonios will regard virtue as insufficient for *eudaimonia* and will add health, strength and some income (ibid 128).

⁴⁹ *Homologoumenōs tēi phusei zēn* ὁμολογουμένως τῇ φύσει ζῆν is the basic, central motto (DL V 87). Sharples cites two more Stoics, Diogenes of Babylon and Antipater to the same effect (p103). Here one may recall Bhagavad Gītā III.33: “Even the man of knowledge lives in agreement with his nature; beings follow nature (*prakṛtiṃ yānti bhūtāni*)...”

⁵⁰ See Long’s excellent discussion (1996: 134-55) showing the highly rational basis for stoic ethics.

⁵¹ *Cum hac scientia prodeunt; instituta nascuntur*: EM 121.6

⁵² This is ably treated in Sandbach 1975 who follows Hierokles, a Stoic of the 2nd cent CE, regarded as “a holy and serious man” (pp 34, 170ff).

One can recognize here the 5 circles or levels of expanding *buddhi* (the organ of discrimination and reasoning) in the later Indian schools: *vyaṣṭi* ‘individual’; *kula* family’; *jāti* ‘society’; *loka* ‘world (of man)’; *samaṣṭi* universe.

⁵³ All these duties remind of the Indic divisions of duties into *nitya*, *naimittika* etc.

⁵⁴ Here we recall Bhagavat Gītā III 35: *śreyān svadharmo viguṇaḥ paradharmāt svanuṣṭhitāt* etc: ‘Better one’s own duty [= *kathēkon*, *officium*] destitute of merit than that of another well-done...’ See also n 49.

⁵⁵ The cosmopolitan aspect went back to the Cynics, §5, above. For an extensive study of Stoic Republics see Schofield 1991.

⁵⁶ See Sharples pp126-7. We may be justly proud of our ‘rights’ and ‘freedoms’ today but, even ignoring the many tyrannical regimes of the 20th century, what real freedom have people even in so-called democratic countries when they are landless and, despite high qualifications, jobless, while others enjoy fantastic riches?

⁵⁷ Thomas Jefferson certainly did in the USA when they were still a British colony but he and other abolitionists were branded as “enemies of their country” (Peterson 1975: 545).

⁵⁸ We saw some Stoic parallels with Indic thought in notes 26, 42, 44, 49, 52, 53. To these we should add the divine presence in man as described by Aurelius, and Epictetus and Seneca and as found in the RV (I.164.21;etc), the Upaniṣads, etc, in the Vedic Tradition. Mc Evilly points out all such parallels (ch 21). He realizes that there are important differences like reincarnation and Self-realization which are totally absent in Stoicism (and Epicureanism and Scepticism). However in chapter 25 he can’t avoid his theme of diffusion and cross-influences (pp631ff). However, for once he does not specify which way the influences run and implies that each culture developed independently (632-3).

⁵⁹ See especially Burkert 1965 showing that Cicero followed Philon’s Skepticism and despite his affiliation to Platonism and Stoicism retained this allegiance alone in Rome.

⁶⁰ LS 1F and Long 1986, ch3, §1 (p137). Aristokles is earlier than Laertius and most probably more reliable.

⁶¹ *phusei* φύσει: by essential, true nature.

⁶² So Sharples 29-30; also to LS vol 1, pp 16-18 and Bett 1994, 137-81.

⁶³ In Sextos’ *Purhōneioi Hupotupōseis* ‘Outlines of Purrhonism’ usually abbreviated to *PH* 2.14-16 and *Pros*

Mathematikous 'Against Professors' usually M 7.29-39. See also Brunschwig 1988 and a discussion of the *kritērion* in Greek philosophy generally in Striker 1974.

⁶⁴ See Tarrant 1985, Hankinson 1995 and Fladerer 1996 for all sides of the discussion. Sharples argues (1996:109) that Antiochos returned to the concepts current in the Academy at the time of Polemo (4th head and teacher of the Stoic Zeno) rather than Plato.

⁶⁵ See also Striker 1983.

⁶⁶ I would have thought these are rather examples of natural guidance, not 'affections' or 'emotions'.

⁶⁷ But in the process McEvilley has collected many parallels from Greek and Indic sources, some of which are most useful.

⁶⁸ Note the value-judgment terms "amateur" and "professional" by the 'professional' writers-editors. In fact both Cicero and Seneca are far more interesting than Antiochus, Albinus or Ptolemy and many modern 'professionals' depending on one's point of view.

⁶⁹ For the concept eclecticism and its history, see Donini 1988.

⁷⁰ For extensive and instructive studies of the different figures and their thought, see Dillon 1977 and Mansfeld 1989.

⁷¹ See especially Frede 1981.

⁷² For a detailed discussion see Glucker 1988. For an all-round view, Powel 1995.

⁷³ *De Aeternitate Mundi* 'On the Eternity of the World': Philon's works are given by Latin titles even though written in Greek.

⁷⁴ *Quaestiones et solutiones in Genesim* 'Questions and solutions in Genesis'.

⁷⁵ C.H. Dodd (1985:54-73) discusses Philon's affinities with John's Gospel. See also Dillon 1977:176-180).

⁷⁶ 352A: τὴν τοῦ πρώτου καὶ καὶ κυρίου καὶ νοητοῦ γνῶσιν. In his essay *On moral Virtue* the soul itself is non-rational but it has a part receptive of reason and contains Nous 'Intelligence' which is fully rational (441F ff).

⁷⁷ See the discussion in Donini 1988b.

⁷⁸ See BU VI.2.2, 9-16; CU IV.15.5-6; V.10.1-7.

⁷⁹ All the available evidence is presented with full references in Kazanas 2003 (section VII).

⁸⁰ Some writers suggest there was no Gnostic movement as such and the terms, "Gnostic" and "Gnosticism" should be scrapped (Pagels 2003: 46; Williams 1996, *passim*). But the terms are very useful even if there was no unified 'Gnostic' movement as such. There undoubtedly were groups following a Christian teaching with a main doctrine about 'Gnosis', i.e. knowledge of Oneself and of God at once. Even Clement (Alexandrus) who belongs to the mainstream/prevalent Christianity writes of *gnōsis* in his *Stromateis* (e.g. 6.7, end). Jonas' *The Gnostic Religion* (1963) implied there was such a religion, but this is untrue. His work is now superseded since the Nag Hammadii texts had not been published then. Otherwise, it is a good introduction.

⁸¹ R stands for J. M. Robinson's edition of the translations of all the texts in the Nag Hammadi Library, as are called the papyrus manuscripts found at that place in Egypt in 1945. The number after R is the page in the 1990 3rd revised edition.

⁸² *Migration of Abraham* 1.44. But in Philon's *Account of the World's Creation* 46, man first comes into existence as an image of God, i.e. an object of thought incorporeal (*Genesis* 1.26), whereas in *Genesis* 2.7 man was fashioned of clay and with God's breath – a composite creature both mortal and immortal. However, Philon disregards that in 1.28.9 God tells the couple to multiply and fill the earth and eat (only) herbs and fruit and have dominion over all other living creatures on earth: this is hardly incorporeal.

⁸³ Cited in the original Greek in Lilla 1971:189.

⁸⁴ For excellent background see Fowden 1986. The Hermetic texts will be denoted as CH I, CH II etc and SF I, SF II etc. The CH stands for *Corpus Hermeticum* and the Greek original is that of Nock & Festugière which has also the SF= Stobaeus Fragments. But *The Discourse on the Eighth and Ninth* will be RCH as it is only in Robinson (n 81 above). Otherwise, a good English translation of all CH is by Copenhaver 1992.

⁸⁵ See Kazanas 2003 and Fowden 1986.

⁸⁶ See similar exercises in the *Gospel of the Egyptians* (R 210) and *Marsanes* (R 467).

⁸⁷ Some of the tractates are highly devotional, of the *bhakti* type.

⁸⁸ This is parallel to Vedānta or the Upaniṣads where the Absolute *brahman* does not create but creation

comes with one or other form of Saguṇa Brahman (Prajāpati, Brahmā, etc). Some scholars (e.g. Roukema 1999) claim that this idea of one High God and one Creator god comes from Plato. This is totally false. There is no 'higher' and 'lower' god anywhere in Plato. In *Timaios* there is only the 'Creator' *Demiurge* 'δημιουργός'. See also §66.

⁸⁹ All this too resembles very much Upaniṣadic descriptions: e.g. man's emergence and descent in *Bṛh Up* I 4, 1-7. And man's attachment in the *Maitrī Up* III 2.

⁹⁰ This is also the reward of good, pious people in the Vedic texts (Upaniṣads etc) who do not reach full Self-realization or liberation *mokṣa* : they attain to *Brahmaloka* as long as the *punya* lasts (see *Muṇḍaka Up* I 2 5-7; *Bṛh VI* 2 15; etc).

⁹¹ *CH* 1.7: *theōrō en tōi noi mou to phōs* 'I see in my [own] mind the light'. In *CH* XIII. 22 where Hermes (the Tutor) confirms – "You have known in mind yourself and our Father".

⁹² See the parallel in the Upaniṣads where the gods are said not to like to lose people who they consider their 'cattle' and initially hinder their efforts for *mokṣa* (*Bṛh Up* 1.4.40). For similarities and differences between Plato and the Upaniṣads see Kazanas 2004.

⁹³ This is argued out at length with full references in Kazanas 2003. Surprisingly, McEvilley does not spot this, though he expatiates on the affinities between Plotinus and Vedānta.

⁹⁴ Note well that it is some "children of the kingdom" and not sinners! The phrase "outer darkness..." is repeated in *Mth* 22.13 and 25.30. It is strange, surely, that God condemns souls, his own spark or breath to eternal torment. Note also that Geena was a valley near Jerusalem where of old sacrifices (with children too) were offered to Moloch, but later there was a constant fire and rubbish was burnt there. It was regarded as an accursed place.

⁹⁵ Christ also tells the rich man who asks that if he wants eternal life he must keep the commandments of the law (*Mth* 19.17).

⁹⁶ Matthew and Luke say that Christ was born of a virgin but do not say that he existed before his birth; John never mentions the virgin birth but says that Christ existed before (1.18 'he was in the bosom of the father; 8.58 Jesus says 'Before Abraham came to be, I am'). The Ebionites rejected both notions.

⁹⁷ This god actually created evil on earth (*OT: Amos* 3.6). In *Joshua* 6, God tells the Israelites to murder men, women and children once in Jericho!

⁹⁸ This is termed 'docetism' from GK *dokein* δοκεῖν 'appear, seem'. Many Christian sects were 'docetic', i.e. adhered to the view that Christ only seemed to have a human body and attributes.

⁹⁹ This has been called 'catholic', 'mainstream', 'orthodox', 'proto-orthodox' etc, but all such terms are misleading: there was nothing 'catholic' or 'orthodox' about it. It simply prevailed for various reasons.

¹⁰⁰ For details see Ehrman 2003, 2004 and Koester 1990.

¹⁰¹ He was son of a Lutheran priest and for 40 years the professor of Hebrew and Oriental languages in Hamburg. He and the others mentioned here were not atheist or irreligious men: they simply questioned the veracity and reliability of the *NT*.

¹⁰² That Jesus existed is attested by three Romans c 100-120 CE: Tacitus *Annals* XV.44.2; Pliny in a letter to emperor Trajan and Suetonius in his *Life of Claudius*; also the Jew Josephus in his *Jewish Antiquities* 18.63.

¹⁰³ The *Church History* of Eusebius (bishop of Caesarea) in early 4th cent is hardly reliable on these issues. The tradition had become thoroughly confused by the mid-second cent (Johnson 1990:22).

¹⁰⁴ Johnson 1990:26. More such differences are given.

¹⁰⁵ In Luke there are no 3 wise men visiting, and no travel to Egypt. Mark and John say nothing about Jesus' birth and early years. Matthew's Sermon on the Mount (the beatitudes, ch 5) is in Luke a Sermon on a plain (6.17).

¹⁰⁶ John is silent on this.

¹⁰⁷ See Poncé 1997:215

¹⁰⁸ Here, one readily recognizes the *brahmaloka* of the Upaniṣads or the lower heavenly state in Hermetica (§52 and n 90).

¹⁰⁹ In view of these statements in the texts of the *NT* it is very curious that early texts, termed 'gnostic', because they deal more directly with gnōsis, have been declared heretical.

¹¹⁰ See the books *Gnosis and Faith* (Roukema 1998) and *Beyond Belief...* (Pagels 2003).

111 τούτο δὲ τὸ γένος οὐκ εκπορεύεται...See also Lk 17.5ff.

112 In my view, in Christ's teaching, knowledge, faith and love are very similar, though distinct, and indicate realization or consciousness, not through mere intellectual activity or emotional energy, but a fine force expressed with one's whole being. Knowledge is for the intellectual who reasons and discriminates; faith is for the active man who does works; love is for the emotional man of devotion.

Various scholars and schools attempt to reconstruct the Q-gospel (Q is short for *Quelle*, German for 'source') which supposedly is an original collection of Sayings of Jesus and on this are based the sayings in Mark, Luke and Matthew. Such collections undoubtedly existed as is indicated by the *Gospel of Thomas* (see §68, below) but it is highly doubtful that anything scholars now concoct will help our understanding of Jesus' teaching and proto-Christianity; it will rather take us even further away. (For a view favouring the Q-hypothesis see Koester 1990, Vasiliades 2005.)

113 This is a re-enactment of man's creation in *Genesis* 2.7. Similar is Ram-god Khnum's creation of man in Egypt: he moulds clay on his potters' wheel, then breathes life into the figure.

114 The Nag Hammadi Library contains one fragment of Plato's *Republic* (588A-589B), 3 Hermetic texts, some Apocalypses and several Gospels attributed to John, Peter, Thomas and other disciples.

115 Their writings are in Migne 1987-97. (For Epiphanius, Williams 1987.) Other heresiologists were Origen and Tertullian. A long list of heretic leaders can be constructed: Simon the Magus, Satornilus, Basilides, Valentinus, Carpocrates, Ptolemy Theodotus and many others.

116 This reminds of the Hebrew God 'Yahweh Lord of the Sabbaths'. The *Apocryphon of John* is in R pp 104-123.

117 A female Power creates the world in other gnostic texts also: in *On the Origin of the World* (R 170-198) she is called Pistis-Sophia (R172-3), i.e. Faith-Wisdom; in the *Trimorphis Protennoia* (R511-527) she is the First Thought or Epinoia. This reminds of the female Prakṛti generating the manifest world while Puruṣa remains uninvolved and watchful (especially in the Sāṅkhya system).

118 This notion may come from Plotinos who says (*Enneads* V.1.8) that Plato establishes 3 degrees of reality and that the Good is superior to Being and Intelligence while Intelligence is the Demiurge, i.e. the Creatorgod. But of course Plato himself makes no such statement. Then one should bear in mind that Plotinos himself attacks not only Gnostics but also Platonists in II.9 and elsewhere. In II.9.6ff he says that the Gnostics borrowed various elements from Plato **distorting them**, but does not realize that some of these ideas may not at all be from Plato.

119 But the idea goes back to *Ṛgveda* X.129 which presents the One *tad-ekam* before all existence and even immortality, and then the *ābhū*, which starts the creation of gods and the world(s). See Kazanas 2003, sect III.

120 Scholars have long debated whether the Christian doctrine of divine love appears in Plotinos' One as will and love of Itself (VI.8.13.5 ff): e.g. Rist 1967: 66-83. For other controversies see references in Wallis 1972 and Harris 1982.

121 McEvilley sees (p563) influence of the Egyptian *Book of the Dead* in *Enneads* V.8.7.32-5: this is not so.

122 Here I agree with McEvilley (pp557-8). Other scholars express doubts but these are very weak. On one page Wallis (1972:89) says that even in life a man may achieve "union which, while it lasts, abolishes all distinction between the soul and the One" and calls the One "our transcendent source"; but then, on the same page, he says that this union "differs from that of the 'monistic' mysticism, exemplified ... by the non-dualist Vedanta". He cites two passages VI 5.12.16ff and 9.9.26ff which in fact speak eloquently of the oneness (see also VI 7.34.13ff). His distinction is incomprehensible.

123 "What a man suffers now is what he himself has done some time ... It is the rule of Adrasteia [=inescapable justice]": *Enneads* III 2.13.14-18; cf Plato's *Phaidros* 248CD.

124 This 'emanation' (or 'outflow, procession, radiation') becomes an important maxim in later Scholastic philosophy: *bonum diffusivum sui* 'good diffuses itself - by regenerating an external 'image' of its perfection.

125 Some translate 'mind' or 'spirit'. Hereafter, the 'word' is *logos*, also meaning 'reasoning, proportion, measure'.

126 The terms used here are *eidōlon* for 'image', *mē on* for 'non-being' and *pseudos* ψεῦδος for 'illusion/lie'. For not absolute non-being see I 8.3.6 and II 4.16.3.

127 This is an obvious parallel with the four states of the Self described briefly in the *Māṇḍūkya Up* but presented in the reverse order from the material condition of Vaiśvanara, to the subtle one of Taijasa, then the causal Prāñña and the final Turīya, which is the One in which all three eventually merge. More complex but equally valid is the description in Kaṭha Up I.3.10-11 where the senses and their objects are parallel to the

material embodiment, the *manas*, *buddhi* and *mahān* are parallel to the soul, the *avyakta* corresponds to causal Nouns and the *Puruṣa* to the One. Another parallel is in *Bhagavad Gīta* III 42 with *indriyāṇi* ‘senses’ (=body), *manas* ‘mind’ (psuche), *buddhi* ‘intelligence’ (=nous) and *saḥ* ‘He, the Supreme’ (=the One).

128 “The universe [=pan] ... according to eternal rational principles completes its duration and always returns periodically to the same condition...” (IV 3.12.13ff).

129 Then again, in IV 3.13, the descent is due to the soul’s own disposition and choice but according to justice *dikē* δίκη! All the different explanations here, as in Plato, are thought to be unconvincing. It would have been perhaps more satisfying to say “It is not known”!

130 ‘quietude’ is *hēsuchia* ἡσυχία, synonym of *ataraxia* ‘imperturbability’ (§10, above). It goes back to the Eleatics and Pythagoreans (GPA §12, 16).

131 This was discussed by Augustine in his *City of God* where he called Porphyry *doctissimus philosophorum* ‘most learnt of philosophers’ (*De Civitate Dei* 19-22).

132 Again in Augustine’s *De Civitate Dei* 19.23.

133 For a full study see Lewy 1956 and Majerick 1981. The first to cite this text was Porphyry.

134 These were produced over the two centuries CE but contain much old material: see West 1998.

135 In Proclus’ *ELements of Theology* cited in Wallis 1972: 107, 123.

136 There is evidence that this was known even in Plato’s day: see GPA §43. But, of course this knowledge did not persist. Aristotle’s geocentric model of the celestial bodies prevailed, fully adopted by Ptolemy (hence Ptolemaic system) and bequeathed to Europe for another 1400 years.

137 The *Greek Magical Papyri* contain all kinds of spells and charms for cures of diseases and the success of self-interested pursuits: there are petitions for success in (illicit) love (e.g. IV 244, 405 etc.) for inducing sleep or insomnia in others (IV 3255, VII 376 etc.) etc. : *PGM* 1928.

138 The Edict of Milan promoted toleration. Then a series of measures strengthened prevalent Christianity against pagan sects. Constantine himself became a Christian just before his death in 337.

139 He wrote commentaries on several of Plato’s Dialogues (including one on *Timaios*) and on Euclid’s *ELements*. For a fuller presentation see Wallis 1972, ch 5.